

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Women’s Rights Close to Home? The Miami-Dade County CEDAW Ordinance as Local Practice

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(Received 12 October 2022; revised 28 February 2023; accepted 17 May 2023)

Abstract

Because of the United States’ minimal domestic engagement with human rights, several subnational initiatives, including the Cities for CEDAW campaign, have formed to infuse human rights into local policy making. Analyzing Miami-Dade County as one locale within the Cities for CEDAW network, this article asks what happens to human rights when they are turned into urban policies. Drawing on literature theorizing the complexities of urban human rights activism and using an interpretivist framework of analysis, the article reconstructs local context features and practices promoting gender equality through the countywide CEDAW ordinance. It develops a narrative based on expert interviews and finds an unusual actor constellation in which a local officeholder led the way rather than community activists. The practices identified work within institutional constraints and highlight data collection to support informed gender policy making. The findings lead to the conclusion that both activists and scholars should think beyond the dynamics of policy formulation and more explicitly about the complexities of implementation.

Keywords: Gender equality norms; CEDAW; local human rights practice; Miami-Dade County; intersectionality; researcher positionality; qualitative methods

The United States is internationally known as an “exceptionalist” state when it comes to human rights. This attitude has been described as the understanding that the U.S. constitutional tradition with its strong focus on civil and political rights is superior to global frameworks, and that some of the rights globally codified, especially socioeconomic rights, are not legal rights, but rather aspirational goals (Alston 2009). Not only is this attitude widely criticized as a misinterpretation of the holistic nature of human rights, it has also led to minimal domestic engagement with human rights, reflected in the low number of international human rights treaties the United States has ratified.¹ However,

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civil society organizations (CSOs) and, increasingly, local governments within the United States are drawing on human rights frameworks. Initiatives using global normative frameworks to create local synergies include the coalition of U.S. Climate Mayors to adhere to the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement (<https://climatemayors.org/>), Human Rights Cities,² and the Cities for CEDAW campaign (<http://citiesforcedaw.org/>), a national network aiming to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in U.S. cities and counties. One municipality within the Cities for CEDAW campaign is Miami-Dade County (MDC), which adopted a CEDAW ordinance in 2015. This ordinance contains the twofold mandate to publish countywide gender equity data and formulate recommendations for local government action based on this data.

Analyzing CEDAW-related practices in MDC, this article aims to find out what happens to human rights when they are turned into urban policies. It proceeds in three parts and starts with a conceptual discussion of locally situated human rights initiatives. I suggest moving away from the norm diffusion literature with its focus on global frameworks and instead following scholarship on human rights practice that is connected within and beyond the local. This literature asks both descriptive questions about practices and outcomes and addresses normative dimensions such as the democratic potential of local human rights policies. Following this epistemological position of analytical-normative engagement, the second section lays out the scholar-activist perspective from which this article is written and explains the interpretivist research process. The third and main part of the article presents the empirical picture in five steps: it describes context features of MDC as one of the most diverse and unequal counties in the country, proceeds with the standards that CEDAW represents and the ideas that local actors involved in gender justice work have about them, reconstructs the dynamics that led to the adoption of the local CEDAW ordinance and elaborates on its content, traces the practices that have emerged in response to the new legal tool, and, finally, provides assessments of the process from the perspective of local actors. This analysis finds an unusual actor constellation in which a local officeholder led the way rather than community activists. Further, the practices developed around the CEDAW ordinance pragmatically work within institutional, including budgetary, constraints and highlight data collection to support informed gender policy making. The findings lead to the conclusion that both activists and scholars should think beyond the dynamics of policy formulation and more explicitly about the complexities of implementation.

From Norm Diffusion to Practice: Context-Specific Engagement with Human Rights

In a 1958 speech at the United Nations celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt famously stated that the universality of human rights means rights realization everywhere, including “in small places, close to home ... the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or

office where he works” (Roosevelt 1958). In this spirit, human rights research has always looked beyond governmental engagement with global human rights frameworks. Nonetheless, the question of how far human rights can reach is often approached with a global starting point in mind. When it comes to women’s rights frameworks and CEDAW specifically, scholars have looked at its comparative impact on governments and societies (Englehart and Miller 2014; Simmons 2009), as well as its significance and reach as a tool of international law (Freeman, Chinkin, and Rudolf 2012; Hellum and Aasen 2012). While this scholarship has made an important contribution to analyzing transnational processes, it under-theorizes local dynamics as the “receiving end” of norm diffusion (Draude 2017).

In response to this critique, alternative approaches such as norm localization, vernacularization, contestation, and translation have been developed (Acharya 2004; Merry 2006; Wiener 2018; Zwingel 2016). This scholarship pays more attention to local agency, and to differently situated practice in general, and aims to decenter the global as a point of departure. With a view toward gender equality norms, this decentering literature has looked at the translation work of transnational feminist networks, their interaction with local organizations and governments, and the impact of this interplay on domestic attitudes toward women’s rights and public gender policies (Biholar 2013; George 2020; Zwingel 2016). Some takeaways from this literature are that gender equality norms need sustained advocacy or translation work to have impact; that women’s rights advocacy must carefully navigate contextual traditions and social structures to gain traction; and that gender equality norms, despite global affirmation, remain contested (Goetz 2020).

These important findings notwithstanding, this literature still focuses on how global frameworks are connected to and made use of in local human rights activism (Zwingel 2016). There is very little analysis of local dynamics per se, or of local dynamics in which global standards play only a minor role, as is the case in the empirical case presented here. Therefore, I turn to literature that more directly analyzes the dynamics of localized forms of human rights and gender equality activism, such as Human Rights Cities (HRC) and Cities for CEDAW. This literature follows the trend of urbanization of human rights struggles (Grigolo 2019; Oomen, Davis, and Grigolo 2016), which has gained momentum in the last two decades. It is infused by scholar-activist perspectives (Goodhart 2019; Koutsoumpas and MacNaughton 2020; Neubeck 2016) that are, on the one hand, strongly empirically focused and, on the other, in search of useful explanatory frames of analysis.

