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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear RC32 members,

It is an exciting time as we make plans to meet in person for the first time in five years at the XX ISA World Congress of Sociology in Melbourne, Australia from June 25 to July 1, 2023. RC32's



Figure 1: Dr. Melanie Heath

conference title is “*Theorizing Gender in Times of Authoritarianism and COVID-19: Building on the Work of Raewyn Connell*.” For the conference, we will engage and build on Connell’s oeuvre to consider gender relations in the context of the current wave of authoritarian, highly patriarchal regimes and democracies that are moving in an illiberal direction. The COVID-19 crisis has further provided an opportunity to nurture

authoritarianism and the failure of democratic leadership.

How can feminist sociologists worldwide contribute to understanding authoritarianism based on inequalities of race, class, gender, sexuality, among others? How have masculinities enabled authoritarianism in the current social climate? How can we decolonialize sociological knowledge and gender studies to better study this resurgence of authoritarianism? Considering how neoliberal globalization generates conflict will be central to our reflections.

Abstract submission is open, and the deadline to submit is September 30, 2022. Here are the RC32 sessions:

- Building Feminist Academia: Research Experiences from the Social Sciences
- COVID-19: Intersectional Perspectives on Patriarchy and the Pandemic
- Empowerment of Women in India and Abroad
- Female Employment, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment across the Globe
- Female Migration, Poverty, and Inequality
- Feminist Pedagogies, Positionality and Situatedness
- Gender and Queer Formations Under Authoritarianism in the Global South

- Secular Authoritarianism and Gender Inequalities in Plural Societies
- Gendered Intergenerational Experiences of Social Mobility in Migration
- Gendering Nationalism in 21st Century China
- Global South Activist Scholarship in the Global North: Counter-Hegemonic Feminist Praxes for Alternative Futures
- In the Shadow of the Pandemic: The Impact of Authoritarian Trends and Tendencies on Gender and Sexual Politics
- Decolonizing the Sociology of Gender and Sexualities
- The Future of Global Gender Inequality and Intersectionalities
- Southern Theories, Connell, and Other Sociological Reflections on Lives during Times of Crises
- Theorizing Gender in Populist Times: Understanding the Challenge to Critical Social Sciences
- Global Perspectives on the Struggle for Reproductive Justice
- Women in an Occupational Gender Segregation Global Labor Market
- Home Is Not So Sweet Home: Shadow Pandemic from COVID 19

If you published a book after the Forum in 2021 up to the Congress in 2023, you are encouraged to submit your book for consideration in our **Author Meets Critics** session. There will be a set of organizing questions, and authors will discuss the themes and methods of their work. There will also be time for questions and comments from the audience. Please submit an abstract that includes the following: (a) title of book, (b) publisher, (c) date of publication, (d) author or authors, and (e) book summary that can be taken directly from the publisher's website. Preference will be given to books that are published by RC32 members. All books must include some focus on gender and/or sexuality.

This newsletter includes an interview with Professor Emerita Raewyn Connell, from The University of Sydney, who received the third ISA Award for Excellence in Research and Practice. She describes her research trajectory, her work on gender relations and how it has transformed the field, and her main contributions to the field of sociology. We are also pleased to include in our newsletter essays by Dr. Esther Hernández-Medina and Dr. Susan Langmagne from our

virtual panel on precarious labor that took place on February 22, 2022. Speakers also included Dr. Deepali Aparajita Dungdung, Dr. Rituparna Patgiri. On April 10, 2022, RC32 sponsored another virtual panel on Decolonizing the Sociology of Gender and Sexualities. Raewyn Connell, Vrushali Patil, and Caroline M. Schöpf provided important insights on how the sociology of gender and sexuality continues to be embedded in relations of power that assume the Global North as the site where gender and sexuality are studied and understood.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Esther Ngan-Ling Chow (November 9, 1943 - April 11, 2022). On July 20, 2022, RC32 honored her legacy with a virtual panel on “Theorizing Intersectionality in the 21st Century.” Dr. Chow, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at American University, grew up in China before moving to the United States in 1966 to obtain her PhD in sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. After receiving her PhD, she joined the American University faculty, where she taught and conducted research on a variety of themes. In the early 1980s, she pioneered research on the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexuality, particularly on Asian American women. She researched the social history and ethnic community creation of Chinatown in Washington, D.C., a city of entry for immigrants. She has been at the vanguard of global research on gender, family, work, and policy. Dr. Chow served as a Co-President of RC32 from 2006 to 2010 with Margaret Abraham, the Harry H. Wachtel Distinguished Teaching Professor for the Study of Nonviolent Social Change and Professor of Sociology, Hofstra University. Dr. Abraham provided opening remarks and offers her insights in this newsletter.

During the panel, we heard an excellent presentation by Dr. Bula Bhadra, Professor of Sociology, Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata. In her presentation, Dr. Bhadra articulated that although the concept of intersectionality is feminism’s success story, prevailing approaches to intersectionality focus narrowly on experiences of the Euro-American realities and adhere to the binary essentialist paradigm of “Global North” and “Global South.” Bhadra’s presentation interrogated a discursive colonialism in the production of the representation of “Third World Woman” as a singular monolithic subject in some (Euro-American) feminist texts partnering with the oversimplified paradigm of “Global North” and “Global South.” She proposed a theory of Decolonial Intersectionality that decenters existing hegemonic discourses and challenges underlying assumptions of coloniality of power, knowledge, and gender. By questioning

hegemonic forms of knowledge, she called for multiple processes of knowledge production by providing researchers with a means for “thinking through others”.

