Our Year:
Center for the Study of Social Difference

2014-15 Annual Report
Over the course of the year our working groups have promoted CSSD’s mission by engaging in innovative interdisciplinary scholarship on gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race in the context of global dynamics of power and inequality.

2014-2015 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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This year shows the spectacular success of CSSD as a vibrant research center serving the academic interests of the faculty and students of Columbia University. CSSD was created as a site where groups of scholars, activists, and artists could work together on pressing research problems intimately connected to social difference—problems such as the enhanced effects of climate change on marginalized social groups, the sustainability of democratic forms of governance, and the socially-produced precarity of women’s lives. The founders hoped that these working groups would spawn a variety of outcomes—books, articles, performances, white papers—and that they might grow into even bigger projects supported by outside funders. In short, CSSD was to be a seedbed for good ideas, collaboratively pursued, without regard for disciplinary boundaries.

This decade-long dream is being realized. There is never enough time or money in the life of a university professor to pursue collaborative research projects easily. CSSD helps to facilitate that goal. One of our initial working groups, Engendering the Archive, is now in its seventh year and has figured in the production of dozens of books, papers, and exhibits. Several other working groups have attracted funding from outside sources such as the Luce Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH); and the range of our work has never been greater. This year, three major projects have been actively addressing topics in the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and the digital future.

The first, Social Justice after the Welfare State, is examining what has happened to democratic practices after the transformation of the Welfare State from the 1970s to the present moment. Focusing on issues like the minimum wage, support for single mothers, and child and adult poverty, and comparing what has happened in the U.S. to what has happened in Europe, the group will spend next year seeking solutions to the problems it has identified in the prior two years regarding current provisions for social justice. With 24 active members and an exciting series of meetings occurring throughout the year, the Social Justice after the Welfare State working group models the rigorous and urgent scholarship being conducted under the banner of CSSD. The group includes participants from Columbia and other New York universities, postdocs, graduate students, and is linked to scholars in several European countries.
In a different vein, another of our projects, **Women Mobilizing Memory**, has used the resources of Columbia’s Global Centers to focus on the ways in which memories of traumatic and violent histories can be put in the service of a reimagined and progressive political and social life. Besides meeting at Columbia for the last several years, the group has also convened with its partners in Santiago, Chile, and Istanbul, Turkey, to explore its topic in a transnational framework. One result has been an art exhibit, “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing,” that was displayed in Istanbul and Vienna; another has been the formulation of two book projects, pieces of which will be presented at the group’s culminating meeting at Columbia in September 2015. That meeting will also feature a day of public talks, an expansion of the Istanbul exhibit to include U.S. artists, and a memory walk through Harlem.

A third project, **The Digital Black Atlantic**, has been creating a digital platform on which to house material dealing with every kind of cultural production that has emerged from the Black Atlantic World, including literary texts, performances, visual art, material objects, and much else. The goal is to cross national boundaries, including language boundaries, to create a deep archive for recovering things lost to history and to allow for a deeply textured understanding of the cultural productions of the Black Atlantic world. This is digital humanities work at its most exciting and has won NEH support.

These CSSD projects are just the tip of the iceberg. This coming fall, for example, a three-year CSSD project on **The Future of Disability Studies** will be drawing to its conclusion with a major national conference in October; and the highly successful project on **Gender, Religion, and Law in Muslim Societies** will be seeking to extend its work by taking up the topic of Reframing “Violence Against Women:” Beyond a Politics of Blame. In addition, new projects will be beginning on **Climate Change in the Pacific; The Afterlife and Legacy of the Bandung Movement**; and **The Gendered Consequences of Rural to Urban Migration in Ghana and Kenya**. CSSD is growing into its aspirations. It has been a fabulous year.

All of this wonderful activity, however, requires financial resources. President Bollinger generously provided funds to launch the Center for the Study of Social Difference; the University is committed to systematic fundraising to endow the Center with donor support; Project Directors actively seek funding from outside foundations and granting agencies. Nonetheless, our expanding work requires further support. To find out how you can become a friend of CSSD, or to make a financial contribution to our work, please contact Associate Director Laura Ciolkowski at socialdifference@columbia.edu. We welcome your interest.