The concept of the Human Rights City was first introduced by the People’s Movement for Human Rights Learning, which defines it as “a city or a community where people of good will, in government, in organizations and in institutions, try and let a human rights framework guide the development of the life of the community” (cited in Goodhart 2019, 143). The local initiatives that have been created follow a diversity of human rights–inspired practices.³ One important influence for HRCs is the “right to the city” discourse. It encapsulates a collectivist, anti-capitalist position that demands, in light of rising urban inequalities, the right of all city dwellers to have a say over the space they live in (Oomen 2016). Another influence is the debate on “moral urbanism,” which sees cities as

incubators of democracy where practices of direct, participatory democracy are possible and the search for pragmatic solutions reigns over divisive politics. These concepts think of cities as spaces that enable locally meaningful human rights practice, but cities are also under neoliberal pressures that exacerbate inequalities and marginalization. In light of these constraints, Grigolo (2016, 2019) proposes to think of HRCs in a more open fashion as the sum of practices that result from the ideas and deeds of a multiplicity of urban actors. These include actors who see human rights as a legal framework useful for local government, engage it as a platform to empower and organize local communities, or have priorities further removed from human rights standards such as local government efficiency. This analytical focus on “who does what and why with human rights” (Grigolo 2019, 5) finds local practices that are more enmeshed than antagonistic and engaged in ongoing political deliberation.

The empirical dimension of the HRC literature has focused on describing specific local practices and teasing out patterns. For this article, three areas seem particularly relevant. First, most Human Rights Cities are the *result of civil society activism*. They are initiated by coalitions of groups with a particular focus—for example, homelessness or racial disparities—that have come to see a human rights framework as useful for advancing their cause (Goodhart 2019; Neubeck 2016). Such grassroots activism, in which enthusiastic individuals are driving forces, is described as an important democratizing dimension for HRCs, as it helps center the most pressing needs in the community (Oomen 2016). However, community organizations base their work on notoriously scarce resources and the engagement of individual volunteers, which makes sustained activism challenging. Therefore, many CSO-driven HRC initiatives see a phase of strong and impactful activism that then peters out, as Koutsoumpas and MacNaughton (2020) describe for the Boston HRC initiative. One way to stabilize and provide continuity for HRCs is for municipal institutions to take responsibility, as has been the case in San Francisco and Eugene, Oregon (Liebowitz 2008; Lozner 2004; Neubeck 2016), but institutional integration also affects the ways in which human rights work is framed. For the trailblazing process of implementing CEDAW in San Francisco, Grigolo (2019) notes strong civil society leadership in the beginning followed by a process of disenchantment, because policies that initially created significant transformation within city departments were defunded and lost traction.

Second, different models have been set up in terms of local human rights practice. Soohoo (2016) distinguishes three potentially interrelated arrangements: the *managerial model* of human rights inclusion that focuses on nondiscriminatory municipal service delivery, typically with a focus on the needs of most vulnerable citizens; the *internal monitoring model*, in which a municipality assesses its own departments and policies in the light of human rights and nondiscrimination standards; and the *participatory model* which focuses on active citizen involvement, often including a human rights training and learning component for city staff and the public as a whole. Although these models have different advantages and disadvantages, they all run the risk of insufficient funding and institutional support because of the pressure of many other local funding priorities. Therefore, cases of HRCs like Eugene, where the three models

have been combined and shaped processes of long-term bureaucratic and societal transformation, are rare success stories (Neubeck 2016). The example of San Francisco shows that even inclusive and successful collaborations may undergo changes that not all stakeholders are willing to support in the long term (Grigolo 2019).

Third, because cities usually do not have a strong affinity for human rights language and human rights policy making, local practitioners often use other concepts that are perceived to be more tailored to local issues and needs, such as social justice, racial or gender equity, fairness, equal treatment, or quality of life (Grigolo 2019; Koutsoumpas and MacNaughton 2020; Oomen 2016). Put differently, local human rights initiatives renegotiate the meaning of human rights, a concept that is perceived by many as “too vague, too abstract ... and too hard to enforce” (Oomen 2016, 12) to make it resonant and useful for policy making. While LaBarbera, Espinosa-Fajardo, and Caravantes (2022) do not focus on human rights but on the implementation of intersectionality policies in the municipality of Madrid, their study teases out a similar dynamic: stakeholders developed two dominant interpretations of the concept of intersectionality that made local sense to them—namely, either overcoming intersectional gender inequalities or recognizing diversity—which led to different priorities in policy development. With regards to the Cities for CEDAW movement, the dynamic of local renegotiation means that activists involved in shaping an ordinance typically do not represent the entire scope of CEDAW. Rather, they focus on the parts they consider most pertinent to local conditions, which are often economic inequalities, health care, and violence against women (Grigolo 2019; Och 2018). Oomen (2016, 14) further observes that one effect of integrating a broad array of stakeholders into local human rights processes is that the politics of compromise dilute transformative visions and that “the most progressive rights do not get mobilized.”

In sum, the conceptual expectation of cities as laboratories for human rights realization meets, in empirical analysis, with a lot of complicating factors: HRCs are dependent on inspirational civil society mobilization, which is, however, structurally unstable; they need committed municipal leadership, including substantive resources, which is not the norm among municipalities with many priorities other than human rights; and they find themselves in a tension between context-tailored adaptations of human rights that resonate with local stakeholders and broader, transformative visions of social justice—a tension that Merry and Levitt (2019) aptly call the “resonance dilemma.” Nonetheless, an “incremental promise” can be detected in this constellation, as even moderate and mundane changes that cities implement may, over time, create new practices and pave the way for further transformation (Grigolo 2016; Runyan and Sanders 2021).

Scholar-Activist Positionality and the Interpretivist Research Process

Similar to other researchers who have published on local human rights initiatives, I situate myself as a scholar-activist who has the dual aim of academic knowledge production and influence on the social processes analyzed. I follow an

interpretivist epistemology, which sees researcher positionality as a crucial part of the knowledge produced and assumes conceptual dynamism in the research process (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012).