Dr. Abha Chauhan, Professor of Sociology, University of Jammu, also offered an engaging talk on gender, political identity, and war situations in rural Northwest India. The concept of “intersectionality” as expounded by Dr. Esther Chow on analyzing gender and social transformation emphasized different forms of inequalities in the global, transnational, and local contexts. Her talk brought to fore the multiple forms of oppression of patriarchy, class, and caste that women in rural areas of northwest India in war-like-situations face, along with some of the factors like political empowerment and education that help mitigate the impact of these discriminatory structures.

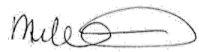
Dr. Gerlinde Maurer, Senior Researcher, Department of Sociology, University of Vienna applied Chow’s theoretical work in her empirical data analysis, highlighting the importance of 1) continuing investigations on the relation between the state as public versus private patriarchy in the current research on parental leave; 2) exploring the intersectional impact of parental leave and childcare allowances on a national and transnational level; and 3) identifying the historical pathways in developing family policies: from highlighting women’s affairs to abolishing gender inequalities and, among other relevant topics, promoting the dual uptake of childcare benefits and reducing the gender care gap. Her research results revealed parents’ unequal opportunities in the uptake of parental leave or educational leave in different branches of the economy and in different positions in gainful employment, thus reconfirming the relevance of Chow’s theoretical framework for current and further studies in gender and family research.

Finally, Ajailiu Niumai, Head, Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, University of Hyderabad, examined the intersections of race, tribe, religion, caste, and gender. She discussed the fluid and unregulated space of the “public sphere” in India to shine light on the stereotyping of Northeast people in Hyderabad.

A special thanks to Arvinder Ansari for helping to organize and chair this panel.

In the coming months, RC32 will sponsor two virtual panels to address some of the significant gender and sexual crises that are taking place in our global environment. A panel will focus on the gender dynamics of the war in Ukraine, building on and interrogating the analysis offered by Sari Hanafi, President of the International Sociological Association, concerning the double standard of Euro-American international relations discourse and practice. RC32 will also organize a panel on global reproductive justice to consider the ramifications of the recent overturning of the abortion law in the United States. Stay tuned for more details!

Please enjoy the rest of your summer and, as always, stay safe!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Melanie', followed by a horizontal line that loops back to the left.

Melanie Heath

AN INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR EMERITA RAEWYN CONNELL

1. Congratulations on being the third ISA award recipient for Excellence in Research and Practice. What has been your research trajectory that has led to this noteworthy award?

It has been a long path, with many turns and branches. In that grim document, my official curriculum vitae, I can count 29 formal research projects between 1965 and 2017. Like most researchers, I have done other pieces of research here and there. This certainly was not planned as a single trajectory!

I have tried to respond to social needs for knowledge. These needs are sometimes very clear. For instance, teachers and policymakers need to know how social differences emerge in schools, in order to reduce inequalities. Community educators need to know about sexual practices in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, in order to reduce transmission. I have been in teams researching exactly these issues.

But sometimes the social need is less focussed or less obvious. I have always tried to study issues that matter, in terms of social justice and power - about gender relations, class inequalities, coloniality, violence, education, the environment, the economy of knowledge. These are all difficult, even intractable issues. Yet they can be studied, debated, acted on. There are always collective choices that we can make about the direction of social change.

Sometimes I have seen a way to develop a particular field of research, and have launched projects in that field, and later I have been surprised (and pleased!) when other people found ways to use the ideas. I do not take much notice of distinctions between 'pure' and 'applied' research. They seem to blend into each other, over time.

A lot of my work has been done collaboratively. I have been blessed with colleagues who have made projects happen and have pushed my thinking forward. That was true in my historical

work on class and state in Australia, and then in the complex fieldwork on schools, on sexuality, and on gender relations that I was involved in from the 1970s to the 2000s. Later, with new groups, I worked on international projects about elite masculinities, and about intellectual workers and new fields of knowledge. I have had lots of opportunity to learn from other people!

One of my best experiences of collaboration was in the gang of four who planned and carried out the hundreds of interviews that became the books *Making the Difference* and *Teachers' Work*. That project sparked my interest in curricular justice, and produced the ideas of hegemonic masculinity and gender regimes. At one point we jokingly called ourselves the Society for the Production of Really Useful Knowledge - it sounds better as an acronym, SPRUK. We are still friends, forty years later.

I have also thought a lot about who I write for. I certainly write for professional colleagues - I see this communication as part of the collective work of advancing knowledge. I have published papers in the English-speaking global North, in journals such as *Theory & Society*, *Feminist Theory*, *Signs*, *Teachers College Record*, or *Social Science & Medicine*. I have, naturally, written many papers for the professional journal sponsored by The Australian Sociological Association, now called *Journal of Sociology*. But I have also taken care to write for journals and books published in other parts of the world, such as *Debate Feminista* in México, *Cadernos PAGU* in Brasil, *South African Review of Sociology* or *Feministische Studien* in Germany.

