

# Breaking the Bowl: Integrating women's, gender and socio-legal issues into teaching and research in law



**Ulrike  
Schultz\***

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\* Akad. Oberrätin, FernUniversität Hagen.

The title of the present essay actually refers to the book “Breaking the Bowls: Degendering and Feminist Change” by Judith Lorber (2005) which aims to “undo gender”, by calling for the abolition of gender boundaries and categories. I use it to describe the process of breaking the walls of the traditional discipline and culture of law with its inscribed gender roles (Schultz 2002).<sup>1</sup> In 2020, I have written an article titled “Gender in Socio-Legal Teaching and Research in Germany” for the German Law Journal. In this article, though, I will give a very personal account of my contribution to breaking the bowl, a kind of memoir with details of my personal history. The article deals with the hurdles and hindrances I had to overcome, which were in a sense typical for a woman of my generation who had to pave the way for the younger generation; why sociology of law became a kind of addiction; which role some colleagues played; and why the IISL - and the younger generation of scholars - are so important to me.

## My personal trajectory

I was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 1947, less than two years after the end of the Second World War on my sister’s first day of school. My parents had lost their homes through bombs twice and we lived in two rooms, which were sublet. My mother said it was the “bad times”. There was not much to eat, the United States sent care parcels, and quaker food was distributed at schools. A thorough re-education and democratization programme was launched by the United States. In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany was founded. The Bonn Basic Law, our constitution, came into force with art. 3 sec. 2. This was the gender equality clause. It read *men and women have equal rights*.<sup>2</sup> It was a simple rule. However, it took decades to achieve it - and that became an important part of my work.

Women had obtained the right to vote after the First World War, i.e., in 1919. This right was promulgated in the constitution of the Weimar Republic. However, the family law in our German civil code from 1900<sup>3</sup> gave men patriarchal supremacy (dominance), and

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<sup>1</sup> The title reminds me of my mother who was a housewife. She happened to smash bowls when she was in a hurry – which, quite often, was the case. Her parents were ironmongers and their business included household goods, so she had a good supply of new china.

<sup>2</sup> In the German original: “Männer und Frauen sind gleichberechtigt”.

<sup>3</sup> After the founding of the German Empire at the end of the German-French war in 1871, in an intense process the law for the new nation was codified, apart from the civil law and procedure also the criminal law and procedure, for instance.



this remained basically unchanged. The husband determined the place of residence; he had the paternal authority (*patria potestas*) over the children and could terminate the employment contract of his wife. These rules were in force until 1957 when the first Gender Equality Act was passed - eight years after the constitution. It is amazing as after the war, women's workforce was needed: there were 170 women for every 100 men over the age of 21. The model of the housewife marriage (which meant that women had to give prevalence to domestic duties, while men were the breadwinners) was still enshrined in the civil code (§1356 BGB) until 1978.

After all the suffering of the war, the Adenauer era, the 1950s and 1960s were a time of restoration of conservative values in the young Bundesrepublik, it became a kind of "quality criterium", if a man could say that his wife did not need to work. Due to celibacy clauses, women had to quit the civil service when they married, double income couples were reviled, and women were paid in comparable positions considerably less than man – the gender pay gap which persists to some extent until today.

That said, the fifties and sixties were the time of a post war economic boom in Europe. In Germany, it was called the "*German Wirtschaftswunder*" (economic miracle), and my generation of women grew into a time of increased access to higher education. More and more families could afford it.

Women went to girls' schools, and they received a good female education. They wore skirts, not trousers and had to be obedient and behave well. Even at the *gymnasium*,<sup>4</sup> they learnt needle work and sewing. My mother wanted us daughters to be good girls and women, her standard phrase was: "*Sei gefällig*", which means: "be courteous, pleasing, compliant". We were supposed to later support our husbands. We read the women's journal "*Brigitte*" which was aligned with a female model of chief secretary, but also explained what to cook, when the household money was short at the end of the month.

As I was the youngest one also in the extended family, I had to stand up to my sister and the cousins. Of course, I lost in most games we played. I had to assert myself and tried hard to show that I was not the stupid little one. I think this is the explanation why I became a fighter, those who know me know that I have what we call in German "a long breath", which means: perseverance for projects. I became critical of so-called female

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<sup>4</sup> The German High School leading to the German Abitur which entitles the students to study at university.

virtues, but at the same time they are somehow deeply ingrained in my bones (as we say in Germany).