I came to this project as a scholar of norm translation and was interested in how local particularities would shape CEDAW-related activism. In addition, I wanted my research to make a contribution to the local process. Therefore, my original research plan contained two steps. First, I wanted to explore the local CEDAW process through an interpretive analysis based on semistructured expert⁴ interviews and document analysis. Although the focus of interest was on the local ordinance and the practices and assessments of local stakeholders, I was also curious about the potential impact of the global CEDAW framework. Second, I planned to invite local CSOs whose work focused on gender issues to a workshop to share my research, gather input from the organizations, and develop a plan for future action. This component was about making the CEDAW ordinance more transformative through community involvement. However, because of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the research process had to be adjusted. I could not carry out the workshop, which in hindsight would not have achieved the dynamic I had anticipated because I was not sufficiently connected with local CSOs. Just before the pandemic started, I had joined a network of local advocacy groups that together planned to explore the potential of the CEDAW ordinance for each organization's goals. We met over Zoom for nine months and eventually disbanded, but this collaboration enabled me to conduct interviews with members of three CSOs. The number was lower than originally planned, but the research retained a slimmed-down dimension of activist representation.⁵

In line with interpretivist research logic, I allowed the data creation process to "lead the way," which also meant that I was led away from some of my original assumptions. Several of the interviewees revealed that the global standard that had seemed so important to me played only a background role for them. Hence, I focused the empirical interpretation more strongly on the local dynamics as well as the assessment of local stakeholders and reconsidered which conceptual framework would be most useful to analyze this constellation of norm engagement (see previous section). I also tried to retain openness in the process of coding and theming⁶ the expert interviews, which meant that some of the codes I had formed based on my initial research assumptions were discarded and new ones were created. For example, the ways in which interviewees expressed their thinking about gender justice led me to identify three distinct, if overlapping, attitudes toward gender equality among them.

Interpretivist research does not isolate the researcher but thinks of her as part of the social network in which knowledge is being created. I keep reflecting on both the scholarly and activist contribution of my work, which can be summarized in two ways: On the one hand, I find it important for scholar-activist research to engage with scholarly debates, even if scholarship is often organized in a siloed way that makes it hard to identify the right audience; for this analysis, interested audiences may include scholars of norm diffusion, gender policy implementation, and human rights practice. On the other hand, I realized that meaningful local intervention as a scholar-activist is complicated

and that it is most useful to establish sustainable structures of community involvement. As I interact regularly with students who are community members, I decided to design a course that juxtaposes global level human rights debates with the work of local gender justice activists. Students have responded enthusiastically to learning about local activism, much of it unknown to them, and for some, this new knowledge was an impulse to become more active community members themselves.

The Empirical Picture: Miami-Dade County and Its CEDAW Ordinance

Diversity, Governance, and Gender-Related Activism—The Local Fabric

Miami-Dade is a county of about 2.7 million inhabitants shaped by pronounced inequalities in terms of income, ethnicity, race, immigration status, and gender (Florida and Pedigo 2019). According to *U.S. News & World Report*, Miami, as the largest city within Dade County, shows the third-largest income inequality gap among big U.S. cities (Bach 2020). This inequality is not the result of extremely high income levels, but of extremely low ones (Berube 2014), which has a lot to do with the major economic sectors in the county—tourism, services, trade, manufacturing, real estate, construction, and agriculture—where employment for many is fixed term, seasonal, and underpaid. As a result, a large percentage of the local population does not have access to affordable housing, health care, transportation, and other basic needs. All interviewees described this reality. In the words of one county staff member, “in Miami-Dade County, 58% of us are struggling to maintain any kind of semblance of financial stability That reality is ... obfuscated by all the wealth and the tourism, and the glitz and the glamour, but that’s the truth” (I1). The population in MDC is more ethnically and racially diverse than in most places in the United States. In the 2020 census, Hispanics or Latinos, most of them self-describing as white, represented by far the largest segment of residents at 69.1%. Among the rest of the county population, 17.4% identified as Black, 13.6% as non-Hispanic White, 1.6% as Asian, and 1.3% as two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.). The county’s share of foreign-born residents is high at 40.5%, with most immigrants hailing from Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular Cuba, Venezuela, and Haiti. Reasons for immigration vary and include search for work, political repression, poverty, and violence, including gender-based violence experienced by women and members of the LGBTQ community (I11).

Interviewees emphasized that gender represents a core dimension of precarity. They described women as, in general, economically worse off than men (I2), exposed to the double burden of employment and care work (I1), and more often than men exposed to intersectional discrimination. As one representative of a CSO working with low-wage and immigrant workers explained,

Every issue in Miami-Dade County that workers face is compounded when you add a gendered and racial lens to it. ... As a low-income Black or Brown woman ... , you may start your day worried about the housing over your head or gentrification happening in your neighborhood, because your rent

is being raised. You put your kids at school, which may be under-resourced. Then you attempt to take public transportation that takes way too long in this heat, ... and then you go to your job where you're likely underpaid ... likely suffer wage theft or sexual harassment ... and then you go home and do it all over again (I10).

People outside the gender binary and trans women are confronted with additional forms of discrimination that make finding employment, housing, and health care even more difficult. One CSO member working with the trans community explained that sometimes trans people seeking housing are “being charged a ‘trans deposit,’ just because of stereotypes” (I11).

Diversity is also a feature of the county's complex governance structure. MDC consists of 34 incorporated cities, towns, and villages of very different sizes,⁷ and over one million people reside in unincorporated areas. Because of this mix, county government plays an overarching role comparable to the multilevel structure of a large city (e.g., New York City with its boroughs and community districts). Local government consists of the Office of the Mayor and the 13-member Board of County Commissioners (BCC), both of which are directly elected. The percentage of women in local government is relatively high—as of 2023, the county mayor was a woman, and so were five out of the 13 county commissioners. One long-term county employee described MDC as a “progressive” place in terms of female leadership (I4). Women who enter local politics have often been socialized in organizations that focus on community and family issues (Solomon 2013). As a result, women are politically visible, but they rarely single out gender equality issues (I5).

The county governance structure is complemented by a set of volunteer advisory bodies, including the Commission for Women (CFW). According to its website, the CFW advises the BCC and “the public at large about issues pertaining to the status of women ... and advocates for the women in the community and strives to improve their quality of life.”⁸ CFW members are appointed by their district's commissioner. Most of them are professionals in the private sector or within county government, and some are members of local women's organizations. While the CFW can count on the support of a full-time program director, its volunteer character works as an impediment to low-income women joining and does not allow for systematic representation of the concerns of the county's women.

In addition to the county's governance structure, a considerable number of local CSOs focus on women's issues, including professional associations, charitable women's clubs, and service providers in areas such as health care, support for women suffering from domestic violence, homelessness, or human trafficking.⁹ Explicitly feminist organizations with a focus on transforming patriarchal structures are underrepresented. Instead, many CSOs engage in intersectional social justice activism in which economic exploitation and discrimination based on migration status, race, ethnicity, gender, and gender identity are addressed in combination.