Jean E. Howard  
Director, CSSD  
George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities
THE DIGITAL BLACK ATLANTIC

DIRECTORS

Kaiama L. Glover
Associate Professor of French and Africana Studies, Barnard College

David Scott
Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Yasmine Espert
Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

FELLOWS

Yarimar Bonilla, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Caribbean Studies, Rutgers University

Nijah Cunningham, Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Carina del Valle Schorske, Graduate Student, Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University

Brent Edwards, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Alex Gil, Digital Scholarship Coordinator for History and Humanities, Columbia University Libraries

Kim Hall, Professor of English and Africana Studies, Barnard College

Maja Horn, Associate Professor of Spanish & Latin American Cultures, Barnard College

Kelly Josephs, Associate Professor of English, City University of New York

Natasha Lightfoot, Assistant Professor of History, Columbia University

Hebe Mattos, Professor of History, Universidad Federal Fluminense

Jennifer Morgan, Professor of History, New York University

Celia Naylor, Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies, Barnard College

Didier Sylvain, Graduate Student, Music, Columbia University

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Digital Black Atlantic Project (DBAP) is a multi-institutional and interdisciplinary working group that has come together to invent a scholarly resource and digital platform for multimedia explorations and documentations of literary texts, visual documents, sites, moments, rituals and ceremonies, monuments and memorials, performances, and material objects emerging out of and concerning the Black Atlantic world. From the epic prose-poems of Aimé Césaire and Derek Walcott, to the city of New Orleans as Atlantic capital, to the explosive moment of historical convergence that was the year 1968, the literary, performative, historical, geographical and other dimensions of the Black Atlantic demand to be approached from as many informed disciplinary perspectives as possible. DBAP seeks to place these perspectives in sustained dialogue with one another, building “deep texts”—experiences of carefully curated content that will allow for enriched engagements with regional cultural productions. This project has won NEH support in recognition of its exciting contribution to digital humanities work.
ACTIVITIES

DBAP provides a unique opportunity for sustained interdisciplinary discussion of the scholarly possibilities of “the digital” through the spaces of the “Atlantic hemisphere.” The working group engages with the digital humanities in many ways, including: 1) as an opportunity for discussion of the transatlantic and interdisciplinary possibilities offered by digital technologies; 2) as a space for the development of specific digital humanities projects—archival, interactive, collaborative; 3) as a space for thinking the digital metaphorically; 4) as a point of departure for the enactment of connections that have been idealized by scholars across nation-language borders; 5) as an opportunity for working group participants to consult with digital humanists and/or technologists via guest lectures and commonly read texts; and 6) as a space within which to consider how the digital might facilitate access to and opportunities for knowledge production in nations of the Global South or, in fact, reify and replicate existing power differentials.

In 2015-16, DBAP will launch sx: archipelagos, a fully digital, open-access, peer-reviewed journal associated with Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism. DBAP will also organize a second iteration of the successful public program The Caribbean Digital. Finally, the working group is moving forward in its development of alternative histories and pedagogical resources for Brazil as a template for such projects in the circum-Caribbean/wider Americas.

PUBLIC EVENTS

- Kelly Baker Josephs, Associate Professor of English, CUNY, presented “sx salon: Behind the Site,” a discussion of sx salon, an online Small Axe project that has featured interviews, literature reviews, poetry and prose since 2010.

- Kim Hall, Professor of English and Africana Studies, Barnard College, presented on the Digital Shange Project, an archive that will give Ntozake Shange’s work a cohesive digital presence while restoring her relationship with Barnard.

- The Caribbean Digital/Kamau Brathwaite Research-athon gathered scholars, scholar-activists, and creative artists at Barnard College for a series of panel presentations concerning digital humanities work in and emerging from the Caribbean.

- The Caribbean Queer Visualities Symposium brought artists, writers, and scholars to Columbia to share creative and critical work addressing contemporary Caribbean visual art practice.
NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- DBAP was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Start-Up Grant.

- DBAP Co-Director Kaiama Glover was awarded a Schomburg Fellow-in-Residence spot for the development of *In the Same Boats: Toward an Afro-Atlantic Intellectual History*, an interactive digital bio-bibliographical map/timeline that traces and visually represents the circulation of seminal Afro-Atlantic intellectuals, cultural actors, and their ideas across the 20th century.

- DBAP working group member Kim Hall was awarded a Tow Innovative Pedagogy Award as well as the first inaugural faculty partner of the year award for her launch of the Digital Shange Project and development of the digital-based course “The Worlds of Shange.”

- DBAP Co-Director David Scott and working group member Hebe Mattos were awarded a development grant from Columbia University’s Global Centers initiative for the further development of their transnational project, *Slavery and Repair*, an online pedagogical model and scholarly resource for the representation of alternative histories of transatlantic slavery.
FUTURE OF DISABILITY STUDIES

DIRECTOR
Rachel Adams
Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT
Jason Fitzgerald
Theatre and English, Columbia University

FELLOWS
Margaret Araneo-Reddy, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Theater, Brooklyn College
Christopher Baswell, Professor of English, Barnard College
James Berger, Senior Lecturer, American Studies and English, Yale University
Nikki Berger, Graduate Student, Oral History, Columbia University
Liz Bowen, Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Raymond Budelman, Graduate Student, Human Rights Studies, Columbia University
William Burton, Graduate Student, French and Romance Philology, Columbia University
Sara Chinn, Associate Professor of English, Hunter College
G. Thomas Couser, Professor Emeritus of English, Hofstra University
Elizabeth Donaldson, Associate Professor of English, New York Institute of Technology
Faye Ginsburg, Professor of Anthropology, New York University
Amy Hughes, Associate Professor of Theater, City University of New York

Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Associate Professor of Musicology, Brooklyn College
Stephanie Kerschbaum, Associate Professor of English, University of Delaware
Ynestra King, Independent Scholar
Laura Mauldin, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Connecticut
Ariel Merkel, Graduate Student, Department of Sociology, New School
Ittai Orr, Graduate Student, American Studies, Yale University
Julia Rodas, Assistant Professor of English, City University of New York
Rebecca Sanchez, Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University
Irina (Lotti) Silber, Associate Professor of Anthropology, City University of New York
Joseph Straus, Distinguished Professor of Music, City University of New York
Emmanuel von Schack, Graduate Student, Art History, Hunter College
Dennis Tyler, Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University
Sarah Wilcox, Professor of Sociology, Sarah Lawrence College
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The study of disability engages some of the most pressing debates of our time, questions about the beginning and end of life, prenatal testing, abortion, euthanasia, eugenics, accommodation in schools, public transportation and the workplace, technologies for the medical correction and “cure” of the non-normative body, disease, wartime injuries, post-traumatic stress, and healthcare. The Future of Disability Studies interrogates charged ethical and political questions about the meaning of aesthetics and cultural representation, bodily identity, and dynamics of social inclusion and/or exclusion. This interdisciplinary working group explores some of the key debates within Disability Studies and identifies new directions for the future of the field.

PUBLIC EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

Author Ron Suskind spoke on “Narratives of Earned Hope: Or the Ways Adversity Can Build Compensatory Strengths.”

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Publication of Keywords for Disability Studies (NYU, 2015), co-edited by Project Director Rachel Adams.
- “Disability, Culture, and Society” has been accepted as a University Seminar in 2015-16, to be co-chaired by Rachel Adams and Julia Rodas.
- Completed planning for “Keywords/Key Questions for Disability Studies,” a major conference in October 2015, marking the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the publication of the Keywords text, and the culmination of the working group’s collaboration.
The Science and Social Difference working group explores fundamental questions about the role of science in the construction of social differences. The working group aims to bring a radically interdisciplinary approach to the study of science—including the interrogation of scientific structures of argument and forms of evidence—and its negotiations around human identities and social hierarchies. Some of the key questions explored by the working group include: What is at stake in the impulse to use “Science” to resolve questions of identity? What social processes get obscured when decisions about identity are framed as “scientific”?
ACTIVITIES

Science and Social Difference focuses on the ways in which scientific arguments are wielded in the sex testing of elite female athletes, exploring the sex testing policy as a rich case study for the role of “Science” in contemporary debates about “true identity.” Working group research and discussion have contributed to the challenge this spring at the International Court of Arbitration for Sport, which prompted the International Olympic Committee to revisit its sex testing policy. The working group now intends to take up the question of how surveillance technologies, such as those that govern border crossings, encode biases in their operations in ways that belie the claim of scientific neutrality.

PUBLIC EVENTS

- Shoshana Magnet, Associate Professor at the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa, presented the program “Feminist Science Studies and Entomology: Analyzing ‘Mixed Societies’ of Robots and Insects.” Professor Magnet discussed biomimetic sciences and the development of robotic insects to model “swarming” behavior for military and anti-terrorism applications.

- Shoshana Magnet presented a second program titled “Technologies of the Border: Race, Gender and Biometric Identification,” which addressed the ways in which social stereotypes are built into algorithms of biometric technologies used for border control.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- In its July 2015 landmark ruling in favor of Indian sprinter Dutee Chand, the International Court of Arbitration for Sport relied on evidence amassed by the work of the Science and Social Difference working group. The court ruling stipulated that athletes such as Chand, who test positive for naturally high levels of testosterone, may not be excluded from competing in female athletic competitions.

- Project Director Rebecca Jordan-Young and Katrina Karkazis published “Debating a Testosterone ‘Sex Gap’” (Science, May 22, 2014). Their article argues that institutional sport’s exclusion of women with high testosterone is not rooted in science, but in social and ethical framings of human diversity.
ENGENDERING THE ARCHIVE

DIRECTORS

Tina Campt, Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Barnard College
Laura Wexler, Professor of American Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Yale University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Tao Goffe, American Studies, Yale University

FELLOWS

Hazel Carby, Professor of African American Studies and American Studies, Yale University
Yvette Christianse, Professor of English and Africana Studies, Barnard College
Kaiama L. Glover, Associate Professor of French and Africana Studies, Barnard College
Inderpal Grewal, Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Yale University
Saidiya Hartman, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Marianne Hirsch, Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University
Jean Howard, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Kellie Jones, Associate Professor of Art History, Columbia University
Anne McClintock, Professor of English and Gender Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fawzia Mustafa, Associate Professor of English, Fordham University
Celia Naylor, Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies, Barnard College
Lorie Novak, Professor of the Arts, New York University
Leo Spitzer, Professor of History Emeritus, Dartmouth College
Jennifer Tucker, Associate Professor of History, Wesleyan University
Mabel Wilson, Associate Professor of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