## Legal education

In 1966, I started to study law in Munich. My father had told me that there were only three options for women for which he would pay my education: medicine, teaching, law. All were occupations and professions, where women were reasonably accepted. In his profession, as an accountant, he said, there was no chance: “in business and economics, women are the servants of men, good for making coffee.” And so, I studied law like my sister, who became a judge. I also wanted to show my father that I could do it.

There were only seven per cent female fellow law students in Munich. Law was a totally male environment. Old men taught young men. The first female law professor in Germany had just got her call in 1965, a position at some remote law faculty and in criminology, which was considered a “soft” subject. She later wrote that she had not been taken seriously by her colleagues in the faculty (Schultz *et al.* 2018, p. 97 ff). It is also noteworthy that the first female professor at my university in Hagen was appointed only in 1985.

The first semester with foundation courses was interesting, the next terrible. I suffered. German law is abstract, we deal with fictional skeleton cases, it is dogmatic, not oriented towards real life. I was more interested in what was (reality) than in what should have been (normative prescription). Moreover, the teaching was as a rule dull and not well structured. But I didn't want to let my father have the triumph that I couldn't do it, so I gritted my teeth and persevered. I discovered the “*minor*”, however non-obligatory subjects: English law (Werner Lorenz), French law (Murad Ferid), reception of law, comparison of law. I also took two summer schools in London at the *City of London College* (later *City of London Polytechnic* and now *University of Westminster*) in English and European law, organised by Clive Schmitthoff, an emigrated German Jewish lawyer who wanted to introduce the young generation of German lawyers to the strength of the English legal system, as a means of reconciliation. I wrote a thesis on the English writ-system. In summer 1968, I changed to the University of Münster. 1968 was the time of the students' rebellion in Europe. In Germany, my generation is still called the “*Altachtundsechziger*”, i.e., the old generation 68, characterized by an alternative, casual/informal lifestyle, a tendency to question and to ignore rules. I experienced a very

difficult tension between me as a good bourgeois girl; all what my parents had taught me, on the one side, and being critical of society, on the other. The movement, however, was initially a male movement, and women's voices were still weak (Schultz 2002, p. 123 ff.).

## My first encounter with sociology of law and my practical training

Sociology of law was a very new subject. In Münster in 1969, a seminar in sociology of law was offered by Andreas Heldrich who later became the rector of the University in Munich. It was my first encounter with the subject, and I remember that Alex Ziegert, who later got the chair of Julius Stone in Sydney/Australia, gave a paper on Podgorecki. During my practical training (*Referendarzeit*), which started in 1970,<sup>5</sup> I spent three months, i.e., one semester, at *The German University of Administrative Sciences (Deutsche Universität für Verwaltungswissenschaften)*. I gave a paper on Eugen Ehrlich in a seminar on sociology of law by Hans Ryffel, who is rather unknown these days. I stayed on for almost two years to work in projects on educational technology, for example. I found in Speyer what interested me. Speyer gave me also ample opportunity to attend courses in general sociology with Renate Mayntz.<sup>6</sup> Courses in social science methods were, at the time, all about quantitative methods with a lot of calculation and a focus on representativeness of results. We all read Luhmann, who had worked in the research institute of that university a couple of years before (from 1962 to 1965), and discussed his systems theory. We learnt a lot about governance and all facets of public administration management. We had endless political discussions. We, the young generation, had the feeling that we had to modernize society, turn the republic upside down - also driven by the need to come to terms with the Nazi era. My parents were very worried about me and saw me in a dangerous environment. I met my husband there. At

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<sup>5</sup> Legal education in Germany has two phases: one for about 5 years at university which leads to a first legal exam and two years of practical training in the status of a civil servant organised by the appeal courts with a state examination at the end (Schultz 2011).

<sup>6</sup> She was one of the first female professors in sociology. She had studied organisational sociology in the United States and completed her habilitation on the subject. She was later appointed to the chair of René König in Cologne, who had been one of the most famous sociologists in Germany with a preference for empirical studies. It was called, at the time, the Cologne School, unlike the social-philosophically influenced dialectical sociology practiced by Theodor W. Adorno and the Frankfurt School.

the time, Speyer was considered to be a marriage market for young lawyers - for me, it obviously worked.

I had put my practical training on hold but resumed it in 1973 as I had become pregnant which was unplanned.<sup>7</sup> I thought, however, that it was good that in this way the decision was taken from me. I only knew about one other woman who had become pregnant during her practical training. It did not fit into the system. In the teaching courses accompanying our training, there were hardly more than 2 women on 20 men.