While conducting interviews, I realized that my interviewees held diverse positions regarding the meaning of gender equality and best forms of local

gender-related activism. I identified three somewhat overlapping approaches, which I label *gender-implicit*, *gender-explicit victim-focused*, and *gender-explicit structure-focused*. These are connected to differently positioned actors, which, as I will show, has influenced both the scope and impact of the CEDAW ordinance.

The first position, gender-implicit, position represents intersectionality that implies but does not foreground gender. It favors interventions targeting multiply disadvantaged groups, including the homeless, the working poor, and underserved communities. Women would benefit as members of these groups (14, 10, 11, 12). In this vein, a county commissioner's staff described ordinances sponsored that focused on economic development, living wage issues, and providing meals to seniors during extreme weather events as "not directly related to women, but I think useful for women." At the same time, the interviewee shared that "we're a little bit fearful of getting into *just gender*" (14, vocal emphasis) given the diversity of the constituency they serve. This position was most common among county employees and local government officials.

The second and third positions highlight gender among other dimensions of discrimination. The second approach—gender-explicit victim-focused—recognizes vulnerabilities and focuses on ways to uplift or help. It is based on solidarity but does not envision fundamental change. An example of this position is a CFW member's description of the CFW's mission: "Everything that we can do to improve the life of women and girls in society. ... A lot of it has to do with increasing awareness and funding and education. Education is important because if women and girls are educated their families would thrive and society would thrive, and the economy would thrive" (18). Here, women's well-being is clearly important, but there is no focus on discriminatory structures that disadvantage women. This position does not question in whose interest such structures are created, or perhaps strategically, frames gender-based discrimination as an oversight nobody is responsible for, as vividly expressed in this comment by a county commissioner: "Obviously people don't sit down and say, well, we're going to discriminate against women" (15). This position frames work done *for* women as not geared *against* anybody else. It was common among members of the CFW and some local government officials.

The third position—gender-explicit structure-focused—connects gender-based discrimination with structures that produce it and actors that benefit from it. Some interviewees pinpointed the double burden of women as breadwinners and caregivers of their families and, in addition, described the local situation as one of "underinvestment" in affordable childcare and transportation that the county government needs to address (11). Or they think, as one CFW member did, of education for women and girls not (only) as a way to become productive members of society, but as a tool of power "in the sense if there is an unfairness and injustice you have to speak up" (19). A structural focus on gender-based discrimination implies a focus not only on the victimized, but also on those who benefit from their victimization. One CSO representative working with workers experiencing wage theft made clear that "the majority of the folks who are routinely engaging in wage theft are from the wealthier parts of the county" (110). This position, which also recognizes other structures of

discrimination beyond gender inequalities, was most common among CSOs and some CFW members.

In sum, MDC is an economically unequal and racially and ethnically diverse local context in which a large part of the population lives in precarious circumstances. Women and sexual minorities are disproportionately affected by precarity. Women are well represented in local politics, but they rarely pursue gender-specific policies. Three positions regarding gender issues were identified among interviewees working on intersectional social justice issues: gender is either relevant implicitly, explicitly with a focus on women as victims, or explicitly with a focus on changing discriminatory structures. As will become clear, these positions have influenced the scope and impact of the MDC CEDAW ordinance.

“Fitting In”? CEDAW, Substantive Equality, and Local Perceptions

As CEDAW has not been ratified on the national level,¹⁰ it does not create any direct obligations for the United States. However, MDW created a direct connection through its local ordinance. It is therefore necessary to specify the core principles of the global framework as well as local stakeholders’ understanding of it.

CEDAW is an almost universally ratified international human rights treaty¹¹ that embodies three principles: elimination of discrimination against women, substantive equality between men and women, and state responsibility for this endeavor. These principles are detailed in 16 articles covering all areas of life, including legal standing, education, employment, health, political participation, family relations, and cultural life. A committee of experts is tasked with periodically meeting with states parties, monitoring their progress in implementing the convention’s provisions, and interpreting the meaning of the convention in light of new challenges. For example, violence against women is not mentioned in the 1979 text of the treaty, but the CEDAW Committee has framed it as an expression of discrimination against women that falls into the scope of the convention (Zwingel 2016). The core focus of CEDAW is to work toward *substantive* equality for *all* women in their diversity. This is different from mere *equal access* to certain rights, an assumption that conceptualizes men and women as individual choice makers. Instead, the convention demands that governments acknowledge and address all intersecting layers of discrimination that hinder women from having a realistic chance of *rights realization* (Byrnes 2012; IWRAP Asia Pacific 2009). Compared with the three local positions on gender equality identified in the previous section, this notion of substantive equality comes closest to the gender-explicit structure-focused position.

In the absence of national-level ratification, several U.S. cities and counties have decided to use the CEDAW framework and adopted local CEDAW ordinances (Och 2018). San Francisco was the first municipality to do so in 1998 (Grigolo 2019; Lozner 2004). In 2013, the Cities for CEDAW campaign formed under the leadership of the Women’s Intercultural Network, a U.S.-based CSO with consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (see <https://winaction.org/>). Since then, at least 10 cities or counties have adopted a CEDAW

ordinance, and at least 33 municipalities have adopted a resolution, while others are in the process of adopting an ordinance or resolution.¹² The Cities for CEDAW campaign originally aimed to build bottom-up pressure for national ratification by creating 100 CEDAW cities, yet that goal has not materialized (Runyan and Sanders 2021).

The Cities for CEDAW campaign helped trigger the creation of the MDC CEDAW ordinance, but the content of the convention plays a minor role for local stakeholders. Several interviewees described CEDAW as not relevant to their work (I2, 7, 10, 11, and 12). Others thought of it as a general guideline only, not as a concrete plan of action, as expressed in this statement by a county commissioner's staff member: "I think you don't have to ... just stick to exactly what CEDAW says but look more generally at what it is that CEDAW tries to do which is to create an environment where women can flourish" (I4). One CFW member thought of the impact the convention could have in the county as different from other places because of the achievements in the United States in terms of women's rights. As she put it, "We're a democracy and we have free elections unlike other countries where they do not allow women to participate in elections and they do not allow, like in Afghanistan, women and girls to attend school and get educated" (I8). Although factually true, this statement does not zoom in on forms of discrimination against women that remain prevalent in the United States, and hence it does not quite align with the mandate of CEDAW to eliminate *all* forms of discrimination. A county employee expressed concern about the potentially limited applicability of CEDAW in "our very unique context" (I1) of Miami-Dade County: "An international treaty that uses ... language about human rights may not be something that everyone is comfortable with or understands especially when we consider that all of the commissioners are doing their very best every day to respond to the meat and potato issues that residents are facing" (I1). Together, these statements suggest that CEDAW is not seen as a framework to transform MDC's toward more substantive gender equality, but as useful when it "fits in" locally.