One of the four inaugural projects of the Center, Engendering the Archive has now completed its seventh year as a vibrant working group of scholars, artists, activists and cultural practitioners whose research focuses on gender, sexuality, race, and archival practices. The working group focuses on key questions, including: What is an archive? Who or what authorizes its construction? How do archives contribute to the production of social and cultural difference? How does the development of new media radically change the way knowledge is classified, stored, and retrieved? Engendering the Archive investigates these fundamental questions from a global perspective, insisting on the multiple ways in which gender, along with race, sexuality, and class, are inescapable aspects of differential power relations that determine what societies remember and what they forget.
Women Creating Change is the Center’s global initiative, engaging distinguished feminist scholars across Columbia’s many schools to focus on how contemporary global problems affect women and the role women play in addressing those problems.

Each working group uses the resources of Columbia’s Global Centers to develop international networks of scholars and activists working on pressing problems of gendered inequity.
GENDER AND THE GLOBAL SLUM

DIRECTORS

Anupama Rao
Associate Professor of History, Barnard College

Saidiya Hartman
Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Neferti Tadiar
Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Barnard College

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

How are gender relations impacted by material impoverishment and social segregation? Why do women suffer disproportionately from the social hazards of urban informality? This working group addresses the global slum as the product of a complex interplay between the political economy of urban space, and the spatialization of social difference, especially gender/sexuality. Gender and the Global Slum queries new aspirations around gender and consumption, the gender of poverty, new formations of informal labor and sex work, and emergent sites of violent conflict as these are remaking gendered relations of power. The goal for work in 2015-16 is to outline a theory of slum and subaltern urbanism by engaging with historical, ethnographic, and literary studies. The group aims to make a distinctive set of interventions in thinking about concepts like precarity, subalternity, remaindered life, and fugitivity.

PUBLIC EVENTS

- “Public Cities, Private Cities” workshop on the politics of city planning met in New York, convening interdisciplinary scholars from Europe, Asia, and the U.S. to generate humanities-focused research in Asian studies and urban studies.

- “Urban Democracy: Informality, Precarity and Modes of Survival” brought a global group of scholars, activists, writers, architects, urban planners, journalists and graduate students to Mumbai to critically re-examine theories and policies relating to the subaltern city.

- Berlin seminar on “Home-Making as Work: Photographic and Ethnographic Portraits of Houses and Homes in Global and Historical Perspective,” co-organized with James Williams, Lecturer in Anthropology, Zayed University. Seminar essays addressing the home in contexts of violence, dividedness, and precarity will be published in Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (Duke University Press).
WOMEN MOBILIZING MEMORY

DIRECTORS

Marianne Hirsch
Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University

Jean Howard
Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Diana Taylor
University Professor, New York University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Andrea Crow
English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

FELLOWS

Bürge Abiral, Graduate Student, Cultural Studies, Sabanci University
Hülya Adak, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, Sabanci University
Meltem Ahiska, Professor of Sociology, Boğaziçi University
Ayşe Gul Altinay, Professor of Anthropology, Sabanci University
Rustem Ertug Altinay, Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University
Carol Becker, Professor of the Arts, Columbia University
Dilara Çalışkan, Graduate Student, Cultural Studies, Sabanci University
Henry Castillo, Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University
Maria José Contreras, Assistant Professor of Theatre, Universidad Católica
Constanza Ambiado Cortes, Historian, Universidad de Chile
Soledad Falabella, Director, ESE:O
Zeynep Gambetti, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations, Boğaziçi University
Nicole Gervasio, Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Marcial Godoy, Associate Director, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York University
Ximena Goecke, Graduate Student, History and English, Universidad de Chile
Milena Grass, Professor of Theatre, Universidad Católica
Alyssa Greene, Graduate Student, Germanic Languages and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Mariana Hausdorf, Graduate Student, Latin American Studies, Universidad de Chile
Andreas Huyssen, Professor of German and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Manuela Infante, Theater Director
Sibel Irzik, Professor of Comparative Literature, Sabanci University
Banu Karaca, Visiting Scholar of Arts and Sciences, Sabanci University
Nancy Kricorian, Writer
Bernardita Llanos, Professor of Spanish Language and Literature, Loyola University
FELLOWS

Kena Lorenzini, Photographer
Amanda Lotspike, Researcher, ESE:O
Susan Meiselas, Photographer
Silvina der Meguerditchian, Artist
Lorie Novak, Professor of Photography, New York University
Leticia Robles, Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University
Iván Smirnow, Graduate Student, Gender and Culture Studies, Universidad de Chile
Alisa Solomon, Associate Professor of Journalism, Columbia University
Leo Spitzer, Professor of History Emeritus, Dartmouth College
Marita Sturken, Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication, New York University
Aylin Tekiner, Artist
Kate Trebuss, Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University
Zeynep Türkyılmaz, Assistant Professor of History, Dartmouth College

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What are the strategies by which the memory of political violence can be mobilized for progressive social change? Women Mobilizing Memory explores the politics of memory in the aftermath of the atrocities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in comparative global perspective and with unique attention to the effects of social difference.

