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Gender studies: A global perspective of their evolution contribution, and challenges to comparative higher education

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Abstract. The incorporation of new fields of study in the university tends to be a contested process. This has been the case for women's studies despite its many conceptual, theoretical, and methodological contributions. Moreover, these programs have constantly suffered financial vulnerability and struggled for academic recognition and autonomy. Comparative data about women's studies programs exist but could be enhanced by explicit cross-national studies. At the crossroads today, women's studies can chose to adopt more feminist political concerns and engage in socially transformative research projects or succumb to forces of globalization that, in making the university increasingly entrepreneurial, preempt concerns for equity and social justice.

Introduction

At most 30 years old and in several instances barely five, women's studies represents a new field in the university. This field, which emerged as the "academic arm" for the feminist movement, was highly political in its origins, for it attempted to provide a theoretical and knowledge base to a movement that has been, and is still, fundamentally altering the foundations of social justice.

Over time, this "arm" has undergone significant change, often renaming itself from "women's studies" to "gender studies," seeking greater scholarly legitimacy, and (except in few circumstances in developing countries) emphasizing an inward view rather than expanding or strengthening its links with civil society.

The first course in women's studies in the world was taught at the Free University of Seattle in 1965 and was closely linked to the students' movement for a democratic society (SDS). San Diego State College in California became the first to have an officially approved women's studies program (1970), and many other American colleges and universities followed suit during the ensuing years. In Western Europe women's studies emerged in the 1980s and in the 1990s in Eastern Europe.[1] Latin America saw the initiation

of such programs in the mid-1980s. Similar programs emerged a few years later in African and Asian countries.

In this essay I reflect on some of the major achievements of and challenges to women's studies as a field in a relatively unsupportive university environment. To do so, I rely on secondary sources from various parts of the world; these present different degrees of geographical representation and programmatic coverage, thus, permitting only a partial and fragmented picture of the state of women's studies. In addition, throughout the essay I offer comments and suggestions about the relationship between gender studies and comparative higher education studies. Finally, I suggest two scenarios for the future trajectory of women's studies, providing examples of what that might mean for research in comparative higher education.

Institutionalization

At present over 600 undergraduate programs and several dozen graduate programs exist in U.S. colleges and universities. Across the world, the number of women's studies is in constant expansion and in some regions, such as Latin America, such programs are found in a high proportion of universities.

Spaces have indeed been gained in the academic world for programmatic efforts. Moreover, more women now function as faculty members and administrators and many more women are gaining access to university education. Beyond these encouraging statistics, the position of women's studies presents more fragility than would be expected after three decades of existence.

Any new field in the university logically seeks to become institutionalized, that is to say, to be accepted as a regular part of the university and to have stable funding, recognition, and autonomy. To what extent is this true of women's studies programs?

The universities, as organizations, have not been very responsive to women's studies as a new field. While it is difficult to break traditional subjects and their departments and university appointments continue to be organized around them (Evans 1997), it is also the case that for many university professors there is still exists a limited understanding about the discrimination of women in social and economic life and resistance to an acceptance of this fact, which ultimately has a destabilizing effect on private and public lives. Within the university, there is also reluctance to engage in interdisciplinary work, particularly work that relies on the value of subjective experiences. Discussing the situation in the Mexican university, Bartra (1998, p. 108) observes that women's studies tend to be considered "second-rate themes" with little scientific value and not sufficiently "serious." She explains

that the shift from women's studies to gender studies in that country was strongly motivated by the desire to appear more scholarly and thus more legitimate. A similar process has occurred in many other countries, where gender is seen as more analytical and certainly less political than either "women" or "feminist" (see Mama 1996, for a similar African account). In the U.K. the shift to "gender studies" was done so that it would sound less "dangerous" and would attract more students, and extend the subject matter to sexual orientation (Bird 1999).

In most instances, whether in industrialized countries or in developing nations, women's studies does not exist as a separate department. Rather, it usually depends upon the sponsorship of a related department, whose needs and priorities lie elsewhere.[2] Women's studies must struggle on a yearly basis for its continuation within a department. As has been observed in the case of the U.S, most courses in women's studies programs originate in other departments and are only cross-listed with women's studies (Patai and Koertge 1994). A common pattern for professors linked to women's studies is to have joint appointments with other departments, which naturally creates loyalty and funding problems. In Latin American countries, where the university is guided by fixed and old-standing policies, the statutes have not been changed to acknowledge women's studies. Therefore, its presence takes many variable forms in order to gain a small institutional space. Often, the modus operandi involves a group of like-minded faculty members joining to offer a program of studies by pooling the courses they voluntarily design on related issues; typically, these professors have little administrative support in the form of research funds, bibliographic resources, secretarial assistance, or even furniture.