I have been concerned to reach other audiences too, beyond the academic world. I have written articles, and given talks, for social movements and unions, for newspapers, and for professional groups such as teachers, social workers and health workers. For instance, one of the early international talks that I gave about research on masculinities was to a conference organized by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, which included delegates from German unions in heavy industry - whose members, seeing changes in the lives of women in their communities, wanted to know what change meant for the men.

Several times I have been a co-author of reports published by governments or United Nations agencies. Such reports can have a really wide audience. However, that is not always a reliable

way to circulate knowledge. In one case, a national project on disadvantaged schools that produced fascinating evidence, my colleagues and I were caught out by a change of political power. Our report, commissioned under one minister, was simply shelved by the new power-holders. For them, it was inconvenient knowledge. Ironically, we managed to circulate some of the key policy conclusions through academic channels.

I have mostly used familiar research methods: documentary studies, quantitative surveys, organizational ethnography, life-history interviews, secondary analysis of data already collected. My projects have often combined several methods - I think it is good practice to get cross-bearings when it is possible.

Often, I have used a version of life-history method that I call the 'theorised life history'. In this approach, the agenda of each interview is, in part, given by a theoretical framework such as the structural theory of gender relations. Life-history work is intensive and slow. (Sigmund Freud was one of the pioneers, and he once wrote an essay called 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable'. Sometimes, working patiently through life-history data does seem interminable!) But such material is incredibly rich in the details of social life, as John Dollard showed back in the 1930s. And it obliges the researcher to adjust to the different social worlds of the narrators.

I have not written very much about method, and I now think that was a mistake. Knowledge production depends on labour and a workforce, as much as it depends on paradigms and concepts. When we recognise that, we can see that 'methodology' is actually a form of labour process analysis! I have become more and more concerned with the workforce of research and teaching. I have discussed this recently in my book *The Good University* and in pieces I have written for education unions. Like others in my generation, I am distressed by the growing insecurity that younger people now face in university work. I have done what I could to oppose that insecurity and mitigate its effects. But it is a basic element of the trend towards corporatisation and privatisation of higher education, and has not yet been stopped, let alone reversed.

2. For gender scholars and beyond, your work on gender relations and men and masculinities has transformed the field. How did you choose this topic and what is your assessment of the field today?

Gender has been a main thread running through my working life. I proudly say that my first publication about gender was in 1974. In that year I published a quantitative paper on sex differences (as the topic was then called) in the social lives of Australian teenagers. It had the perky title 'You Can't Tell Them Apart Nowadays, Can You?' (Answer: Yes, you can.) Half a century later I am still thinking about these issues, I hope in a more sophisticated way.

How did I choose the topic? In a sense it chose me - I could not avoid it. In the 1970s the Women's Liberation movement grew explosively in Australia, as in other countries. The Gay Liberation movement soon followed. Knowledge horizons were expanding, and there was a great deal of intellectual and political work to be done. When I was appointed to the chair of sociology at a new university in Sydney, we had the chance to create a new curriculum. We included courses about gender and sexuality as mainstream sociology courses. I think we were one of the first departments anywhere to do that. Student interest was very strong, including among graduate students. With both academic staff projects and doctoral projects, our department became a centre of gender and sexuality research.

Our research filled in a great deal of detail about gender processes in social life: in workplaces, in schools, in families, in sexuality, and in government. It was a time of rapid expansion in gender and sexuality studies, and many well-focused studies were being published in Australia and elsewhere. As the detail built up, it became clear that we needed new theoretical tools to understand a deeply gendered world. We had concepts such as 'sex role', 'patriarchy' and 'social reproduction'. But how could we theorise gender comprehensively, as a social reality? That was the conceptual issue I was wrestling with, by the end of the 1970s. In the doom-laden year 1984 I put my thoughts together while living in a friend's house in south London, on leave from my teaching job in Sydney. The result was the first draft of the book *Gender & Power*.

That was a wildly ambitious project. I tried to link the idea of gender as a large-scale social structure with an understanding of gender in personality and intimate relationships, through

the mediating idea of 'gender relations'. I tried to show that reproductive biology was necessarily involved in the social process we call gender, but did not determine social outcomes. I pictured gendered personality as a project developing through a life course (borrowing from existential psychoanalysis). I argued that the structure of gender relations had definable substructures (I later called them 'dimensions') - power, production, cathexis, communication. These take specific forms in particular institutions (I called these forms the 'gender regimes' of different institutions), and in whole societies (I called these the 'gender orders' of different societies). And I argued - against classic structuralism - that all these structures were historical. They were not universal, but were brought into existence in real time by human action. They contained in themselves contradictions and pressures for change. Gender relations, through their own dynamics, could become more equal and more democratic - though they might also get worse.

In later years I have tried to refine this approach to gender, especially in the four editions of my book *Gender: In World Perspective*. Theories should not be static! Not all my formulations have held up well, of course. But I think the approach is compatible with the idea of intersectionality, and with post-colonial perspectives. One part of this work, in particular, has been very actively developed. The early research on multiple masculinities went into my theorising, and the few pages in *Gender & Power* that discuss hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity became the most-cited part of the book.