Emerging from feminist ways of thinking and working, Women Mobilizing Memory represents a series of commitments: to combine theory and analysis with practice and action; to think about the material effects of memory work for the future; to envision inclusive memory institutions; to disrupt patriarchal, racist, nationalist, ethno-centric, and militaristic forms of memory; and to memorialize resistance and hope instead of violence and oppression. Based in the Humanities and the Arts, the group looks closely at the political efficacy of various media of memory, ranging from visual art, literature, journalism and performance to museums, memorials, and street actions. What role do these various media play in combatting the erasure of past violence from current memory and in creating new visions and new histories for future generations? The collaborations among the participants in the working group, their face-to-face as well as virtual meetings and their constructive conversations and disagreements, aim to create a space of solidarity that can lay the groundwork for a more hopeful future.
ACTIVITIES

What is our responsibility toward those who suffered past or distant atrocities? How can we be responsive without being appropriative, how can we be good listeners, promoting dialogue and change? And through what media can we best turn memory toward a different future? The working group had an opportunity to explore these questions this year at its third international meeting, in Istanbul, Turkey. With the support of the Blinken European Institute and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the group sponsored an art exhibition at Istanbul’s DEPO Gallery on “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing” in which ten artists or artist collectives contributed work. The group also participated in a day of public roundtable discussions on “Coming to Terms With Gendered Memories of Violence” and met with local feminist memory activists fighting on behalf of Kurdish minorities and against the denial of the Armenian genocide. The meeting’s overall topic was “Mobilizing Memory for Action” and members were able to exchange strategies for galvanizing change in societies weighed down by past atrocities and present injustice.

In 2015-16, the working group will host its final international meeting, at Columbia University in NYC: “Women Mobilizing Memory: Collaboration and Co-Resistance.” In conjunction with this meeting, the group will organize an art exhibit at Columbia’s Neiman Gallery: “Collaborative Archives: Connective Histories.” A central goal of this meeting is to fold United States histories and American work on feminism and on memory studies more closely into the group’s thinking about Women Mobilizing Memory.
PUBLIC EVENTS

- Five-day workshop and series of public panels and theatre performances in Istanbul, Turkey on “Mobilizing Memory for Action.” The conference brought together an international group of scholars, artists, and activists to analyze the activist work memory practices can enable.

- Graduate students from Women Mobilizing Memory conducted a roundtable discussion at Columbia University with colleagues from Istanbul. The roundtable addressed the problems of translation that arise in global academic conversations.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing” exhibition at DEPO Istanbul. The exhibition showcased a collection of global feminist art that viewed memory as an integral part of a larger politics of resistance. The exhibit later moved to the Kunsthalle Exnergasse in Vienna and was written up in the Austrian newspaper Die Presse and feminist art journal n.paradoxa.
SOCIAL JUSTICE AFTER THE WELFARE STATE

DIRECTORS

Alice Kessler-Harris
Professor of American History, Columbia University

Premilla Nadasen
Visiting Associate Professor of History, Barnard College

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Lindsey Dayton
History, Columbia University

FELLOWS

Mimi Abramovitz, Professor of Social Work, Hunter College
Rebecca Adami, Fulbright Fellow in Human Rights, Columbia University
George Aumoithe, Graduate Student, History, Columbia University
Volker Berghahn, Professor of History, Columbia University
Sheri Berman, Professor of Political Science, Barnard College
Anna Danziger-Halperin, Graduate Student, History, Columbia University
Deborah Dinner, Associate Professor of Law, Washington University School of Law
Yasmine Ergas, Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
Melissa Fisher, Visiting Assistant Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis, New York University
Irwin Garfinkel, Professor of Contemporary Urban Problems, Columbia University
Linda Gordon, Professor of History, New York University
Allen Hunter, Professor of History, New York University

Nick Juravich, Graduate Student, History, Columbia University
Suzanne Kahn, Graduate Student, History, Columbia University
Clara Mattei, Graduate Student, Economics, Columbia University
Ruth Milkman, Professor of Sociology, City University of New York Graduate Center
Jennifer Mittelstadt, Associate Professor of History, Rutgers University
Frances Fox Piven, Professor of Political Science, City University of New York Graduate Center
Sandy Schram, Professor of Political Science, Hunter College
Wilson Sherwin, Graduate Student, Sociology, City University of New York Graduate Center
Bert Silverman, Professor Emeritus of Economics, Hofstra University
Kirsten Swinth, Associate Professor of History, Fordham University
Carl Wennerlind, Professor of History, Barnard College
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Social Justice After the Welfare State explores the implications of the declining welfare state for American politics, gender and race relations, and the future of American democracy. This interdisciplinary working group studies social policies with respect to their impact on the capacities of citizens to sustain democratic governance and participation, and explores a range of issues, including: financial support for lone mothers; labor migration; child and adult poverty; trade union organization; incarceration; social movements for minimum wages; voting incentives and disincentives.