The structural umbrella for these programs is a "center," a "working group," a "program," or a "specialization" affiliated to or sponsored by a specific department. Departments that have responded positively to women's studies are few and they tend to comprise the social sciences (particularly sociology and anthropology) and the humanities. Penetration into the physical sciences has been less successful; nor has the problem of acceptance led to any influential work in such instrumental fields such as business administration, medicine, and law. Perhaps the most telling sign of the weak institutionalization of women's studies in the university is that the core curricula for undergraduate students remains to be made gender-sensitive or non-sexist in many universities. And two fields that carry the strongest potential for the transformation (or conversely continued reproduction) in the social relations of gender – education and social communication – have not subjected their curricula to critical revisions. Moreover, in these fields, as elsewhere, research has tended to depoliticize gender, making it more of a variable in existing studies and frameworks than an alternative perspective on

education that is linked to concomital professional practices. The transformative potential of these fields has failed to occur because they have not yet produced a critical mass of gender-sensitive faculty and because many young faculty who may harbor sympathy toward feminist scholarship do not want to act openly for fear of being labeled feminist and thus rendered academically vulnerable in already vulnerable fields (particularly education) the eyes of more influential faculty.

In early years, women's studies programs attempted to engage in "feminist pedagogy," best defined as egalitarian teacher-student relationships, inclusion of personal experience, and attempts to use new forms of assessment. This efforts have continued but with important modifications. In the case of the U.K. alternative forms of assessment were abandoned, partly because these were found difficult and out of place with the rest of student assessments, and partly because students expected power differences between students and faculty and complained when they were absent (Bird 1999).

Contributing further vulnerability to the state of women's studies in universities has been the tendency among feminist professors to maintain disciplinary hierarchies, neglecting to make alliances with schools or colleges whose fields are seen as less prestigious than the pure social sciences or the humanities, as in the case of education, social work, and nursing. Perhaps they see their work on theory as potentially contaminated by association with the more "practical" fields? This is reflected in the relatively scarce number of events and activities by gender or women's studies programs seeking the engagement of the professional schools.

Interesting examples from Spain and the Netherlands pinpoint the weak institutionalization of such programs. These two countries are particularly relevant because they exercise considerable financial and conceptual influence in gender as it relates to both education and national development in Latin America. According to a white paper on the issue, "in none of the public universities in Spain in 1995 [was] it possible to obtain a degree in Women's Studies, Feminist Studies, or Gender Studies. It is not possible either to undertake these matters as specializations in any of the university curricula" and most programmatic activities are conducted as "seminars" or "study groups" (Ballarín et al. 1995, p. 8). A similar situation occurs in the Netherlands: Out of 14 Dutch universities listed in a national study, only two had a department of women's studies and one offered a master's degree (Brouns 1990).

The knowledge content

Women's studies, if responsive to its feminist origins outside the university, cannot avoid being political. It has to deal with power. As Scott observes,

"gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated" (1988, p. 451).

Reviewing the impact of feminism in the academy, Evans (1997) maintains that feminism destabilized the academy by introducing debate on new content, new ways of teaching (asking new questions about the teacher and the taught), and doing research (particularly by problematizing key aspects between the observer and the observed). In my view, the contributions of women's studies have been enormous; however, they have been marked by an increasing distance from the political.

Despite these hurdles, the field has made contributions to our knowledge in two ways: through methodological approaches to the research process and through the introduction of new questions to contemporary knowledge. By realizing that in the case of women's oppression it is crucial to understand the small but cumulative nature of ordinary occurrences, research methodologies have been enriched by focusing with greater detail on everyday life experiences. Since women's lives are much more affected than men's lives by the family and its constituent members, the role of the life cycle in explaining decisions and situations of women has also gained methodological importance. And since the particular life trajectories of women have not previously been sufficiently recognized, feminist approaches have been keen to capture the "lived experience" of women through methodologies that accept personal and thus subjective accounts that argue for the need to defend one's "standpoint," or the perspective and voice that women's lives brought to our production of knowledge.