I needed more empirical evidence on that, so I launched a life-history research project with four groups of men who were facing pressures for change. I began to write journal articles about this, since there was a rising interest in issues about men and masculinity. But for years I resisted writing a book. There were too many 'books about men' being published at the time, many of them in anti-feminist backlash style; I did not want to legitimize the genre. Eventually I did relent, and published *Masculinities* in 1995. I discussed not only the life-history research but also the history of ideas, theoretical needs, and the politics of masculinities. The book was well received. Readers seem to have felt a need for critical synthesis and a framework for understanding. One of my happiest experiences was seeing that book translated. There are now versions of it in eleven languages other than English, the latest translation being in Farsi (Persian).

I wrote earlier about unexpected applications of research. Masculinities research provides a prime example. As soon as we began to talk about patterns of masculinity and femininity in schools, teachers wanted to know more! So, we published a beautifully-illustrated booklet for a teacher union, and then published academic articles on the topic. Soon after our 1985 article 'Toward a new sociology of masculinities' came out, I heard about practical applications in teaching and counselling. Later I heard of applications in social work, criminology, public health, anti-violence work, psychology, literary criticism, and more. So, 'pure' sociological research can have its uses!

That is the story of my most influential work on gender - up to this point, a conventional story within the mainstream economy of knowledge. It tells about research, theory and applications of knowledge. But there is one step more.

By the 1990s I was thinking harder about postcolonial perspectives in social science. After years of work on those issues I published *Southern Theory* in 2007. This book analyzes global-North hegemony in the social sciences, and introduces many examples of social thought coming from the colonized and post-colonial world. *Southern Theory* did not particularly highlight gender, but of course the argument applies to gender. So, I have written a series of articles about post-colonial thought on gender politics, theory and research, coming from the majority world. These articles call attention to some brilliant thinkers who are mostly overlooked in Anglophone sociology and gender studies.

Among other things, this made me think about the historical limits to concepts such as 'hegemonic masculinity'. Colonial violence drastically re-shaped indigenous gender orders - think of slavery, migrant labour, the seizure of land, mass rape and the disruption of kinship and gendered relations with the environment. But colonial regimes, based on military force, may have had little use for mechanisms of hegemony. This is a point made strongly by Ranajit Guha in relation to India. There are still a lot of open questions here.

3. What do you see as some of the most important contributions that you have made to the field of sociology? How should scholars, in your view, build on your research legacy?

I think, on several occasions, I have helped to crystallize an advance in sociological knowledge. In Australian social science - before my writing circulated much internationally - my work on class helped to replace an abstracted 'social stratification' model with a more concrete and dynamic picture of changing class structures and their involvement with education, politics and the practices of everyday life. I believe that our research on schools helped to make the sociology of education more relevant to teachers and policymakers. We showed in education an active process of constructing social life, rather than a passive reproduction of inequalities - an approach particularly inspired by feminist teachers in schools.

When my work began to circulate internationally, what caught readers' attention was mainly the work on gender. My writing may have been influential because it offered a full-scale sociology of gender ranging from personality dynamics, through personal relationships and sexualities, to whole economies and states. It may also have been useful because it recognized both the weight of social structure, the intractability that feminists encountered in struggle, and the possibility of change, the consequences of struggle.

My work on masculinities offered concepts that allowed people to think about different forms of masculinity and the diversity of men's lives, without losing sight of overall gender inequalities. My empirical work documented some of that diversity, showed men grappling with varied situations, some of them very difficult; and also uncovered opportunities for change. Some grim realism, some hope - perhaps both were of value to the readers?

My work on southern theory had a different shape. I have always found the sociology of knowledge interesting but frustrating. There have been feminist versions - the work of Dorothy Smith and Sandra Harding comes to mind - but the sociology of knowledge was not often connected to colonialism and empire. I think that is changing, and I believe my work has helped.

It took about fourteen years of reading intellectual and cultural histories, collecting books and pamphlets, tracing biographies and backgrounds, and asking advice from colleagues in many

countries, before I could write *Southern Theory*. It is not a runaway best-seller. But it has been read and cited, and even translated four times. Most post-colonial and de-colonial literature has come from philosophers, cultural theorists and historians. Yet the issues very much involve sociological problems about institutions such as universities, about material inequalities on a world scale, about workforces, and about ideologies of progress, race and nation. I'm pleased to see a growing number of colleagues in sociology taking up these problems.

I have never wanted to create a school of thought or a new orthodoxy. New orthodoxies sometimes emerge in sociology, and in my view that is not a happy outcome. I am opposed to 'canons'. I see the history of social science not as the story of a few Great Men but as the collective project of many workers, from many backgrounds, across the world. I have wanted to teach my students, and encourage my colleagues, to think for themselves. I have wanted people to think deep and wide, to find new resources, to contest authority and try new paths. That way we nurture the creativeness of the whole knowledge workforce.

Sociology does not have a guaranteed future. The catastrophes of climate change, war, global inequalities, and authoritarian politics, are with us already. Social science is important, even vital, in responding to them. But social science is also under challenge: it can be marginalized, de-funded, made more precarious, and in some cases just banned. We have complex and difficult work to do.