Towards the end of my pregnancy, I spent two months in a solicitors' office in London, which was also part of my practical training. I did interviews and a questionnaire survey with lawyers in England and in France about freedom of establishment for lawyers in Europe. I had a fantastic time in London, I met many solicitors and barristers of the German-Jewish community, was invited to many nice lunches and dinners, I also met Ernst Joseph Cohn, a barrister and a very friendly old gentleman, who was famous at the time. He had written a manual on German law in English and published many articles on comparison of English and German law and on arbitration, amongst other things. I also had a somewhat nasty encounter with another German-British lawyer who gave the verdict that my work with interviews and statistics was unscientific, that only dogmatics matter.

During my practical training I had also discovered that I loved practical legal work as an advocate. I asked my father whether I could set up as a lawyer in his office. He gave me a blunt no. What a blow. He did not want to have women and "emotional female trouble" in his office. My professional dream was to become an international lawyer, travelling around the world, a very unrealistic idea at the time, but the travelling, after all, became true.

## **My somewhat strange career at FernUniversität in Hagen**

The day after my second exam, I got a position at FernUniversität in Hagen, which had been founded a year before as the national distance teaching university teaching with

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<sup>7</sup> My father's comment was that it is not decent to have children at the expense of the state meaning the all in all 3 ½ months of paid leave before and after the birth of the child, and we only got a meagre subsidy, not a proper salary.



correspondence courses and using new media. I started as assistant in civil and commercial law. I still thought about quitting after a couple of years to become a practitioner, but I soon took over a position in educational technology for the law faculty. My generation had the impetus to improve law teaching and I wanted to contribute to it and build on my experience with didactic projects in Speyer. I carried out a lot of media work and acted as the chief moderator of our university TV series. I also produced a huge number of videos on current issues of law and women's rights questions.<sup>8</sup> On request of the rector of my university, I started to set up interdisciplinary and practice-oriented programmes of further education. They necessarily included many socio-legal perspectives: *Teaching Law at School (Methodik und Didaktik des Rechtskundeunterrichts)* from 1980 onwards, *Women's Rights (Frauen im Recht)* from 1985 to 1997, a *Practical Skills Training for Lawyers (Einführung in den Anwaltsberuf)* 1990 to 1998. I am still involved in *Teaching Law at School* these days, and for more than thirty years I have offered a "Train the Trainer" at our State Justice Academy (*Justizakademie NRW*) for lawyers, judges and prosecutors who teach "Rechtskunde" (Schultz 2022 and 2023). The course, *Women's Rights*, was used by equal opportunities officers as a qualification programme. I had a wonderful turnover in these projects. They were very successful. I had started to set up an institute for further education for lawyers, and I had enough money to pay for my journeys to relevant conferences. This made working internationally easy. I had a nice number of staff, had important contacts and was powerful, but for some people in the law faculty this was a thorn in their side. They decided to expropriate me after the rector had left for another university. I was suddenly considered a "masterless object". It was a career breaking moment. All my work was in vain. To make matters more difficult, the faculty was in those days in danger of being liquidated with only three chairs left. It ruined the practical skills training which was very painful for me after all the work. I had invested my heart and soul. They decided to close the *Women's Rights* programme with the argument that "we do not have these problems anymore". That was 1997. In a faculty meeting, the young new dean lost his face as he tried to throw me out, although I had been invited to the meeting. After that, he did everything to do harm to me - something that is rather typical of the highly discriminatory and competitive academic environment in Germany. Looking at it today, the problem was a status and a gender issue. A strong mentor is essential for an academic career in a German law faculty, even more so for women (Schultz *et al.* 2018, p. 353 ff.).

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<sup>8</sup> Some information about it can be found on my website: [www.ulrikeschultz.de](http://www.ulrikeschultz.de)

## Doors closed – doors opened

I had to climb out of a hole and reinvent myself. I started to train as a trainer in communication, negotiation and mediation. Over twenty years I taught these subjects regularly in the state justice academy and in our national judges' academy and kept on training lawyers for teaching law at school.<sup>9</sup>

In 1999, I was able to raise a huge governmental grant for virtual international gender studies (VINGS) and revived the qualification for equal opportunities officers bringing it in "through the backdoor". In 2006, I was asked to compile a Gender Curriculum for Law. Only now, 15 years later, it is being broadly discussed (Schultz 2006/2012).

