Gender, “Progress,” and Development: Equality, Sustainability, and Dimensions of Care

*International Women’s Day Annual Conference*
Feminist Legal Studies Queen’s and Queen’s University Faculty of Law
*March 8-9, 2024*

Robert Sutherland Hall (School of Policy Studies)
138 Union Street, Katarokwi (Kingston), Ontario

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**CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANEL PROPOSALS**

Feminist Legal Studies Queen’s is delighted to circulate the call for our annual International Women’s Day Conference with the Faculty of Law at Queen’s University. We invite submissions of individual papers and complete panel proposals for presentation at this event to be held on March 8-9, 2024.

**About the Conference Theme**

This year’s conference theme has been chosen with consideration to the United Nations’ 68th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that will be taking place from 11 to 22 March 2024. The priority theme for the Session is on “[a]ccelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”; the session’s review theme focuses on “[s]ocial protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has had disproportionately negative effects on women. While the post-pandemic recession has been characterized as a “scession,” the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Risks that Matter 2020 Survey highlights that it is, more accurately, a “mocession,” noting that “[a]cross countries, however, one group stands out as faring especially poor in labour force and unpaid work outcomes.”

Health, wellbeing, care, and gender equality have significantly been impacted in other ways, as violence of all types against women and girls has intensified with the pandemic. Characterized as “The Shadow Pandemic” by the United Nations Women 2021 Report, domestic violence rates have significantly increased due to lockdowns, with verbal abuse and denial of basic resources as the most common forms.

Approximately 1 in 4 women said that household conflicts became worse during the pandemic, increasing how unsafe they felt in their homes. Violence against women more generally, outside the domestic sphere, has also increased in light of the COVID-19 pandemic; for instance, 4 in 10 women feel more unsafe in public spaces, with 1 in 5 women feeling unsafe walking alone.
during the day and 1 in 2 women feeling unsafe walking alone at night. These figures remind us that, although the COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably affected many—if not, all—persons, the disproportionate impact on women and girls generates new, amplifies existing, and perpetuates old forms of inequalities and gendered harms.

At the same time, notwithstanding Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5’s commitment to reduce gender inequality and empower girls, and SDG 10’s commitment to reduce inequality within and between nations, global and gender inequality continue to proliferate and compromise the attainment of the 17 inter-related and indivisible SDGs.

The pursuit of development cannot be made in the absence of gender equality and without regard to the multiple dimensions of care, care work, and the care economy. Different dimensions of care have been explored in academic, political, and social policy work, across and within various disciplines, and merit considerably more treatment in public policy discussions, advocacy, and law reform efforts. Studies have shown that caregivers—particularly those of older adults—suffer significant levels of abuse and violence by care recipients, with findings that abuse is more likely to occur and/or be intensified among middle-aged female caregivers and more likely when the unpaid caregiver is caring for a relative. These problems, however, also exist in other forms of care, such as care to children and non-elderly care-dependent adults. In 2022, Statistics Canada found that more than half of women 15 years and older (accounting for for 52% of the population or almost 8.4 million women), provided some form of paid and/or unpaid care to children and care-dependent adults. How sustainable is care work, what are the values, assumptions and burdens of the care economy, and are there important and necessary limits that need to be addressed?

This call invites submissions on all forms of equality, sustainability, and dimensions of care. While there is much discussion around the concepts of “progress” and “development” within the sustainability literature, situating the importance of care, care work paid and unpaid, the political economy of care, and all its other dimensions as central to these merits dedicated attention to advance the 2030 Agenda pledge to “leave no one behind and start with the most behind first.”

We are delighted to announce that Professor Anita L. Allen will launch the FLSQ conference event with delivery of the keynote lecture “Unconditional Love: Legal Embodiments.” This keynote will look at ways in which the well-being of women is affected by legal institutions and rules that presume that familial and spousal love is or ought to be “unconditional”. The keynote lecture will be held on Friday, March 8, 2024 in Robert Sutherland Hall on the Queen’s University campus.

Professor Allen is the Henry R. Silverman Professor of Law and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania’s Carey Law School. She is an internationally renowned expert and leading scholar in the fields of privacy and data protection laws, ethics, bioethics, legal philosophy, and women’s rights. Dr. Allen served on President Barack Obama’s Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (2010-2017) and is an elected member of various societies including the National Academy of Medicine, the American Law Institute, and the American Philosophical Society. She is also a fellow of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She served as the University of Pennsylvania’s Vice Provost for Faculty (2013-2020), and also chaired the Provost’s Arts Advisory Council.

Queen’s University is excited to welcome Professor Allen into our community.
Canada is a signatory to a number of international instruments that together commit to the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, disability, and gender. The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 to secure active state engagement in bringing all laws, policies, and practices into compliance with the Convention on the Eradication of Discrimination against Women.

This conference continues the FLSQ annual tradition of hosting a major event in honour and celebration of International Women’s Day. By centering the elimination of gender inequality and intersectional discrimination, we seek to focus on the wellbeing of all members of society and to consider care in relation to those who are disproportionately impacted as caregivers. Target 5.4 of Goal 5 is particularly pertinent to the conference theme as it aims to “recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility”.

Care and care obligations require examination not only to better understand the nature and burdens of care, who is providing it at what costs and to whose benefit, but also the consideration of conditions under which care is and is expected to be provided in assessing care sustainability and its relationship to broader sustainability for personal and planetary wellbeing.

We particularly encourage submissions that address issues relating to gender equality within the spheres of care (care work, care economy, and the multiple dimensions of care). We also welcome submissions on the elimination of all forms of violence and inequalities toward all women and girls and their respective empowerment. Contributions that demonstrate how research and data gaps can be filled to ensure full analysis of the indicators being used to measure progress in meeting the SDGs are also welcome.

**Conference Details**

**Dates:** Friday, March 8, 2024 and Saturday, March 9, 2024.

**Location and accessibility:** The conference will be conducted in-person and in a hybrid format at Queen’s University in Katarokwi (Kingston), Ontario. Parts of the conference may be streamed via secure links in order to provide them to conference participants and registrants.

**Submitting proposals:** Please e-mail all submissions to Bita Amani (amanib@queensu.ca) and Kathleen Lahey (kal2@queensu.ca), copying Natalie Moniz-Henne (natalie.henne@queensu.ca).

- **Individual paper proposals:** Email presentation title and one-paragraph abstract.
- **Complete panel proposals:** Proposed panels should include three to four papers. Please e-mail proposed panel title and designated panel chair (who may or may not be presenting in the panel), along with a one-paragraph abstract.

**Deadline for receipt:** February 09, 2024 at 11:59 pm.

**For further information,** please contact Bita Amani (amanib@queensu.ca) and Kathleen Lahey (kal2@queensu.ca)

**For registration details and future updates,** please check our conference website.

*Queen’s University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territories.*