I hope my work offers resources rather than fixed doctrines. I am sure that in time my concepts will be replaced, my methods will be improved on, and my writing will seem quaint and old-fashioned. But if they have helped other workers to launch new knowledge projects and explore new pathways for action, they will have served their purpose.

REMEMBERING AND HONORING PROFESSOR ESTHER NGAN-LING CHOW

By: Dr. Margaret Abraham

The Harry H. Wachtel Distinguished Teaching Professor for the Study of Nonviolent Social Change and Professor of Sociology,
Hofstra University.

Professor Esther Ngan-ling Chow's contributions as a sociologist, teacher, scholar, researcher, feminist, and community activist are immense and invaluable. Although the term intersectionality has become mainstream, Esther was among one of the early sociologists and women of color, especially in the 1980s, who drew attention to and enhanced our understanding of the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, class, labor, especially for Asian American women.

I got to know Esther through the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Women and Society (RC32), Sociologist for Women (SWS) and the American Sociological Association (ASA). However, I also knew Dr. Esther Ngan Ling Chow from her important writings in the late 1980s and early 1990s where she highlighted, in much needed ways, Asian American voices and experiences including in her articles, such as the "Development of the Feminist Consciousness Among Asian American Women", (1987) in *Gender and Society*; "The Feminist Movement: Where are all the Asian American Women?" (1989) in *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings by and about Asian Women*, edited by the collective (Asian Women United of California), and "Asian American Women at Work" (1994) in *Women of Color in U.S Society* edited by Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill. In her works, Esther examined the conditions and impediments that Asian American women encountered in the workplace, the marginalization, mobilization, and engagement of Asian and Asian American women in feminist and Asian American movements. She drew upon the contexts that influenced the "development and transformation" of feminist consciousness among Asian American women. She particularly considered how gender, race, class, and culture influence the nature of participation in the mainstream feminist movement in the United States and the challenges and complexities in organizing the heterogeneities among Asian-Americans.

Between 2006-2010 during our tenure as co-Presidents of ISA's RC32, we worked on increasing and globally diversifying its individual and regional membership, systematizing forms of communication, increasing research activities and organizing conferences and sessions that could help enhance a deeper understanding of issues of gender, migration, intersectionality, transnationalism, work, family, and citizenship. These conferences and sessions included *Mundos de Mujeres/Women's Worlds: 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women*, Madrid, Spain; *American Sociological Association*, Boston, USA; *the First ISA World Forum of Sociology*, Barcelona, Spain; and *the XVII World Congress of Sociology* Gothenburg, Sweden. In 2008 ISA/Research Committee of Women in Society (RC32) successfully held its First Interim International Conference with its theme of *Women and Citizenship in a Local/Global World* in collaboration with the "National Centre for Social Research of Greece", EKKE in Athens in June 2007. This two-day conference was attended by approximately one hundred and fifty participants and resulted in a book *Contours of Citizenship: Women, Diversity and Practices of Citizenship*, edited by Margaret Abraham, Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Laura Mararou-Alipranti and Evangelia Tastsoglou (Ashgate 2010). Esther's article "Citizenship Divided, Education Deprived: Gender and Migrant Children's Rights to Schooling in Urban China" provided important sociological insights on why migrant children, particularly girls, were deprived of citizenship rights for education in Urban China. She argues that differences based on space, class, gender, and age interact with the state, family, economy, and educational system to shape how migrant parents and their children experience fragmented citizenship as they move for urban employment. She also co-organized with Tan Lin a conference in China that resulted in a book *Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global-transnational and Local Contexts* (2011) edited by Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Marcia Texler Segal, and Tan Lin.

Esther's commitment to education, especially for girls, came from her own personal early experience of financial hardship and the opportunity she got in furthering her own education through a scholarship. She gave back by becoming a founder and funder of scholarships to promote girls' education. She also funded scholarships for students through the True Light Foundation. Esther was a survivor and resilient in many ways, including never stopping her personal fight against cancer. Given that she wrote on work and family, I would be remiss if I

did not mention her wonderful spouse, Norman Chang, who was an important source of support.

Esther, may you rest in peace and thank you for your rich legacy that continues to empower a new generation of scholars and activists in making a difference.



Figure 2: RC 32 presidents at the XVII ISA World Congress, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2010.

Photo Source: Margaret Abraham, 2010

A DISCUSSION ABOUT PRECARITY

By : Dr. Raewyn Connell
Professor Emerita, University of Sydney

In Australia, where I live, we worry about the growth of precarious employment in universities. Much of the essential non-academic work has been outsourced; while more and more teaching and research jobs are on short-term contracts, sometimes very short-term. Our union (the National Tertiary Education Union) estimates that about 70% of undergraduate teaching is now 'casualized', that is, done by workers in insecure employment.

Insecurity has gendered contours. Among senior ranks in universities, where there are either secure jobs or high salaries to compensate for any insecurity, men predominate. A particular pattern of masculinity is hegemonic in corporate management, and more of that has been appearing in universities. Women's careers have been more interrupted, and recognition harder to get, than is the case for men.

The problem is not just about equity in employment. It's about the future of the university workforce, which is being stressed and eroded by current policies. Australia is a rich country: it could do much, much better. But corporate-style management, the decline of public funding, the treatment of universities as competitive firms, and sheer government hostility, have happened here too.