With the recent influence of postmodernism, women's studies has made additional contributions by adopting forms of deconstruction – a methodological approach that has enabled the sharp analysis of text to discover hidden assumptions, ideological messages, and partial truths characterizing much of our received knowledge. Women's studies has also contributed to the replacement of dichotomous thinking about self and other, person and society, consciousness and activity, and replacing it with more dialectical modes of analysis. A logical extension of these kind of reflection has been the use of qualitative research methods that, relying on interviews and observations, have considerably challenged the use of questionnaires with closed-response items to capture deep, and often hidden, aspects of our individual and collective lives. Although it may be difficult to apportion a particular share of the changes to women's studies, the sizable contribution it has made to the acceptance of naturalistic, ethnographic, and interpretive approaches to social science research cannot be denied.

In terms of content, traditional concepts have been reframed and, in several instances, discarded. Among the long list of revised notions we have: family,

work, motherhood, marriage, science, the state, power, law, social class, ethnicity. Attached to the new concepts, there have been new theoretical lenses through which to view how gender functions in society. While there is no one dominant theory of the social world in contemporary feminism, there is a prevalent recognition within the field of women's studies of the nature of the ideological and material forces that shape our construction of reality, forces that result both in the powerful momentum that maintains the status quo and in the small but concrete spaces emerging to challenge and transform this "construction."

As can be deduced from recent compendia of women's studies curricular concerns (e.g., Wetzel et al. 1993; Patai and Koertge 1994; Hinds et al. 1992; Maynard and Purvis 1996), there is a wide set of issues that come under discussion in those programs. They range from the psychology of women, women's well-being, and politics to spirituality, the Earth's ecology, colonialism, migration, and racism. Interesting, however, is the relatively weak attention higher education generally, and comparative higher education in particular, gives to two institutions deeply implicated in the reproduction of gender attitudes, beliefs, and practices: the school system and the mass media.

While the contributions of women's studies to the challenging of established concepts have been considerable, it must be observed that the disciplines from which these concepts derive have not been drastically altered. One such example applies to political science. Feminist work in political theory (produced by such thinkers as Mary O'Brien, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Zillah Eisenstein and Nancy Hartsock) has been largely ignored within political science. As Vickers (1989) observes, political science continues to be less concerned with the "what" of politics than with the process through which it is developed. Moreover, it has failed to recognize non-institutional ways by which the political world reenacts itself. In particular, political science deals poorly with social movements, especially feminism, that are attempting to reconceptualize the meaning of the political in radical ways. Similar responses could be documented in the fields of economics, law, international relations, physics, medicine.

As women's studies has struggle to get a foothold in the university, the political content of its curriculum has diminished and attention has been shifted to discussion of ontological and epistemological issues. The influence of postmodernity in the social sciences and the humanities has produced long debates into issues such as whether "woman" is not itself a totalization and sex, no less than gender, a social construction (see, for instance, Judith Butler, one of the most influential feminist philosophers, 1990). These discussions, far from trivial, have challenged the need and even the possibility to act on

behalf of "women" since, it is argued, no one can claim to speak as if women constitute a single reality. Postmodernity is expressed in "discourses" and myriad "voices" rather than in falsifiable propositions (Kumar 1995, p. 183). Further, for some postmodern thinkers, concepts such as "patriarchy," "hegemony," "domination," "oppression," "marginalization" are inappropriate and narrow for they prevent us from perceiving the "highly differentiated, quite fragmentary and continually under negotiation" set of relations within the household and in the heterosexual gender difference (Gibson-Graham 1996, p. 68). Hence, on many U.S. campuses, "emancipatory" aspects of feminism have become weaker. Instead, as Barrett and Phillips observe (1992), since the 1980s there has been an extensive "turn to culture" in feminism, in which the social sciences have lost to the arts, humanities, and philosophy. Even feminist sociology examines less the social structure than questions of culture, sexuality, or political agency (Barrett and Philipps 1992; see also de Groot and Maynard 1993).