"The Cause of Women Per Se": Creation and Content of the CEDAW Ordinance

The Board of County Commissioners adopted the CEDAW ordinance (No. 15-87) in September 2015. All accounts of how this process came about went back to a single person, Daniella Levine Cava, who at the time was a well-known leader of a local nonprofit organization and a recently elected county commissioner. She had heard about the Cities for CEDAW campaign from a San Francisco-based member of a national female lawyers' network she belonged to. The initiative interested her because it tied in to her work but also expanded it: "My career has been about addressing disparities in our society. ... [But] I've not been so active ... on the cause of women per se, ... only in the sense that women are more disproportionately affected by disparity" (I5). In Levine Cava's estimation, both the Cities for CEDAW initiative and the connection to CEDAW as a global framework add legitimacy to the ordinance: "Several of the commissioners, rightly so, feel that they have been champions for women's issues. And I think that this could have died based on people feeling that I was being pushy ... But

because it was part of an international framework and other cities around the country had adopted it, that gave it credibility” (I5). Other interviewees echoed the notion of added legitimacy through the global framework (I6, 9).

Commissioner Levine Cava’s office led a careful drafting process that included consultations with county attorneys, the CFW, and a range of community-based women’s organizations (I1, 5). In the recollection of one of Commissioner Levine Cava’s staff members, this process was not without challenges: “It was like: how do we tie this ... abstract framework into something that’s meaningful and persuasive to this county commission that has so many downward pressures on it?” (I1). This description suggests both a broad consultation process and the existence of constraints. A unique feature in MDC is that CSOs did not initiate or take the lead in creating the ordinance, but rather were included by a proactive county commissioner. Compare this, for example, with the process in San Francisco, which was initiated by women’s groups who had attended the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing and wanted to bring “women’s rights home” (Grigolo 2019).

The result of this process was an ordinance tailored to the county’s needs, with the two main components of data collection and policy recommendations. Specifically, the county commission auditor is tasked with gathering “gender equity data” in the three areas of economic development, health and safety, and education. This data “shall ... identify disparities existing between women and men throughout Miami-Dade County and shall include ... information regarding sex, race, sexual orientation, immigration status, parental status, disability, and age.” This data is periodically published in an annual report. Based on the published data, the CFW is then tasked with formulating recommendations of action to the Office of the Mayor and the BCC.

A couple of observations to contextualize the content of the ordinance are in order. First, the ordinance must be set in the context of previously enacted local gender equality policies.¹³ The point that local policies targeting women’s needs already existed was stressed by many interviewees. Second, the ordinance was selective in that it focused on three areas of CEDAW and left out others that could be relevant for women in MDC, such as human trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution (addressed in CEDAW Article 6). One interviewee involved in the process gave several reasons for this focus: it reflected the priorities expressed by the women’s organizations that were consulted; for the purpose of the annual reporting process, the scope should not be too broad; and redundancies should be avoided, since a lot of organizations already work on certain issues, especially human trafficking (I5). Third, the ordinance was based on the term “gender equity,” not “gender equality,” and used the term “disparities” rather than “inequalities.” While (in)equality would align better with CEDAW’s core concept of substantive equality, no interviewee mentioned any discussion about which term would be preferable. This difference in terminology could point in two directions, one being a rejection of the structural dimension inherent in the concept of substantive gender equality, the other an understanding of gender equity as more inclusive of intersectional forms of discrimination beyond gender.

Fourth, the mechanism created was for reporting and advising, not implementing. Thus, the ordinance did not mandate that the BCC or the Office of the Mayor must create policies in response to the data gathered and the CFW's recommendations. Fifth, and relatedly, the only budget attached to the ordinance were funds to cover the production of the annual report (13). According to one CFW member, the lack of a budget for implementation work was a result of "realistic" expectations in the process of creating the ordinance, as a request for funds would have diminished its chance of approval (19). Although this situation limits the ordinance's potential impact, the regular allocation of funds for report writing puts MDC in a better position than some other municipalities in the Cities for CEDAW network that have no resources to work with (Och 2022; Runyan and Sanders 2021).

"Realistic" and "Actionable": The CEDAW Ordinance at Work

Since the ordinance was passed, five reports have been produced (in 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021).¹⁴ They were written by a university-affiliated think tank with support from the Office of the County Commission Auditor and provide data for the three areas specified by the ordinance—economic development, health and safety, and education—with the most comprehensive information produced in the field of economic development. The CFW submitted recommendations in response to each report.¹⁵ The BCC held public meetings to discuss the CFW's findings and recommendations. This process had three main repercussions: the production of gender-sensitive data as a basis for county decision-making; an intensified local process of discussing gender equality issues in which the CFW has played a central role; and some concrete, if small, local policy changes.

The annual reports created countywide information that was not available before. The fact that the data was created systematically and periodically and made public provides a solid basis for data-driven policy making. In the area of gender policies, this was a new and, for most interviewees, welcome situation. As for the substance of the data production, there are several noteworthy findings—for example, an intersectional poverty and pay gap. Women are generally poorer than men (21.7% versus 18.5% live below the poverty level according to the 2016 report¹⁶), and the gender pay gap fluctuates between 13% and 15%, which is smaller than the national average. The reports also specified economic stratification based on race and ethnicity. Throughout all the reports, Black women and men experience the *highest* poverty rates, White non-Hispanic women and men the *lowest*, and Hispanic women and men—the majority of the county's residents—find themselves in the middle. The pay gap data reflects a similar trend. Although the data suggests that race and ethnicity are more influential than gender on pay inequity and poverty rates (2018 report), the reports place more emphasis on the widest gender pay gaps which are usually found in the highest paid professions.¹⁷ However, it is noteworthy that the annually produced data brought to light the intersectionality of pay inequity. In the words of one CFW member, "there's been a ... focus on the fact that Black women and Hispanic women earn a lot less than their white women counterparts. We're aware now thanks to the CEDAW and this report." (18)

Another interesting finding is that the number of female entrepreneurs in MDC is higher than the national average, but the businesses they own are very small. Because of this gendered business structure, only 10% to 14% of county contracts are awarded to women-owned businesses, and the revenue that they create is minuscule (4%). This shows a tremendous underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs among county vendors, a situation that the county government can actively address.