It's a worldwide problem, as we know. Precarious work, and the responses to it, differ between countries, regions, and campuses. We have much to learn from each other, by comparing experiences, discussing strategies, and finding ways to give mutual support. I am very glad that RC32 has been able to hold a symposium on precarity. I hope the discussion will continue!

THINKING AND HUSTLING: THE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF ACADEMIC LIFE IN DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND THE U.S.

By: Dr. Esther Hernández-Medina

Assistant Professor Latin American Studies and
Gender and Women's Studies at Pomona College

Email: esther.hernandez@pomona.edu

This article is based on the talk I gave as part of the panel “Addressing Precarious Labor in Academia in the Global South and the Global North” RC32 convened on February 22nd as part of the Women, Gender, and Society Panel Series. There I had the opportunity to reflect on my academic life in two countries, my native Dominican Republic, and the United States and engage in a stimulating conversation with colleagues Susan Langmagne, Deepali Aparajita Dungdung and Dr. Rituparna Patgiri. As such, it is a brief attempt at contributing to the debate on how to think about and address the precarity of academic work around the world and how it is related to the role academia plays and should play in society as a whole. I will start with some of the challenges.

The Challenges

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have a lot of diversity in this regard. The biggest countries have very established and well-developed academic systems that are somewhat comparable to academia in the United States. In this group we can find countries like Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, and Peru. Some of the smaller ones like Uruguay, Costa Rica, Cuba, and countries in the English-speaking Caribbean also have relatively mature academic systems where you can find groups of people exclusively or almost exclusively devoted to academic work. But that is not the case in many of the smaller countries in the area.

In the case of the Dominican Republic specifically, most of our academic institutions focus on teaching whereas research is minimal and is concentrated at research centers, usually but not always, affiliated with the bigger universities in the country. For instance, a great deal of

academic research on gender equality has been conducted at the Center for Gender Studies at the Santo Domingo Institute of Technology (@CEGINTEC), one of the first in the region, founded in 1987. The second most important research center of this kind, the Research Institute about Gender and Families (@IGEF_UASD), was founded in 2005 and is housed at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at the iconic public university, the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD), the first one in the Americas. Additionally, an important part of the research conducted in the country in this, and other topics is commissioned by international organizations and national and international NGOs and conducted by specialized consultants.

An important feature of the Dominican academic system is that most higher education students are served by public institutions, especially UASD, whereas most higher education professors are concentrated in the private sector as shown by the latest statistics I had access to published by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (MESCYT) for period 2005-2017. It is important to note that UASD is part of the Latin American public university tradition that bigger universities like UNAM in Mexico are famous for. Another important trend shown by the MESCYT report is that, even though most university students are women (63% according to other sources), men still represent the majority of higher education professors. In fact, only 42.5% of university professors for that period were women.

Similarly, to what Susan Langmagne mentioned about Ghana, salaries in Dominican academia are very low. I don't know if that is also the situation in Ghana but in the Dominican Republic academic work for the most part is not really considered a career path. Instead, it is seen as something you do as a complement to your regular career. With very few exceptions, it is not possible, or it is very difficult to live off being exclusively an academic, and that is why I am here in the US. Some people do it, and I did this for a while, by combining it with being a consultant especially for government institutions doing policy work.

Another group of academics, especially among those who work at UASD, teach an insane number of classes similarly to what contingent faculty have to do here in the US. But even that path is very difficult. And I was in fact joking about this a few days before the talk with a friend of mine saying that part of the reason why I did not stay in the Dominican Republic is because I no longer have the energy to do that even if I wanted to.

Two other challenges associated with academic work in the Dominican Republic are the following. First, as shown in the MESCYT statistics, 79.5% of people are on hour-based contracts, not even like regular adjuncts in the US. For instance, when I used to work in government, I would teach only one class a semester just because I wanted to stay in touch with academia and I love teaching. And I actually started teaching when I was 21 a long, long time ago! But this modality is not a significant source of income let alone, as I mentioned, a recognized career path.

And the last challenge I am going to mention is the fact that private universities must over-rely on tuition. In this regard, private higher ed institutions in the US have the advantage of being able to access private funds (at least in theory). That is not the case in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean where we don't have a strong tradition of private actors donating to academia like the Mellon Foundation regularly funding the humanities and other foundations and individuals funding the academic institutions and causes they believe in the US.

In terms of problems in the US, I will be very brief since most of us are familiarized with academia in North America. The challenges include the over-reliance on contingent faculty. When we look at the statistics, 70% of faculty here in the US are contingent. And we forget that because we are always focusing on the tenure-track system but that is actually the minority of people in academia. Limited unionization is another challenge, but it varies a lot across institutions, even among private ones.

And, as Susan was mentioning in her talk, the vast majority of contingent faculty are women and people of color. That was also my case because until recently and still at the time of the talk last February, I was a Visiting Assistant Professor at Pomona College and was on the job market trying to get into that privileged tenure-track segment of US academia (which I was fortunately able to do in July when I was hired as an Assistant Professor at the same institution).