In 2007, any kind of programmes of further education at my university were in danger of being closed. Another blow – but, again, good luck: the law faculty needed gender contents for their master of laws. In the accreditation procedure, Susanne Baer (who later became judge at our Federal Constitutional Court) had announced that the faculty would not get the reaccreditation without gender contents. So, I moved back to the law faculty after 30 years, set up a gender module for the master and concentrated on third party funded big empirical research projects on gender issues. This time, though, with a focus on qualitative methodology. The results were *Women in Leading Positions of the Judiciary* (in Northrhine Westfalia) and *Gender and Careers in the Legal Academy*.<sup>10</sup> As the fruit of my work, a chair was set up for *Gender and Law*. Yet, it came after I had retired and was only a temporary one for five years.<sup>11</sup>

## Why did I concentrate in my work on issues of gender and law?

It resulted from *Zeitgeist*, chance and opportunity. At the beginning of the 1980s, the second wave of the women's movement (die *Zweite Frauenbewegung*) gained momentum - worldwide. The few women in the academic service at my university started to meet in order to learn about and discuss women's issues. I - by the way - was the only

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<sup>9</sup> See e.g., Schultz 2013.

<sup>10</sup> [www.fernuni-hagen.de/jurpro](http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/jurpro)

<sup>11</sup> So, I could not harvest the fruit of the tree I had planted, but I have gone on teaching Gender and Law at other universities.



woman amongst them with children. In 1985, I started to organise lectures by the few prominent women in law who were knowledgeable in women's rights issues. They were video-recorded, and I presented them in our university TV series which brought me a lot of criticism: "*We are dominated by women's issues*", but I only used open slots. Amongst these women were Jutta Limbach, who later became the first female president of our Federal Constitutional Court, members of parliament, first female ministers, first female law professors and leading judges and law court presidents, also the first female German judge at the European Court of Justice and the first female German judge at the European Court of Human Rights. This is one of my networks. We, as the pioneers, are still in contact. I have interviewed some of these women in law again after 25 years for my website on *Law and Gender*,<sup>12</sup> and it was moving to see how times had changed.

The manuscripts of the first series of lectures on women's rights were compiled into a book with the title *Frauen im Recht*, which means in German *Women in Law* as well as *Women in the Right*. It gathered all the knowledge at the time available on women's rights, from civil law, labour law, over criminal law to tax and social law (with pension law) always including the constitutional perspective. All these issues were not discussed in the legal mainstream press. It was a result of true pioneer work; a milestone. Our work had a tangible impact on law reform in Germany. I am trying to be proud of it, although the price I had to pay was high.

As I knew so much about women's rights, I could not avoid being involved in the equal opportunities work at my university which started at the time. Many men in the institution saw me as a person with dangerous knowledge, which did not ease my position. I took over functions as long-time chair of the equal opportunities commission and equal opportunities officer for the law faculty. I organised lectures and events for women, all in all about 200 over three decades including a video-conference seminar on "*Equal Opportunities in Comparative Perspective*" (Hansen and Schultz 2005) and edited about 57 manuscripts on women's and gender issues in our equal opportunities series. I became a requested speaker on women's rights and gender issues and have given innumerable lectures in many contexts all over Germany.<sup>13</sup> For our Ministry for Women in Northrhine-Westfalia, I edited four big handbooks: 2002 *Women and Law*, 2004 *Images of Women*, 2006 *Women and Demographic Change*, 2008 *Women Change Europe - Europe Changes Women* which helped me to generate and finance

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<sup>12</sup> [www.fernuni-hagen.de/rechtundgender](http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/rechtundgender)

<sup>13</sup> Details on my website.

manuscripts for my teaching programmes.<sup>14</sup> Another source for them was the *Handbook for Equal Opportunities Officers* which I have been editing since 2006 with a friend, offering quarterly supplementary deliveries, all in all 600 pages per year (Berghahn and Schultz).