It has been easier to talk about concepts and the power of discourse to shape reality than to address conditions that bring us back to a brute and cruel reality. Topics such as abortion, unwanted pregnancies, wage discrimination, "glass ceilings" in professional promotion, sexual harassment, the feminization of poverty have been pushed to the margins, to be talked of by some but certainly not by the main feminist figures on campus. "Feminist" figures, in turn, have come down in numbers, with very few women scholars openly applying the term to themselves. Some scholars who specialize on gender, in fact, are on record as denying that they are feminists. Moreover, there are very few women's studies programs that maintain close contact with women's groups in either the surrounding communities or the country as a whole. In this context, one is reminded of the observation made by Foucault regarding humanism a number of years ago:

> Humanism is based on the desire to change the ideological system without altering institutions; and reformists wish to change the institution without touching the ideological system. Revolutionary action, on the contrary, is defined as the simultaneous agitation of consciousness and institutions; this implies that we attack the relationships of power through the notions and institutions that function as their instruments, armature, and armor (1977, p. 228).

Some exceptions do exist. Evidence from Taiwan reveals an important combination of women academics and women's organizations working together first to create and now to participate in the Gender Equity Committee, which has operated within the government structure since 1997. This committee proposes gender-sensitive policies and is endeavoring to

integrate gender dimensions into "competency indicators" for grades 1–9. Its task is not easy because it finds itself having to compete with other issues such as computer technology, environmental education, human rights (Chuang 1999). Another exception worthy of note is the growing partnership in Peru between the Catholic University of Lima (one of the country's most prestigious tertiary institutions) and an NGO with a strong feminist focus, *Escuela para el Desarrollo*. Both institutions are working to produce a gender-sensitive curriculum, synthesizing theoretical and practical concerns, for faculty in other Peruvian universities (Anderson and Mendoza 2000). The curriculum introduces gender theory but relates it directly to national development and the market. At the same time, it brings up personal-level issues such as self-esteem, sexual harassment, and abuse. The collaboration between a university and an NGO in the design of curricula for university faculty training in unprecedented; it signals the recognition of the valuable knowledge that can be obtained in higher education by borrowing the experiences of activists engaged in gender work.

Societal impact of women's studies

Some studies about the impact of women's studies on its graduates and on the rest of society are beginning to emerge. For the most part, the results are highly positive. One of the largest studies in the US was published in by Luebke in 1995. Based on a geographically representative sample of universities and colleges and an individual sample of about 400 students with a bachelor's degree whose undergraduate major was women's studies, and with a response rate of 25 percent. The study found that the students felt women's studies had challenged to think in a new way, that it had increased their awareness of the world around them, and had given them emotional and intellectual self-sufficiency. In the case of students in developing countries, the evidence is more anecdotal. Several of the graduates of these programs have been able to join state machineries working on women, thus multiplying the effect of the program.

While women's studies seems to have a strong and positive impact on the students enrolled in them, two major weaknesses surround these programs. First, they attract a very small proportion of university students. This occurs because many young women do not realize the need for such knowledge, their regular programs of studies may be too demanding to accommodate additional courses, and women's studies have not been able to become integrated into other regular academic programs. Second, more career-oriented students may not see great financial rewards following graduation. Nevertheless, many of the women in the new generations of the women's movement, particularly

in Latin America, are getting an understanding of gender from gender studies programs.[3]

Emerging contents

Today women's studies face criticism from various quarters. The shortcomings I sketched above calls for greater political content and focus, a greater commitment to occupy other intellectual spaces in the university, and many more ties with the women's movement in its multiple organizational expressions. Well-known scholar Carmen Diana Deere (1998) considers that gender scholarship today seems to prefer the superstructure and disregards the material basis (property rights and gender) underlying gender distinctions. She notes that since the 1960s few studies have dealt with such issues as inheritance. She finds that feminist lawyers (most of whom are outside the university) are doing much work with institutions and family codes but that social scientists are not.[4] Other observers, however, criticize women's studies precisely because of what they consider an excessive political emphasis that inappropriately conflates educational and political aims. Thus, Patai and Koertge, on the basis of open-ended questions circulated among a group of about 30 professors in women's studies, accuse women's studies of having become "sectarian" and "anti-intellectual sites of polarization and nonproductive political agitation" (1994, p. 210). At the same time, the authors criticize women's studies for considering too many "particularisms that would turn feminism into little more than a gathering of competing narrow 'identities,' each hotly promoted" (Patai and Koertge 1994, p. 3).