The Advantages

In terms of the advantages of being part of academia in the US, they are also well known. They include the fact that, in comparison with other countries, there are more resources, there is more

involvement of the private sector, and there is a tradition of supporting the academic system. That kind of support and the fact that these resources exist also allow academia in the US a level of autonomy from the rest of society that can be positive in many ways, not in others. But it can be positive regarding academic freedom, for instance.

Again, being able to join the tenure-track and tenured faculty positions put people in the best possible scenario. Yet there might also advantages even if you are contingent faculty, but it depends on the resources available at your institution. For instance, even in my role as a Visiting Assistant Professor, Pomona College allowed me to have access to multiple kinds of resources (not only funds) including access to the Claremont Colleges Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which has been crucial for improving and updating my teaching, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic. And those include not only courses and workshops but also spaces for regular exchange with colleagues about our pedagogical practices.

Similarly, I have had access to the multiple resources (webinars, courses, motivational emails) offered by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) through Pomona's institutional membership. And both CTL and NCFDD also showcase resources for and pay special attention to the needs of those of us who are junior faculty, those of us who identify as female, those of us who are people of color, and so on.

But I do want to finish by emphasizing the advantages that we have in the global South. And I'm going to focus on the case of the Dominican Republic, but I have seen this in other countries as well. I refer to the fact that, in part ironically because of the lack of resources (although that is not the only reason), academia can't have the luxury of being isolated from the rest of society. Academia in the Dominican Republic and I would argue in the rest of the region, is not an ivory tower, it can't be just like "we do our own thing here and some of us go public."

I remember when I started my PhD in the US at Brown University, it was the time when Michael Burawoy was president of the American Sociological Association (ASA) and he was emphasizing the need for having a "public sociology." Coming from Latin America, I didn't understand what the debate was about. I was like "what do you mean 'public sociology'? Of course, sociology is public!" I was thinking "that is redundant, I don't understand what you

mean.” Reading Burawoy’s work helped me understand that, in the US, you have this division between public sociology, critical sociology, policy sociology, and professional sociology. And the latter is the norm, meaning that the majority of my colleagues engage with other sociologists but not with the public at large. In Latin America and the Caribbean, that is not the case neither in sociology nor in the other social sciences. In fact, most scholars engage with the public or at least see that engagement as the rule, rather than the exception in their work.

Final Remarks: An Invitation

A few months after being part of this RC32 panel, I had the privilege of attending the congress of the Latin American Council for Social Sciences (CLACSO), which takes place every three years. The congress was held in June at UNAM, the Latin American quintessential public university in Mexico City, and it brought to life many of the themes I had addressed in my talk. Key among them was seeing in real time how connected Latin American and Caribbean scholars are to our respective societies, how present we are in the debates about the most pressing issues of the most unequal region in the world, and how enthusiastically younger generations are taking up that mantle by becoming committed scholar-activists in their own right (although we don’t use that name in the region, again, for many it would be redundant).

For me it was a celebration, a renewal of vows of some sort. It reminded me why I returned to academia in the first place, and why I combine my scholarly labor with my feminist activism and policy work in my two homes: the Dominican Republic and the United States. I left Mexico reenergized and refocused. And I invite all of you who are reading these notes, especially my colleagues from the global North, to also consider what sociologists and other social scientists from the global South have to offer. What can we learn from expanding this dialogue? How can we give more substance to it in the spaces where it already exists? A case in point, as we discussed at the Summer Meeting of Sociologists for Women in Society last week, is the many lessons feminists in the US can learn from their peers in Latin America regarding the fight for abortion rights. In sum, how can we apply our sociological imagination to our own discipline so that we can have the curiosity and the creativity needed to come up with the new answers and new questions our world needs? That is the invitation.

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Recommended Portals:

CLACSO Institutional Portal (English): <https://www.clacso.org/en/what-is-clacso/>

Sociologists for Women in Society Portal (English): <https://socwomen.org>

PRECARIOUS LABOUR IN ACADEMIA: MY EXPERIENCES FROM THE GLOBAL NORTH AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

By: Dr. Susan Langmagne
Lecturer, University of Ghana

The trend towards precarious employment in academia is becoming a global phenomenon and needs urgent attention. Key to this trend is the liberalization associated with globalization, which according to (Standing, 2011; Callaghan, 2018) has produced a new “dangerous class of labour, the precariat.” This development has infiltrated academia creating a host of university faculty in precarious jobs.

Kalleberg and Vallas (2018) define precarious work as “work that is uncertain, unstable, and insecure and in which employees bear the risks of work and receive limited social benefits and statutory protection.” University workers in precarious employment not only have limited access to career advancement opportunities and statutory protections, but also bear the greater risk associated with the employment relationship. With the shift towards corporatization and cost-cutting, universities now view permanent employment as costly and therefore, rely on insecure contracts or non-regular faculty to transfer the cost burden. The extent or level of precarity in academia, however, vary between and within countries.

Beck (1992) and Zygmunt (2000) conceptualized the problem of precarity of work in contemporary society. Beck linked the problem to the rapid economic growth which has led to the emergence of what he refers to as the “risk society,” while Zygmunt Bauman (2000) bemoans the erosion of stable institutional structures that augmented industrial capitalism as resulting in a new era of “liquid modernity” marked by conditions of “precariousness, instability, and vulnerability” in modern life (Kalleberg and Vallas 2018). Having had the opportunity to teach as a faculty member in both Canada and Ghana, I share in what follows, my perspective into the nature of precarity in academia in these two countries in the global North and South.