## Sociology of the Legal Professions

In 1976, I became member of the newly founded German Socio-Legal Association (*Vereinigung für Recht und Gesellschaft*). In 1980, my second child had just been born, I was asked to contribute together with Erhard Blankenburg to the huge project on *Lawyers in Society* which Rick Abel and Philip Lewis were organising (Blankenburg and Schultz 1988, 1995). In 1981, I went to my first RCSL meeting at Wolfson College, the Socio-Legal Centre in Oxford to meet Rick, Philip and others who wanted to contribute. It was a revelation and an eye-opening experience for me: afterwards, I knew what I wanted to do. In 1983, at the RCSL meeting in Antwerp, I met Vittorio Olgiati, who became a friend. In 1984, we had the meanwhile legendary meeting of the Lawyers in Society project in Bellagio (4 women and 22 men), and I – like many others – got addicted to the group. In 1986, we started work as a RCSL working group on legal professions, Terence Halliday, American Bar Foundation, being the first chair of the group, supported by Benoit Bastard, *directeur de recherche au CNRS* in France who was indispensable in the group. He and Bill Felstiner<sup>15</sup> became also chairs of the group. Other key persons have been Mavis Maclean with the family law sub-group,<sup>16</sup> Avrom Sherr, Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, University of London, and editor of the *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, as well as Alan Paterson from Scotland. They were all very important for me, and they all pushed me to publish articles on the legal profession - in English, which was not easy as it came on top of the work I had to do at FernUniversität.

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<sup>14</sup> In 2005 I also edited a book *Taking fate into one's own hands, women artists, writers and musicians from the 17th - 21st century*. [http://www.ulrikeschultz.de/downloads/buch\\_kuenstlerinnen05.pdf](http://www.ulrikeschultz.de/downloads/buch_kuenstlerinnen05.pdf) As the main editor, it shows “der Rektor” whose contribution was to give the book as present to visitors of our university. Women in the fine arts is a less captious and dangerous subject than women in law. This publication is not the only one where my name appears in the second position, although I have done all or most of the work.

<sup>15</sup> Director of the American Bar Foundation and Scientific Director at the IISL in Oñati from 2000 - 2002.

<sup>16</sup> RCSL President from 1994 - 1997.

Vittorio Olgiati urged me to write on women in the legal profession in Germany (Schultz 1994), later also on legal education in Germany (2008, 2011). Bill Felstiner urged me to write an update on Lawyers in Germany in 2005, Avrom Sherr included me in projects on *Legal Ethics in Europe*, *Money Laundering*, and gave me the possibility to put together several special issues of the “International Journal of the Legal Profession” on “Women in the Legal Profession” (ed. with Gisela Shaw 2003), “Gender and Judging” (ed. with Gisela Shaw 2008), “Gender and Judicial Education” (ed. with Gisela Shaw and Brettel Dawson 2014) and “Women and Judicial Appointment” (ed. together with Tabeth Mesengu 2020).<sup>17</sup>

From 2010 to 2014 I became head of the *Legal Profession Working Group*, and at our meeting in Frauenchiemsee in 2014 it was decided to launch a revisiting of Lawyers in Society. I became part of the editorial committee together with Rick Abel, Hilary Sommerlad and Ole Hammerslev (Abel *et al.* 2020, 2022). It was a wonderful cooperation with wonderful colleagues, but more than a lot of work.<sup>18</sup> The project resulted in two huge volumes *Lawyers in 21st Century Societies*.

## Women/Gender in the Legal Profession

At the Bellagio meeting in 1984, the issue of (at the time still only few) women in the profession was still a neglected subject. It was only treated marginally – at an evening session in the garden under the trees, and that is when I thought about making it my topic - a woman who wanted to become a lawyer/advocate but ended in academia. For the volumes of *Lawyers in Society*, Carrie Menkel-Meadow has written a groundbreaking and extensively quoted article on “Exploring a Research Agenda of the Feminization of the Legal Profession” (1989). I met her a couple of years later at a legal profession group meeting in Aix-en-Provence, and we planned to do an international comparative project together, a female version of *Lawyers in Society*. It turned out that Carrie Menkel-Meadow was too busy at the time. In 1994, at the *Legal Profession Group* meeting in Rouen, I was urged by my colleagues to organise the international comparative work on the subject which resulted in the big book with 28 contributions on “*Women in the World’s Legal Professions*” 2003. After the very intensive editorial

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<sup>17</sup> Comp. also Schultz and Shaw 2012 and Schultz *et al.* 2016.

<sup>18</sup> I may add here, that if I had not met Rick Abel my life might have taken another course. Rick in his quiet, friendly, supportive and persistent way made me stick to the work on the legal profession.

process, I had thought I would never be able to engage in something alike again, but I “fell off the wagon” and organised and edited again together with my friend Gisela Shaw two more of these comprehensive books: “*Gender and Judging*” 2013 and “*Gender and Careers in the Legal Academy*” 2021. I was happy that Carrie Menkel-Meadow finally could contribute to this project with a very profound and again ground-breaking chapter on “Feminist Legal Academics: Changing the Epistemology of American Law Through Conflicts, Controversies and Comparisons”.