The reports contain many more data points that cannot be represented here.¹⁸ Although data creation based on the CEDAW ordinance is of great relevance for designing forward-looking county policies, a lot of data relevant to fully represent gendered living conditions are not captured. Examples are gender-disaggregated data on conditions of employment (e.g., stable employment with benefits versus precarious employment, enforcement of labor standards¹⁹), the performance of unpaid care work, and the availability and use of childcare services. It is partly because of the unavailability of such data, and partly because of limited resources for report writing, that expansion of data collection has not been considered.

In addition to data collection in reports, the second effect of the ordinance was the formulation of recommendations by civil society actors based on the data. The CFW played a leading role in this, as spelled out in the ordinance. Upon the release of each annual report, a months-long process of proposing and vetting recommendations to forward to the BCC ensues under the guidance of the CFW program director and led by the CFW chairperson (I2, 6, 7). These recommendations always contain a general reminder that the county should express its commitment to women and girls by providing resources, as “the budget is a reflection of priorities” (2018 recommendations: 2). Then, the CFW lists its substantive recommendations based on the data revealed in the reports. Over time, the CFW has strategically narrowed this list, as a CFW member involved in the process explained: “The first time we came up with like 60 plus recommendations, that’s how bad it was, okay. But we know a lot of those recommendations would necessitate funding which sometimes the county might not have. ... So we have to be realistic” (I9). Hence, rather than asking for broad measures, such as reducing the local gender wage gap, it has become the strategy of the CFW to formulate shorter lists of focused recommendations that are “actionable” (I5) for the county government. For example, the CFW has repeatedly recommended that the county procurement and contracting department do more outreach to women-owned businesses to support them in getting county contracts. It also suggested revising procurement rules that pose a hurdle for smaller and new companies, many of which are women owned (2018 recommendations).

The CFW strategy is tailored to the local policy process. In the words of one CFW member, “We are the ears and eyes of the commissioners, we have to come up with those recommendations to see what can be done” (I9). There have been mixed assessments of how open commissioners are in terms of acting upon the CFW recommendations. The fact that several recommendations appeared repeatedly and in identical wording in subsequent years suggests a lack of action. As one interviewee judged the situation, “It really is very hard to get them to look

at the recommendations and actually work on implementing them” (I2). However, Levine Cava was described as leading the efforts to act on implementation, and other commissioners were described as inclined but not directly proactive (I1, 2, 4, 5, 6).

One important component of the ordinance process is the public launch of each report and the CFW recommendations in front of the BCC. This produces some “community traction” (I1, 6) because members of CSOs attend this event. Sometimes, it is also covered by local news outlets. However, the CFW’s alignment with local governance necessities narrows the scope of its recommendations and makes them, in effect, less relevant for wider local constituencies. For example, the demand to improve opportunities for female business owners is useful, but a recommendation to focus on the needs of female workers, especially low-wage workers, is missing. The CFW explicitly welcomes community involvement in the process of formulating recommendations. Sometimes, such involvement has added demands, such as educating female workers, in collaboration with community organizations, about their rights as employees and enforcement of labor standards (2019 recommendations). But the CFW, as a volunteer board, is not set up to make this process inclusive and strategic in the long term. Local CSOs have limited resources and pursue their own goals, which may only occasionally align with the ordinance process. Nonetheless, the engagement of the CFW with the CEDAW ordinance is significant, as this interviewee explained: “It was a little bit of an experiment to see, could the Commission for Women take ownership of something like this. And it has been very good and very effective. It has really helped give them a stronger identity” (I5).

Finally, the process attached to the CEDAW ordinance has produced some concrete, if typically small, policy changes. One measure that interviewees described was a change in the way the MDC police department tracks human trafficking crimes. Because of a conversation that a county commissioner had with MDC chief of police explaining the importance of recording cases of human trafficking separate from other sex crimes, “the county is now in a much more meaningful way able to track this information” (I1). A second specific recommendation that was implemented was to provide every woman leaving a homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, or jail with a one-page information sheet on available resources of support. The “direct” and “discrete” nature of this measure (I5) helped get the BCC’s approval, certainly because it could also be carried out at low cost.

Further, an equal pay pledge by county vendors has been implemented. In theory, this is a significant step, as it means that the county only contracts with businesses that pay their employees nondiscriminatory wages. The formal change was initiated by Commissioner Levine Cava, who worked out the specifics with the county procurement department; as a result, a question was added to the broader equity checklist that companies must fill out (I2). However, as this county employee explained, implementation of this measure depends on monitoring businesses’ practice of equal pay: “They have to sign an affidavit that they don’t discriminate. But the county would have to hire thousands of people to show up unexpectedly at businesses. You have to take their word for it that they’re doing it” (I2).

This selection of concrete measures does not show the full range of impact of the ordinance, as the reports and recommendations have also influenced county policies more indirectly. Some interviewees described a general awareness of gender inequality in county government and a willingness to make changes, an attitude that aligns with and is reinforced by the ordinance (I3, 4, 9). What the description of these measures does show, however, is the minimal amount of resources that are made available for implementation of the ordinance or, put differently, an affinity for small, “actionable” measures that are cost neutral and far removed from a systematic approach to dealing with intersectional gender hierarchies.

The political will to do this differently lies, arguably, with the county mayor because of that office’s strong influence on setting political priorities, including through the budget process. In the words of this interviewee, if a mayor were interested in robust monitoring, he or she would understand that this requires “some dedicated staff who even know what equity is. We have ... an equity impact statement right now for ordinances. But it’s not meaningful because nobody really applies relevant criteria” (I5). Instead, monitoring could be improved through several measures: “The human resources department could be tasked with more systematic collection of data or training, procurement ... [could be] making sure that it’s not just words on a paper ... It’s really the direction and oversight of the chief executives” (I5). Accordingly, changing political leadership could create change toward more gender awareness in the county administration. Since Daniella Levine Cava was elected mayor in 2020, several such changes have taken effect, most importantly in form of the first countywide equity and inclusion office. However, the process connected to the CEDAW ordinance remains unchanged.