ACTIVITIES

Social Justice After the Welfare State was conceived as a three-year project. Year one (2013-14) identified and categorized some of the issues raised by contemporary shifts in conceptions of social rights. Year two (2014-15) shifted the focus of the group from “social rights” to “social justice.” Year three, our final year, will focus on “solutions” to the issues and problems we have identified and will involve increased comparative work, including research in Europe and China. The group will also attend to the problem of how to effect social change, raising questions about whether or how, in the context of neoliberalism and the subsequent denigration of “human rights,” we may begin to envision a fairer or more just society. A symposium inviting scholars to address these questions is planned for late-March 2016.

PUBLIC EVENTS

- Christian Lammert, Professor of North American Politics at the Free University of Berlin conducted an open workshop on “Welfare and Citizenship: The Pillars of Social Cohesion.”

- Elizabeth Hinton, Assistant Professor of History, African and African American Studies at Harvard University, held an open workshop on the topic of mass incarceration.

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Essays from the project’s 2014 Paris conference, “Shifting Notions of Social Citizenship: The ‘Two Wests’” (Reid Hall), have been collected in a volume forthcoming from Columbia University Press.
GENDER, RELIGION, AND LAW IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

DIRECTORS

Lila Abu-Lughod
Professor of Anthropology and Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University

Katherine Ewing
Professor of Religion, Columbia University

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Susanna Ferguson
History, Columbia University

FELLOWS

Sarah Ababneh, Assistant Professor, University of Jordan
Fariba Adelkhah, Senior Research Fellow, Sciences Po
Dina Afrianty, Lecturer in Social and Political Sciences, State Islamic University Jakarta
Attiya Ahmad, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, George Washington University
Reem Al-Botmeh, Researcher, Birzeit University, West Bank
Zahra Ali, Graduate Student, School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Paris
Asef Bayat, Professor of Global and Transnational Studies, University of Illinois
Sarah Bracke, Associate Professor of Sociology, Ghent University
Meriem El Haitami, Graduate Student, Cultural Studies, Mohammad V University, Rabat
Hoda Elsadda, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Cairo University
Nadia Fadil, Assistant Professor of Social Sciences, KU Leuven, Brussels
Amal Ghandour, Writer
Hala Gosheh, Development Consultant

Nilüfer Göle, Professor of Sociology, School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Paris
Zareena Grewal, Associate Professor of American Studies and Religious Studies, Yale University
Nacira Guénif-Souilamas, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology in Education Sciences, University Paris 8
Havva Guney-Reubenacker, Postdoctoral Fellow, Harvard Law School
Rema Hammami, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Birzeit University, West Bank
Nabila Hamza, President, Foundation for the Future, Amman
Mona Hassan, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and History, Duke University
Frances Hasso, Associate Professor of Women’s Studies and Sociology, Duke University
Leila Hilal, Senior Fellow, New America Foundation
Islah Jad, Associate Professor of International Affairs, Qatar University
Miriam Künkler, Assistant Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton
FELLOWS

Nadia Loan, Instructor of Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Oregon
Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Professorial Research Associate, SOAS, University of London
Annelies Moors, Professor of Anthropology and Sociology, University of Amsterdam
Nicola Pratt, Reader, International Politics of the Middle East, University of Warwick
Anupama Rao, Associate Professor of History, Barnard College
Zakia Salime, Associate Professor of Sociology, Rutgers University
Yara Sallam, Transitional Justice Officer, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, Cairo
Asma Sayeed, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies, University of California, Los Angeles
Sa’diyya Shaikh, Senior Lecturer of Islamic Studies and Feminist Theory, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Professor of Law, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
Marwa Sharafeddin, Graduate Student, Philosophy of Law, Oxford University
Amina Tawasli, Postdoctoral Fellow, Northwestern University
Merieme Yafout, Researcher, Institute of Political, Historical and International Studies, University of Lausanne
Gökçe Yurdakul, Professor of Social Sciences, Humboldt University, Berlin
Rafia Zaman, Graduate Student, Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This working group asks: What can we learn from the diverse Muslim women who are working to transform society, refashion their roles as women, redefine their authority, reform law, and participate more fully in public debate? Over the past two decades, women’s activism has taken creative new forms across the Muslim world. These efforts have been shaped by the international contexts within which women work, contexts in which Muslim women’s rights have become the object of global concern and military and humanitarian intervention. Women in Muslim societies are debating the merits of working within a framework of Islamic piety and Islamist institutions, rather than secular feminism. How do these debates enable women to envision social transformations?