Without Gisela Shaw’s support, I would not have been able to edit the volumes. She was always there, discussing the contributions with me and she adapted (and smoothened) the language of the non-native writers. This is also a somewhat Sisyphus task. I had met Gisela for the first time in 1990, when she came to interview me on questions of lawyers in Europe and freedom of establishment. For the last volume we also had the indispensable aid of Rosemary Auchmuty and Margaret Thornton.

## **Another passion: the IISL and RCSL**

Vittorio Olgiati had urged me to come to the IISL in Oñati. He had acted as RCSL general secretary in the foundation phase of the institute supporting Jean Jacques Arnaud, the first Scientific Director in 1990/91. He knew everything about the institute and told me many stories, which I again try to pass on to the younger generation of socio-legal scholars. Vittorio was RCSL President from 2010 to 2014, succeeded by Masayuki Murayama, my Japanese colleague, who I visited in Tokyo in 2005 on a journey through Japan where I also met again Kahei Rokumoto who was part of the Bellagio group.

Johannes Feest, IISL Scientific Director from 1995 to 1997 made me come to Oñati for the first time in 1997 for a workshop on Gender and Colour of Law, and he also recruited me immediately as examiner for a master thesis which was on online witchcraft and sociology of law.<sup>19</sup> A year later at a workshop on the judiciary (2 women and 28 men which was typical at that time), I shared room 1 of the Residencia with Anne Boigeol.<sup>20</sup> Anne is a dear friend and a very reliable author. She is also a specialist on gender and judging in France. We have met over a period of thirty years at legal profession group

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<sup>19</sup> Over time I have been examiner for several master theses.

<sup>20</sup> The room is at the street corner in the basement of the building which the students call dungeon. I wondered whether I would ever like to come back to Oñati. The bypass around Oñati was not yet finished, the noise of the heavy traffic kept us awake.

meetings. When she was RCSL president (2006 to 2010), she asked me to become an IISL board member.

Since 2006, I have been on the IISL board. I have assembled over time a profound knowledge of the institute and its history. From 2006 to 2014, I have also been RCSL board member, and in 2018, I was elected RCSL president.

I have attended numerous Oñati workshops and been involved in at least 8 workshop applications. In 2009, Carlos Lista as Scientific Director at the IISL asked me if I could teach alternative dispute resolution together with Luigi Cominelli in the master programme. Since 2010, I have offered training on communication skills, negotiation and mediation in the induction week. The encounter and work with the highly motivated students in the master programme belong to the best experiences in my academic life. We usually work very intensively together in role plays and in connection with the students' presentations, we cook together – and dine together. I have kept in contact with many of my past students. It is wonderful to see them “grow up” and to meet them again at RCSL and other international socio-legal conferences.

Other things to mention would be my involvement in the *Law and Society Association* based in the United States. I have been on the programme committee for three of our big international meetings and was involved in dealing twice with admission and funding of *International Research Collaboratives (IRC)*. I have organised a number of *International Research Collaboratives* and head, together with colleagues the *Collaborative Research Network (CRN) 12, Gender and Judging*. I am also involved in planning a kind of *World Consortium for Law and Society*.

## **In conclusion**

With a very busy life I have, at times, felt like a breathless long-distance runner. A life with many pitfalls and a lot of discrimination but that is the fate of pioneers. The head of our didactic institute once said: all the gender work has to be seen as your hobby. Quite a few of my friends gave me the feeling, too. Is it proper work and alright to be paid for dealing with women's and gender issues? Is it as useful as pulling teeth or writing judgments? This in a sense was the worst.

But I have had many wonderful experiences; many that were related to RCSL and the IISL. I have met and worked together with fantastic colleagues. Drawing a conclusion

today - in spite of all the hurdles and obstacles - the sum so far is positive. A colleague who interviewed me for the journal of our women lawyers' association chose as title of the article my sigh: "*If only the year could have more days*".

Being in my mid-seventies, I hope to have still enough time to finish most of the things I would like to finish. Amongst them are some rather big half-written manuscripts, but also projects with new ideas. For the socio-legal meeting in Lisbon in July 2022, I have initiated two International Research Collaboratives (IRCs) on: *The Notariat Across Borders* and *Gender in Customary and Indigenous Law and Proceedings*. I would like to revive comparative research on *Knowledge and Opinion about Law* which also has interesting gender aspects.

But I also need enough time for my family – because after all, they are what matters the most.

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