“Nothing That’s Important ... Don’t Require Funding”: Assessments of the Process

What local actors thought about the CEDAW ordinance depended on whether they had been directly involved with this tool. Especially CFW members, county employees, and local officials believed the ordinance had made a positive impact. Several CFW members credited the ordinance with creating a new awareness about local gender disparities, because they were never laid out before so clearly (I6, 9). In conjunction, the ordinance shows “the fact that as a county we need to ... respect women’s rights ... That’s a major strength, because women have not been put at the level that they should be” (I9). One county staff member described county government officials as responsive to the findings as “they’ve started to recognize needs within our personnel system” (I3). Others thought the reports had an educational function and enabled discussions on gender disparities that had not been the case before (I4).

These positive assessments are embedded in a recognition that long-term change takes more than an ordinance, even if the ordinance is a useful element in such change. One county staff member did not even expect direct impact, but rather expressed the opinion that “the ordinance does what it’s supposed to do in that it gives a very broad guidance ... The next step is to help mitigate ... these

things ... But I think that the ordinance itself does its job.” (I3) Other interviewees had higher expectations. In the view of this CFW member, the framework of the ordinance has some weaknesses, in particular concerning lack of funding and clear responsibilities: “That resolution should have had money attached to it. ... Because there is nothing ... that’s important ... that don’t require some funding. If originally when it was drafted, ... if it was just tying \$1 million to it in the county budget ... I think that’s a lesson learned ... , try to push at the beginning, because once you don’t get it at the beginning, it’s harder for you to get it at the end. ... Another thing that I see ... add a line of responsibility, line of duty” (I9; also I2, 8).

However, most interviewees did not see ways to change these shortcomings and accepted the framework. Members of the CFW pointed to their advisory function and assumed that they could not make demands of any kind, as illustrated by this statement: “It is the county that decides what to do with the recommendations. We don’t push them. We don’t lobby” (I6). Many interviewees had vague ideas of who should move on implementing the ordinance, oscillating between the BCC, the mayor’s office, and “all of us,” and they did not think of their particular task in the process (e.g., formulating recommendations) in a way that connected to an overarching perspective on change making. In other words, the positive assessment of the ordinance among interviewees who were directly involved was based on modest expectations of what it could and should achieve.

In contrast, CSOs interviewed who were not directly involved with the CEDAW ordinance did not think that it offered much added value for their work. One reason for this is the narrow focus of the process on county responsibilities—for example, its focus on the gender pay gap among county employees rather than all workers in the county. Also, they considered the reach of local government structures as not supportive of community organizing (I10). However, in the view of this CSO representative, the process of open consultation in the context of the CEDAW ordinance had become more accessible than other local government structures: “Having this model work for the CEDAW process would allow us to expand it to all the other processes. They just established the LGBTQ advisory board for the county and for the city of Miami. And it looks just like the landscape of leadership here in South Florida that has been ineffective” (I11). The main reluctance of working with the CEDAW ordinance is that the channels for implementation are so limited.

Despite this detachment, some CSOs developed the focus of their work very much in line with the notion of intersectional discrimination and structural transformation that CEDAW and its core concept of substantive equality stand for. As this CSO representative explained: “I think that ... CEDAW is useful ... On a countywide level this framing is not used enough. We talk about climate change, and we talk about affordable housing, and we talk about transportation ... none of those are ... brought together in the way that, how does it manifest in an individual’s life. ... That is often dehumanizing” (I10). What is described here is precisely the idea to recognize *all* layers of discrimination and understand how they reinforce each other, then develop strategies that transform all layers, not just one.

The spectrum of assessments reflects the three social justice positions identified among local interviewees. Not surprisingly, representatives of the intersectional justice approach, in which gender is not prioritized, found the CEDAW ordinance and its explicit gender equality focus not very appealing (I12). This approach's local influence, together with the weight of other local positions that were not working for social justice goals at all, was likely a factor in the modest—or in some interviewees' terms, “realistic”—framing of the ordinance. The gender-explicit victim-oriented approach was embraced by the promoters of the CEDAW ordinance, especially within county governance and in the CFW. It aligns most with the ordinance process as it supports change, including in incremental form, to the benefit of (some) women. Finally, the gender-explicit structure-oriented approach represented by some CSOs is critical of the limitations of the CEDAW ordinance and more invested in structural transformation toward intersectional gender justice.

Conclusion

Local human rights initiatives generate expectations that are challenging to translate into practice. Global frameworks seem far removed, and concrete tools at hand to create palpable change are ambiguous: activism of civil society coalitions is paramount to create momentum, but CSOs are dynamic and often volatile entities that are not set up to sustain momentum, let alone institutionalize it. The commitment of municipal leadership is key for setting up long-term policy processes, but local political structures tend to limit transformative visions in light of what can “realistically” be done. And finally, a tension exists between making human rights ideas locally understandable and acceptable and insisting on their long-term goal—that is, in case of CEDAW, to end all forms of discrimination against women.

The Miami-Dade County CEDAW ordinance grapples with these difficulties and, at the same time, has created some incremental changes that might lead to more ambitious transformation in the long run. With respect to the three factors shaping local human rights initiatives identified in the literature, the case examined can be categorized as follows: First, it is an outlier in relation to CSO involvement. In most local human rights initiatives, CSO activists drive or significantly influence the process (Grigolo 2019; Och 2018; Oomen 2016), but in MDC, the actor who shaped the CEDAW ordinance was a county commissioner. This influenced the scope of the ordinance, which aims to support local political procedures but is not geared toward solving the most pressing problems that women in the county might be facing. Granted, this is not possible with one legal tool, but the ordinance includes neither a mandate of policy implementation nor access to resources for implementation—these dimensions would have been crucial for marginalized women whose interests CSOs represent. Over time, CSO involvement has increased in the process of formulating recommendations, but community buy-in with the CEDAW ordinance is still relatively low.

Second, the ordinance represents a local human rights model that is supported by county government. Although it is only modestly impactful for women

in the county in general, its legal base and periodic report writing provides a continuity that is useful for local policy formulation, which has happened in the form of some small and discrete measures. The ordinance has further been useful for discussions about gender equality policies within county bureaucracy, especially equal pay, in the spirit of Soohoo's (2016) internal monitoring model. However, all things considered, the political will in local government to implement CFW recommendations is limited, as can be seen in the case of the equal pay requirement for county vendors that lacks any oversight structure. After the commissioner who championed the CEDAW ordinance became the county's first female mayor in 2020, the political will for more proactive gender equality policies clearly increased.