ACTIVITIES

Gender, Religion, and Law in Muslim Societies focused attention in 2014-15 on publishing a special section of Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, now completed and forthcoming in December 2015. The section entitled The Politics of Feminist Politics features work from the conference on “Debating the ‘Woman Question’ in the New Middle East: Women’s Rights, Citizenship, and Social Justice,” held by the working group on May 3rd and 4th, 2014 at Columbia’s Global Center in Amman, Jordan. The special section brings together the work of feminist scholars of the Middle East and South Asia, suggesting that careful analysis of the languages of justice, forms of social and political life, and embodied realities that belong to particular places and times can unseat the “common sense” of liberal feminist discourse and
trouble its universalist claims. These essays track the everyday languages and institutions of governance, policing, and morality by working carefully through diverse fields, including legal cases and reasoning, histories of education, dynamics of marriage, arts of linguistic transformation, politics of religious argument, legitimations of state power, and political economies of labor and housing. They draw attention not only to the social exclusions and selective silencing that often attend feminist projects, but also to their points of openness and to possibilities for a more inclusive politics.

FUTURE PLANS

This work has led the group to focus future research and thinking on the next phase of the project: “Reframing ‘Violence Against Women’: Beyond a Politics of Blame.” The project begins with the observation that violence against women has finally captured national and international attention, becoming the object of intervention by institutions operating on local, national, and global levels. But which acts get named “violence against women” and who gets to decide? When “violence against women” (VAW) is invoked in the halls of the United Nations, increasingly replaced by the more expansive term of “gender-based violence” (GBV), these words are assumed to have stable meanings. Yet these concepts circulate far beyond the halls of the UN, inspiring efforts and debates in different locations around the world. What in these specific sites does VAW or GBV actually signify? Who speaks in their name? What kinds of debates, politics and policies do they inspire?

We aim to open up a critical global conversation among scholars and practitioners, making use of the Global Centers and their regional constituencies, about which phenomena or events fall under the rubric of “violence against women” or “gender-based violence” in different regions. We can ask comparative questions about the forms of inquiry, techniques of measurement, and technologies of intervention that men and women are using to frame problems of violence. The intention is to map the patterns of what falls under these rubrics, but also to address the equally urgent question of what falls out. Who do different definitions empower and what alliances do they activate? Who and what might be excluded from scrutiny, but also care?

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Public roundtable on the topic of women in political office in the United States and elsewhere, the problem of the political pipeline, and the limited political aspirations of disadvantaged women of color. The event, co-sponsored by the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA), featured poet and Nation columnist Katha Pollitt ’75SOA, Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer ’97GS, and NPR reporter Mara Liasson. Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies and Dean of Social Sciences Alondra Nelson moderated the discussion.
Women Mobilizing Memory: Keywords
Columbia University, March 30, 2015

Graduate students from the Women Mobilizing Memory working group and the Columbia University Seminar on Cultural Memory hosted a roundtable discussion exploring the problems of translation that can arise in global academic conversations.

Keywords Interdisciplinary Roundtable Conversation: TRANS
Columbia University, April 9, 2015

CSSD and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Council co-sponsored Keywords: TRANS, featuring Jack Halberstam, Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, Gender Studies and Comparative Literature, University of Southern California; Jack Pula, Instructor of Psychiatry, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University; and Yasmine Ergas, Director of Gender & Public Policy Specialization, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. Jean Howard, Chair, Department of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, moderated. The Keywords series draws participants together from a wide range of disciplinary homes in order to explore the various ways we think about fundamental critical/theoretical ideas and to generate new vocabularies and new methodologies.
Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing
DEPO Istanbul, Turkey, September 5-October 3, 2014

The “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing” exhibition at DEPO Istanbul presented a collection of global feminist art that utilized memory as an essential element of the politics of resistance. The show was curated by Ayşe Gül Altınay and İşin Önl and artists included Gülçin Aksoy, Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Silvina Der-Meguerditchian, Hakikat Adalet Hafıza Merkezi (Truth Justice Memory Center), Gülsün Karamustafa, Susan Meiselas, Nar Photos (Serra Akcan, Fatma Çelik, Gülşin Ketenci, Aylin Kızıl, Serpil Polat), Lorie Novak, Emine Gözde Sevim, and Aylin Teker. 

Co-hosted by Columbia Global Centers | Turkey, DEPO Istanbul and Sabancı University Gender and Women’s Studies Forum, the exhibition and parallel activities were also supported by the Blinken European Institute, Sabancı University, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, the Truth Justice Memory Center and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Turkey Office.

