

## BSA Sociology of Rights Study Group

### Annual Report

#### 1. Established:

2007

#### 2. Membership Figure (2016):

**162 members, as of February 2017, based on subscribers to JISCMail list Sociology of Rights**

#### 3. SG Expenditure:

**SG Income: £0**

**SG Expenditure for 2016-17: £0**

#### 4. Aims of Study Group:

The Sociology of Rights Study Group brings together people interested in promoting the sociological study of rights, with an emphasis on human rights. Members of the groups explore different areas and practices of rights as well as the actors involved, from social movements to governments. They critically question the meaning and functioning of rights across international, state and local/urban arenas.

#### 5. Review of Year:

This has been a busy year for the group and one of transition as well. Our members have remained active on many academic fronts, by developing the themes of sociology and rights in different activities, from research to teaching. As two convenors decided to step down from their role, we will be launching soon a call for new convenors. These will certainly bring new ideas and resources to the group, which will help the development of activities in the short and long term future. In the meantime, we have continued to contribute sociology of rights panels to the BSA conference, making issues of rights and human rights visible in the sociological debate. We have also contributed a small report for the Network magazine. Our members, as this report will highlight, have also continued to work on and/or relate to activities and events which raise sociological issues of rights and human rights. It is also quite promising that some universities opened job positions related to human rights with potential interest also for sociologists of rights, e.g. Kingston and Roehampton.

#### 6. Membership

Members of the Study Group include BSA and non-BSA members. Members are recruited in particular through BSA conferences and other Study Group activities, such as workshops and seminars. As part of the membership, we ask people to subscribe to our mailing list.

#### 7. Publications

Several Study Group members have published articles and books developing sociological knowledge of rights and human rights, at theoretical and/or empirical level. We would like to emphasise the following (in alphabetical order):

- Alice Nah (co-editor) (2016, Routledge) *Critical Perspectives on the Security and Protection of Human Rights Defenders*.
- Alice Nah (2016) "Networks and Norm Entrepreneurship amongst Local Civil Society Actors: Advancing Refugee Protection in the Asia Pacific Region", *International Journal of Human Rights*, 20(2): 223-240.
- Cavidan Soykan (2016) 'Access to International Protection – Border Issues in Turkey' in *States, The Law and Access to Refugee Protection: Fortresses and Fairness*, Stevens, D. & O'Sullivan, M. (eds) Hart Publishing, UK.
- Hannah Miller and Robin Redhead (Guest Editors) (2017) 'Beyond "rights-based approaches"? Critical research into human rights practice', *International Journal of Human Rights*, Special Issue, Issue forthcoming.
- Matthew Waites (2016) 'LGBTI organisations navigating imperial contexts: the Kaleidoscope Trust, the Commonwealth and the need for a decolonizing, intersectional politics', *The Sociological Review* (doi:10.1111/1467-954X.12424).
- Michele Grigolo (co-editor) (2016, Cambridge) *Global Urban Justice: The Rise of Human Rights Cities*.
- Priscilla Alderson (2016 Routledge) *The Politics of Childhoods Real and Imagined*.

We expect more publications in the sociology of rights in the near future, especially in the area of LGBT studies, as part of engagement of Matthew Waites, former convenor of this study group, in a book series on Global Queer Politics which was launched recently from Palgrave Macmillan. Matthew co-edits the series with Jordi Díez (University of Guelph, Canada), Sonia Corrêa (Sexuality Policy Watch, Brazil) and David Paternotte (Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium) and Matthew Waites (University of Glasgow, UK). If you have an idea to discuss or would like the proposal form, please email Matthew Waites at [Matthew.Waites@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Matthew.Waites@glasgow.ac.uk).

Hannah Miller (Co-convenor, Kingston University) and Robin Redhead (Leeds Beckett) have guest edited a Special issue of the *International Journal of Human Rights*, *Beyond "rights-based approaches"? Critical research into human rights practice*. The collection (2017, forthcoming) contains an important selection of key articles written by members of the study group and those affiliated to the group more widely. The call for papers particularly welcomed sociological submissions (especially given the journal's strong history in publishing leading contributions from within the field of the sociology of rights). The collection showcases articles that think critically about - and beyond – "rights-based" approaches. It details research that seeks transformative solutions to systemic patterns of injustice, while considering the real changes in peoples' lives. Contributing authors include: Prof Chatan Bhatt (LSE); Prof Paul Dixon (Kingston University); Dr Peter Manning (Bath); Dr Emma Larking (Australian National University); Dr Javier Trevino-Rangel (LSE); Dr Kathryn Tomlinson; Dr Hannah Miller (Kingston); Dr Robin Redhead (Leeds Beckett); Jeff Halper (ICAHN & People Yes! Network); Prof Thomas Reifer (San Diego); Ruth Kelly (ActionAid).