Within Ghana, there are striking differences in precariousness, between public and private universities. Precarious faculty work in private universities in Ghana means irregular salary, anxiety having courses cancelled without notice after weeks of preparation, feeling marginalized and not appreciated, (especially where the university's focus is more on flagship programs), job insecurity, (one's contract could be terminated at will when students' enrolment numbers drop) or reduction in pay resulting from declining enrolments, unionized workers, limited social benefits and statutory protection, and no clear career path.

Public universities, have more categories of employment contracts compared to the private universities. The different employment contracts include: full-time, part-time, tenured, post-retirement and visiting lecturers' contracts. The extent of casualized or precarious work depends on the category or type of employment contract. Employment types such as post retirement contracts and, in some cases, tenured positions may not be considered precarious at all. Only faculty retiring at the rank of Professor or Senior Lecturer can be offered a post-retirement contract in most public universities. A Senior Lecturer could be offered a maximum of five (5) years contract after retirement and ten (10) years for a Professor. Contrary, Part-time Lecturers in most public universities in Ghana are recruited or engaged based on departmental need. The precariousness faced by this category of contract employees is that they have no guarantee their contracts will be renewed after expiration or that they'll become full-time Lecturers in the future. Being on a part-time contract, is not a career path, and will not lead to a tenure-track position. Thus, faculty in this category receive low wages, have limited access to benefits and almost no employment security. Part-time Lecturers in public universities encounter similar challenges as those confronting private university faculty. Furthermore, while most of the contract employees (except part-time, post retirement, and visiting faculty) in public universities are unionized, all categories of faculty in private universities are not unionized and do not have any collective bargaining power. Again, whereas, faculty of public universities in Ghana enjoy book and research allowance and other statutory benefits, this is not the case for most private university faculty.

From a comparative perspective, I did not observe any marked difference in the precariousness of academic labour among Sessional Lecturers in Canada and Part-time Lecturers in Ghana. Commonalities were, however, found. It was evident that the extent of precariousness in both

countries intersects with gender, and even with race in Canada. Additionally, tenured faculty in both countries experience minimal precarity, if any at all, as these categories of academics have secure employment and are entitled to all the benefits that come with tenure track positions.

Extant studies (Gleerup, et al., 2017; Kalleberg and Vallas, 2018; UK-UCU, 2016) have suggested a number of ways to address the casualization of academic staff. Some of which include searching for opportunities to advocate on precarious employment, collection of data on the labour conditions of faculty, trade union support to negotiate better conditions in temporary contracts among others. In as much as these recommendations are laudable, it is even more important for academics to engage their publics regularly on the duties and responsibilities of a Lecturer, and the challenges involved. Until the University Teachers Association of Ghana (UTAG) embarked on an industrial strike in January 2022 and had the opportunity to actively engage the media during the seven week long strike, most Ghanaians only had partial knowledge about the scope of work of Lectures. The majority of the public perceived teaching and grading as the sole duties of faculty and therefore, found the demand by UTAG for increment in salary and a general improvement in conditions of work as unreasonable. After continuous engagement and explanation of the core duties of a faculty, UTAG garnered public support for its course.

Based on my experience of teaching in both the global North and South, I do appreciate that precarious academic labour is a global problem which could become even worse in the near future if nothing is done immediately to address it. Perhaps a global association of academics (GAA) could be formed where annual meetings would be held to discuss, strategize and plan on how to address the plight of the modern day academic. It could also serve as a common space for advocacy and a forum to project the critical role of academics to the development of society.

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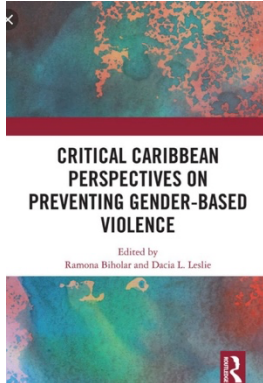
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MEMBERS' NEWS

BOOKS AUTHORED BY RC32 MEMBERS:



Dr. Ramona Biholar and Dr. Dacia Leslie are thrilled to announce that the co-edited book "Critical Caribbean Perspectives on Preventing Gender-based Violence", published by Routledge, is now available in soft and hard copy across the world.

They are honoured to be a part of a dynamic team of Caribbean researchers and practitioners at a critical time in the history of The UWI, the #1 university in the Caribbean.

The book is the output of a cross-campus collaboration between MonaLaw and the SALISES Crime Prevention and Offender Management Research Cluster and will be of interest to researchers and practitioners working on issues related to gender, the Caribbean, global development, criminology, and human rights.

Check it out!: <https://lnkd.in/gZDhAmQK>

Dear RC32 Members and readers of this newsletter,

I hope that you had a relaxing and joyous summer! Thank you for your contributions and for making this newsletter possible year after year. Please stay tuned for the call for our winter newsletter for 2022. In the meantime, please take care, stay well, and stay safe!

From your newsletter editor –

Dr. Shweta Majumdar Adur,
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
California State University, Los Angeles.