In the threshold of the 21st century, the university houses a new generation of professors, including those in women's studies programs. A sizable proportion of the old guard is being substituted by postmodernists. The postmodern insistence on the fragmented and fictional nature of experience has led many to shy away from a broad, unifying perspective. While feminist theory must deconstruct how power has been exerted a myriad ways, feminism as a political project is essentially modern inasmuch it seeks a better society than heretofore and one based on the use of reason rather than ill-formed beliefs about women's competencies and appropriate societal place. A political project must be built on a common denominator; it is dubious that without hope and trust in people's ability to improve themselves that we can have a successful struggle for social justice (see Stromquist 2000).

Globalization forces are affecting women's studies in a negative way. The emphasis on knowledge for financial purposes, those that show relevance to marketing and production of goods, derails from concerns linked to social justice. As Cowen contends, "If the meta-narrative which links univer-

sities to a search for truth and which places academics/intellectuals as the elite guardians of that narrative has broken down, then quality – defining and establishing it – is a matter for managerial enterprise" (1996, p. 256). The retrenchment of the state that has become associated with the global economy and its competitiveness means fewer funds for the universities' existing programs, and even fewer for less "useful" programs such as gender studies. These effects are being felt even in countries that are relatively well-off and which have an increasingly strong women's studies movement (see Nam 1999, for greater elaboration for the case of Korea).

In universities today, the student body has more women than ever before; the same is true for women as professors. On the other hand, there has been an increase in "casualization" (fixed-term and part-time work) among academic personnel, a pattern highly associated with a feminization of these hires. This casualization is affecting countries in both the developing and developed world. Producing data for the U.K., De Groot (1997) shows that between 1983 and 1993 there was an increase of 71 percent in the number of part-time and pro-rata contracts.

Challenges ahead

Through women's and gender studies, women have gained new and relatively autonomous spaces within the university. Ironically, these programs operate under the same patriarchal dependent conditions affecting women in the rest of society.

The world today is unquestionably different from that of the 1970s, when women's studies were beginning to emerge in the university. While the university remains a male-dominated institution, philosophical forces such as postmodernity and economic and political forces such as globalization have brought preoccupations that deviate from a path toward social justice.

Women's studies today is quite vulnerable to market demands. During the 1980s, it survived because there was demand by women students for such courses. Today, a more utilitarian perspective guides student choices of disciplines and careers. Also, as a result of the gains attained so far, a sort of complacency now pervades the women's movement and has embued young people with the mistaken belief that all important goals have already been realized.

What is the future trajectory of women's studies? In one scenario, it will recapture its original roots and constantly seek to combine a theoretical and a political project. It will become more diversified in terms of recognizing the situation of gender under central and peripheral capitalist conditions, under settings heavily permeated by religious ideology and contexts relatively free

from it. This scenario implies a transformation within the academic world as we know it and the emergence of vigorous networks of women in academic fields functioning in strong coordination with the women's movement outside the university in both industrialized and developing countries.

The university stands to make two kinds of contributions to more explicitly feminist political concerns: (a) understanding how knowledge is gendered within the university itself and attempting to alter the university from within, and (b) using the university as a site for knowledge production that can serve the process of gender transformation in the world outside it. Examples of crossnational research centering on the first type of contribution would be studies to document the gendered nature of the disciplines in higher education, assessing the degree of gender awareness among women students who enroll in scientific and technological fields, producing inter-generational comparisons of university student perceptions of femininity and masculinity, looking into classroom situations and mentoring practices to detect how women and men students are treated, identifying ways in which feminists within the university have been able to question patriarchal structures and procedures, understanding more systematically the evolution of women's studies, and understanding barriers to the use of feminist pedagogies in the classroom. Examples of the second type of contribution would be comparative investigations of the impact of economic globalization forces on the well-being of women and the modification of gender relations, studies to rescue the multiple ways of political struggle by women and thus to reconceptualize notions of the "political" and "policy," investigations to trace developments in the conceptualization of human rights and to recognize sites where such reconceptualizations are being produced, and studies that examine the role of the mass media in the new forms of gender reproduction. Ideally, this research would not be limited to research "projects" by individual members but would be part of more lasting research programs by university research teams, acting in close association with feminist groups outside the university.

