

BSA Violence Against Women Study Group

Annual Report for Year 2010/2011

1. Established:

1985

2. Current Membership Figure:

94

3. SG Expenditure: 0

SG Income: 0

4. Aims of Study Group:

The aim of the Study Group is to provide a feminist (woman only) space for academics, students, practitioners and activists to analyze violence against women, to network, share work and ideas, foster thoughts and interest and to support each other in working to combat violence against women.

5. Review of Year:

Whilst there was not a formal study group event held in 2010, members of the group regularly communicated with each throughout the year regarding their work, new research, research bids, related events (such as conferences, seminars, workshops), activism and anything thought to be of interest to the group. Networks have been forged and strengthened and the mailing list continues to be a useful resource for support and information sharing. Several new members joined the group during 2010 and the group convener regularly received correspondence from people interested in the work of the group, including representatives from the media on two occasions in the last year.

Members of the group have had notable recent publications, including:

Dr Hilary Abrahams' latest book *Rebuilding Lives after Domestic Violence: Understanding Long-Term Outcomes* examines the long-term outcomes for women who have suffered domestic violence and abuse, based on interviews conducted over seven years. It is the first longitudinal study of life after domestic abuse for many years and the first to cover such an extended period.

A chapter by group member Professor Marianne Hester forms part of Itzin, C., Taket, A. and Barter-Godfrey, S. (eds.) book, *Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse: Tackling the Health and Mental Health Effects*.

Carol Rivas won a PhD student prize with the Psychology of Women Section of the British Psychological Society, for the article,

“I don't feel like I'm in an abusive relationship”: Women's naming of their partner's abusive behaviours and how this may be affected by institutional definitions’. *Psychology of Women Section Review*, Vol. 12, No. 2.

The prize included guest attendance at their annual conference and presentation of the paper.

Dr Carole Wright is writing the UK chapter, with Malcolm Cowburn, for a book edited by Jeff Hearn, Bob Pease, Keith Pringle and Elisabetta Ruspini and provisionally entitled *Men and Masculinities around the World: Transforming Men's Practices*, published by Palgrave.

Group members Professor Liz Kelly and Dr. Nicole Westmarland were involved in writing a research review for the Government Equalities Office commissioned as part of the Stern Review, the report by Baroness Vivien Stern of an independent review into how rape complaints are handled by public authorities in England and Wales. The review looked at the extent to which there was research evidence on important issues such as: what we know about the prevalence and distribution of rape; reporting and disclosure; support and advocacy; the response of the criminal justice system; the response of the health system; attitudes to and stereotypes of rape; and the impact of recent policy changes.

Brown, J., Horvath, M., Kelly, L. and Westmarland, N. (2010) *Connections and Disconnections: Assessing Evidence, Knowledge and Practice in Relation to Rape*. Government Equalities Office.

6. Key Activities during year 2010/2011:

At this year's 60th anniversary BSA conference, the study group held a special event panel on violence against women, organised by Jo Armstrong from Lancaster University and chaired by group convener Gillian Macdonald. The panel consisted of paper contributions from Professor Sylvia Walby (Professor of Sociology at Lancaster University and one of the conference's plenary speakers), Professor Susan Edwards (Dean of Law at the University of Buckingham), Jude Towers and Philippa Olive (PhD researchers from Lancaster University), Professor Marianne Hester (Head of the Centre for Research on Gender and Violence at the University of Bristol) and Gillian Macdonald (social work lecturer at the University of Bath and the current BSA VAW study group convener). Between them, these different speakers presented a fresh understanding of the gendered working of the criminal justice system when dealing with issues of violence against women (including domestic abuse cases and defence for women who kill because of or out of fear), the intersection of gender and sexuality in domestic abuse, new perspectives on gendered debates about methodology when researching violence against women and a rethinking of the priorities in analysing and theorising gender and VAW. The panel was well attended and concluded with a useful discussion following delivery of all the papers.

7. Concluding Remarks:

Following discussions at the BSA Annual conference (2011), it was decided to explore the possibility of constructing a BSA VAW study group webpage, or forum, in order to facilitate group communication and the sharing of information, since this is currently a primary function of the study group. The group convener will seek information and advice from the BSA regarding this matter.

Discussions were also had in relation to achieving a bigger group presence at the next BSA conference. The VAW special event panel was successful, but hosted in an open stream, which made it quite difficult to identify panel details in the conference programme. The group hopes to have a bigger and more obvious presence at the conference next year and will explore ways of achieving this with the BSA and the conference organisers.

8. Convenor and Contacts:

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