Third, in terms of the resonance dilemma, that is the relationship between the global framework of substantive gender equality and assumptions about gender norms in Miami-Dade County, we have seen that the direct connection to CEDAW principles is weak and that the terms used in the convention (in/equality) are not used in the ordinance (disparities/equity). Further, of the three gender-related social justice positions identified among interviewees, the attitude most closely aligned with the ordinance does not perceive gender justice in structural-transformational terms, as CEDAW does, but rather focuses on incremental, "actionable" changes. At the same time, actors who do have such a structure-focused perspective connect very little to the ordinance process because it is not seen as promising for their goals of community transformation.

These findings suggest that both activists and researchers should think harder about complex processes of policy implementation. Local human rights work would be more impactful if the actors involved thought beyond reports and strengthened structures of enforcement. For example, the pay equity pledge for county vendors in Miami-Dade could be enforced by the county's recently created Equity, Diversity and Inclusion office. But more sustaining transformation is likely if there is collaboration between local government and civil society actors. A recent promising example of such collaboration is the MDC labor standards co-enforcement coalition in which local government agencies work together with a coalition of community organizations to address problems with enforcing labor standards. This collaboration has concrete impact on marginalized county inhabitants, such as victims of wage theft.

Scholars interested in gender equality policies should intensify conversations about implementation processes. Arguably, we have long neglected the complexities of policy implementation by thinking of these processes in rather technical terms and underestimating their inherent battles of power (Engeli and Mazur 2018). It is also necessary to think about the ways in which policies are embedded in social conventions and understandings, and how these could be made more conducive for and accepting of gender equality policies. As scholars who study these areas and as political beings with normative convictions, we are part of these social processes and can influence them as teachers and public intellectuals.

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank Alina de Luna Aldape, Jennifer Hill, Sara Kolah Ghoutschi, Malliga Och, Michael Pollok, Rebecca Sanders, Anne Sisson Runyan, and three thorough anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

Notes

1. It is state party to only three of nine core human rights treaties—the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), and the Convention against Torture (CAT)—and did not ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Convention on the Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families (CMW); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED). See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/united-states-america>.
2. Several cities in the United States identify as such, including Washington, DC; Eugene, Oregon; Boston, Massachusetts; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Seattle, Washington; Jackson, Mississippi; and Atlanta, Georgia (listed in chronological order of adopting the status).
3. Some initiatives have a strong focus on human rights education, while others, such as Cities for CEDAW, use one particular human rights treaty for local activism, or they institutionalize a gender mainstreaming approach, as the European Union’s Gender Equal Cities Initiative.
4. In line with an open definition of the “expert” as someone who possesses “specific contextual knowledge ... otherwise not accessible to researchers” (Littig 2009, 100), my experts were involved with the CEDAW ordinance in different ways.
5. I conducted 12 interviews (listed in the appendix): four with members of the Commission for Women, one with the program director of the CFW, one with a county commissioner, two with staff members of county commissioners, one with a staff member of the county commission auditor; and three with a representative of a local civil society organization. All interviewees were assured anonymity. Interviews were between 30 minutes and over an hour long, recorded with the interviewee’s permission, and transcribed. I sent each transcript back to the respective interviewee for authorization.
6. I follow the coding and theming process explained in Saldaña (2016, 4), who defines a code as “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/ or evocative attribute for a portion of ... data,” assigns codes in a first cycle, followed by a second cycle of clustering codes into broader categories, and, eventually, themes. I used Nvivo software to enhance this process.
7. The range is between close to half a million (City of Miami) to less than 1,000 inhabitants (Golden Beach and Indian Creek).
8. See <https://www.miamidade.gov/global/government/boards/commission-for-women.page>.
9. A regularly updated directory published by the CFW lists local women’s organizations (<https://www.miamidade.gov/advocacy/library/connections.pdf>).
10. The United States has been a signatory to CEDAW since 1980. The ratification of international treaties requires a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate, and CEDAW has never been called to vote (Baldez 2014).
11. As of 2023, the Holy See, Iran, Niue, Palau, Somalia, Sudan, Tonga, and the United States of America have not ratified it.
12. The online list has not been updated since June 2019 (see <http://citiesforcedaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Landscape-Cities-for-CEDAW-Branded-for-Website-June-27-2019.pdf>). Since then, several others followed, including Broward County, Florida, and Washington, DC, adopting ordinances and Irvine, California adopting a resolution.
13. Such policies include ordinance 98-30 (Requiring county vendors to demonstrate that they do not discriminate against minorities and women, 1998) and resolutions R-536-92 (Establishing gender balance for county advisory boards and committees, 1992), R-644-12 (Declaring freedom from domestic violence a fundamental human right, 2012), and R-998-14 (directing the Mayor’s Office to analyze pay equality within the County’s workforce, 2014).

14. Available at <https://metropolitan.fiu.edu/research/periodic-publications/miami-dade-county-gender-equity-report/> and <https://www.miamidade.gov/global/government/boards/commission-for-women.page>, Status of Women Annual Reports.
15. The first set of recommendations of 2016 is available at the Commission for Women's website at: <https://www.miamidade.gov/advocacy//library/2016-status-of-women-recommendations.pdf>
16. The overall poverty rate fluctuates slightly across the reports, but the gender ratio remains the same.
17. According to the 2019 report, legal professions stand out with a gender pay gap of over 50%.
18. For example, the education data shows that women/girls slightly outperform men/boys in terms of graduation rates and that there is a gender difference in areas of college education which affects the gender pay gap.
19. The 2020 report contains some data on wage theft which affects a large number of low-income workers in MDC.

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Appendix: List of Interviews

- I1: Former staff member of a county commissioner
- I2: Commission for Women program director
- I3: Staff member the county commission auditor
- I4: Two staff members of a county commissioner
- I5: County commissioner
- I6–9: Members of the Commission for Women
- I10–12: Representatives of civil society organizations

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Cite this article: Zwingel, Susanne. 2024. "Women's Rights Close to Home? The Miami-Dade County CEDAW Ordinance as Local Practice." *Politics & Gender* 20, 54–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X2300034X>