Will this transformative scenario materialize? The struggle for autonomous women's studies in the university has been difficult because other, more traditional disciplines and colleagues have not given it a breathing space, committed as they are to their own perpetuation. Any increased recognition of women's studies has been fraught with obstacles generated by the academy's notorious distinction between "scientific knowledge" and work in the concrete world, particularly work of an advocacy nature. This does not mean that the academy eschews reality; in the case of the physical sciences we see constant use of labs and experimental situations with concrete phenomena. But the "real word" in the case of the social sciences is more

messy, more vulnerable to unpredictable outcomes since human subjects are notorious for reflection and for making efforts to challenge what is said about them. Moreover, rewards in the academic world come from research along traditional lines and, more often than not, from research using conventional methodologies and modes of analysis. While "service" is recognized (along with research and teaching) as an element of the individual academician's profile, rewards in terms of promotion and tenure do not go to faculty who spend a great deal of time mobilizing or organizing neighborhoods. The tradition of "extracurricular" or extension services exists primarily in several developing countries. For instance, there is a relatively dynamic set of activities proposed by extracurricular departments in Latin America; nonetheless, work on gender is seldom one of these actions.

The second scenario, the easier by far to extrapolate, is that "humanistic" discourse (in the Foucauldian sense) predominates and that women's studies become programs in which abstract thought and decentered discourses prevail.[5] It is also a scenario in which globalization forces intensify and the university becomes unambiguously entrepreneurial and driven by marketing and efficiency concerns (Morley 1999; Currie and Subotzky 2000). As critical thought loses adepts and sympathizers, women's studies becomes an "at-risk" field that receives little funding, enjoys limited acceptance, and consequently provides scant legitimacy and rewards. In this scenario, women's studies face disappearance in a few generations. In contrast, it might be argued that the women's movement, as represented by women-led NGOs, will continue to make inroads and women will gain greater political representation and access to decision making in government.

In any case, whether women's studies reshapes itself and grows stronger or it falls prey to globalization trends and discourse analysis, the challenge for feminist scholars in the field of education is great. While focusing on an institution that plays a major role in the reproduction of gendered beliefs, feminist educators have not yet been able to develop a rich theory of the intersection between gender and education, despite some important contributions to the study of schooling as a site for the development of masculinities (see Connell 1996). We need conceptual frameworks that bring together education in its three key modalities (formal, nonformal and informal) and provide us with the tools to capture recurrent and path-breaking phenomena. These frameworks will be built on the basis of a blurring of the boundaries between formal school and other settings and on the recognition of the "educational". Components of multiple activities in everyday life, ranging from the informal learning that occurs through constant exposure to television programs (mostly negative) and participation in mobilization for women's rights (mostly positive) to the nonformal learning that occurs as women join

short-term courses and workshops in which such topics as domestic violence, citizenship, and leadership are treated. Schools of education are not preparing their students for this crucial task. But since we learn from the world around us, let us be optimistic that this challenge will be somewhat successfully met. In the meantime, we should reflect more on an answer made by Foucault to the question of what constitutes knowledge:

> Knowledge is an "invention" behind which lies something completely different from itself: the play of instincts, impulses, desires, fear, and the will to be appropriate. Knowledge is produced on the stage where these elements struggle against each other; its production is not the effect of their harmony or joyful equilibrium, but of their hatred, of their questionable and provisional compromise, and of the fragile truth that they are always prepared to betray (1997, p. 229).

Notes

1. While socialist governments made attention to gender officially unnecessary, either in the socioeconomic spheres or in the academy, upon the demise of such regimes many universities in the former Soviet bloc created women's studies programs. An important example is the creation of the Moscow Center for Gender Studies in 1989.
2. Thus, for instance, while in the US there are many programs offering women's studies as undergraduate majors or minors, there are only six programs that offer a Ph.D. in this field.
3. This was reported by a group of young women participating in the VIII Feminist Encounter for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo in November 1999. Several of them mentioned that their transition from gender to feminism had been a personal quest rather than an outcome of their having participated in women's studies programs.
4. A clear instance of the work by women lawyers outside the academy is reflected in the efforts by CLADEM (Comité Latinoamericano de Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer) to bring about a new and expanded version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which would recognize a much more extensive set of rights to protect not only women but also ethnic, religious, and other minorities. CLADEM has already produced an alternative declaration and is now pressuring for the second consecutive year for consideration of this document by the General Assembly of the United Nations.
5. While attending a recent international conference in Bangkok, I heard a Pakistani activist refer to the university approach to gender as NATO: "no action, talk only" – a statement that captures incisively the perception of the university by many NGOs.

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