Coming to Terms with Gendered Memories of Genocide, War, and Political Repression
DEPO Istanbul, Turkey, September 17, 2014

Part of a five-day workshop on “Mobilizing Memory for Action,” this series of roundtables brought together an international group of scholars, artists, and activists to analyze the advocacy work memory practices can enable. The roundtables and workshop (as well as accompanying documentary screenings and theatre performances) were organized by Women Mobilizing Memory and co-hosted by Columbia Global Centers | Turkey, Sabancı University Gender and Women’s Studies Forum and DEPO Istanbul.

Additional support was provided by the Blinken European Institute, Sabancı University, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, the Truth Justice Memory Center, and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Turkey Office.
Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing Exhibition Catalogue

The catalogue for “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing” at DEPO Istanbul showcases the exhibit's collection of feminist art that imagines memory as part of a larger politics of resistance. Works in the exhibit mobilize memories of past and present violence to create the conditions and the motivations for social change. The exhibit brought together women artists, many of whom are themselves direct witnesses to oppression and terror, revealing moments of resilience, resistance, and creative survival. The works presented provide alternative histories and different political imaginaries than do official archives, memorials, museums, and state commemorations.

Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women

Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women (University of North Carolina Press), co-edited by Mia Bay, Martha Jones, Farah J. Griffin, and Barbara Savage, arose from the CSSD working group of the same name. The volume presents the work of black women writers, educators, activists, religious leaders, and social reformers in the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean. Exploring the work of thinkers marginalized by both their race and their gender, the 15 essays seek to uncover the work of unconventional intellectuals, both formally educated and self-taught thinkers.
Narratives of Earned Hope: Or the Ways Adversity Can Build Compensatory Strengths
Columbia University, March 25, 2015

Ron Suskind discussed his memoir *Life, Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes, and Autism* (Kingswell, 2014) in a program sponsored by the Future of Disabilities Studies working group. Suskind shared his chronicle of pursuing a demanding career in investigative journalism while raising an autistic son. He argued that adversity is a necessary precondition of insightful journalism.

Co-sponsored by the Heyman Center for the Humanities, Graduate School of Journalism, Sevellon-Brown Fund, American Studies, and Department of English and Comparative Literature.

Welfare and Citizenship: The Pillars of Social Cohesion
Columbia University, November 5, 2015

Christian Lammert, Professor for North American Politics at the John F. Kennedy Institute of the Free University of Berlin, spoke about the relationship between welfare and democracy. Lammert argued that this question is central to contemporary transatlantic debates surrounding capitalism, austerity, and inequality.
Caribbean Digital Conference
Barnard College, December 4-5, 2014

For two days, artists, graduate students, activists and administrators explored the dimensions of digital expression and its implications for the Caribbean and its diaspora. Predominantly researchers and educators of color populated seven panels that showcased radical approaches to the archive. The accompanying Kamau Brathwaite research-athon demonstrated an ongoing collaborative amalgamation of open-access, online bibliography work with over 500 contributions generated in six hours. Twitter and extensive social media activity gave enormous reach to the events.

Along with CSSD, other supporters included Barnard College’s Africana Studies Department and Barnard’s Committee for Online and On-Campus Learning (COOL).

Caribbean Queer Visualities Symposium
Columbia University, April 2-3, 2015

This symposium brought artists, writers, and scholars to Columbia to present creative and critical work considering the emergence of heterodox identities in relation to contemporary Caribbean visual art practice.

Caribbean Queer Visualities was co-sponsored by the Digital Black Atlantic Project.
Keywords for Disability Studies

*Keywords for Disability Studies* (New York University Press) was co-edited by Future of Disability Studies project director Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin. The collection of 60 essays brings the debates that have often remained internal to disability studies into a wider field of critical discourse, providing opportunities for fresh theoretical considerations of the field’s core presuppositions through a variety of disciplinary perspectives.
ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS

- Rachel Adams, Director of the Future of Disability Studies working group and Professor of English at Columbia University, was appointed Director of CSSD for the 2015-2016 academic year.

- The Center for the Study of Social Difference Fund, an inaugural quasi-endowment, was established with the help of University Trustee Ann F. Kaplan to build ongoing support for CSSD and its projects.

- The Executive Committee clarified new project selection guidelines to include the following: proposals must address expected outcomes and must explain how the working group will build contacts and connections with scholars outside of the University. Proposals are encouraged to bridge work in the social sciences and humanities.

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2014-15 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

- WCC received $206,060 from alumni donations.

- Women Mobilizing Memory received generous support from the Global Center in Istanbul for workshop and exhibition expenses connected to the Istanbul conference in September 2014.

- The Digital Black Atlantic Project was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Start-Up Grant to be used for the development of the beta version of the peer-reviewed digital publishing platform sx:archipelagos.