## Events

The Human Rights and Social Justice Research group at Kingston University organised a one-day workshop, co-hosted by the study group in February 2016. The workshop was centred on the

proposal for a Special Issue of the International Journal of Human Rights, with guest editors Dr Robin Redhead (Leeds Beckett) and Dr Hannah Miller (Kingston). The workshop included numerous panel presentations related to the theme of Beyond "Rights-Based Approaches". The purpose of the workshop was to share excellence in research related to human rights practice. There was a strong sub-theme of the sociology of rights across many of the presentations. The workshop developed key themes for the forthcoming SI (as detailed above - Miller and Redhead, 2017, 'Beyond "rights-based approaches"? Critical research into human rights practice', International Journal of Human Rights, Special Issue, Issue forthcoming).

The Internationalism, Cosmopolitanism and the Politics of Solidarity (ICPS) Research Group at LSE organised a series of human rights events with sociological relevance:

- Emergencies of Peace: The Exceptional State of (Academic) Affairs in Contemporary Turkey,
- Solidarity: Call for Specificity

Both events were chaired by Dr Ayça Çubukçu, Assistant Professor in Human Rights, Centre for the Study of Human Rights / Department of Sociology, LSE (chair). For more information on ICPS, please see <http://www.lse.ac.uk/humanRights/research/groups/Solidarity.aspx>.

A workshop on 'State Accommodation of Religious Tribunals' was held in January 2016 at the University of Leicester. The purpose of this workshop was to theorize The Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality) Bill in relation to the values of the liberal state and to provide a UK-specific and contemporary lens through which to explore the tension between women's rights and accommodations of religions by way of judicial autonomy.

In July 2016, a conference on children's and young people's rights in the digital age took place at LSE, as a London-based pre-conference to the Leicester IAMCR conference. The event explored the potential of online and networked media for promoting children's rights, as well as . At the same time, it also raised the concerns of researchers, child rights' advocates and internet governance experts that children's rights are being newly infringed rather than enhanced in the digital age, with implications for research, policy and practice. More information can be found at <http://iamcr.org/leicester2016/preconf/youth-digital-rights-cfp>.

## Teaching

Priscilla Alderson and Rachel Rosen University College London Institute of Education. To encourage students on the **MA course of The sociology of childhood and children's rights** to write book reviews for journals, and thereby help to promote the books, we held a writing workshop. The students reviewed different chapters of the Routledge International Handbook of Children's Rights Studies, eds W. Vandenhoe, et al (2015). The reviews with an account of the workshop were published in Children & Society 2016, 30: 520-27, 'book review meets book club', available on Iris and Researchgate.

Calls for **PhD projects** in the area of sociology and rights were published in 2016, in the following areas:

- Human rights and the city. An investigation into environmental issues, the right to clean water and the right to the city in the city of Barrancabermeja, Columbia. The project is conducted by Fatima Elena Garcia and is supervised by the study group co-convenor Michele Grigolo (Department of Sociology at Nottingham Trent University) as part of his ongoing exploration of human rights and cities.
- Global transitional justice. The research is based at the Department of History and Politics at Liverpool Hope University and is supervised by Dr Catalina Montoya and Dr Peter Manning, both of whom have published in the field. The project aims to explore specific “glocal” challenges in transitional justice.

## 9. Forthcoming:

The Sociology of Rights sub-stream section at the next BSA Conference at University of Manchester. Title: Recovering the Social: Personal: Troubles and Public Issues. Dates: 4-6 April, 2017. In particular the Tuesday (4<sup>th</sup>) of the conference will see a packed day of sociology of rights presentations. There will also be a study group meeting (in room 4.214, lunch time) and an evening social event. For more information please email [michele.grigolo@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:michele.grigolo@ntu.ac.uk) or [h.miller@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:h.miller@kingston.ac.uk)

A call for papers was launched, including papers based on the sociology of rights, for sub-theme on ‘De/humanisation and Organisation’ in the conference of the European Group of Organisational Studies (Copenhagen, 6-8 July 2017). The purpose of this stream is to explore the dehumanising effects of contemporary organisations but also the potential of organisations to re-humanise social relations. For more information, please consult: <http://tinyurl.com/hg84wjr>

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