

活動報告

SUPRI Project Annual Report April 2018 - March 2019

Group 2 “Global Justice and Human Rights”

Group Members:

Tracey Nicholls, Rob Sinclair, Hanna Zulueta

Research Subject

“Understanding Sexual Violence: Epistemic Injustice, Law, and Social Awareness”

The Global Justice and Human Rights research team was constituted at the first meeting of academic year 2018, April 25, 2018. We were charged with developing a research plan that we would present at the next meeting of the Soka University Peace Research Institute (SUPRI) in July 2018, and would develop into a *Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research* (KAKENHI) application for research funding from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (submitted October 2018).

1. Research targets and plan (methodologies and schedule)

In our first team meeting (May 16, 2018), we met to discuss our respective research interests, with a view towards establishing the

overlap out of which we might develop a collaborative research project.

Dr. Nicholls is part of a four-person international team of scholars hired as faculty in Soka University's newly-created Graduate School of International Peace Studies (SIPS). This school and the M.A. degree it offers were created at the request of the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT), as part of their identification, and development, of Soka University as one of the Top Global Universities of Japan. She was appointed in April 2018 to teach in the areas of peace studies and gender studies. Her doctoral research considered the question of how ethical and political norms present in improvised jazz could help build more democratic political communities and more robust systems of protection for human rights. Her first faculty position was in the United States, teaching philosophy of law, ethics, and political philosophy, and co-directing a Women's Studies Program. As the university began to respond pro-actively to the general academic climate of concern regarding campus sexual assault, she began to work in the areas of gender justice and eradication of sexual violence, creating and directing a student group—much like the Believe Campaign currently working to introduce sexual consent education at Soka University. There she staged education and awareness events and helped train students in bystander-intervention techniques, which are a sociologically-recognized way to reduce sexual assault. Since arriving at Soka, motivated by the education and reform power of the “me too” social movement, she has begun researching and writing a book that brings her interest in improvisation together with a commitment to gender justice and equality, a book about improvisatory strategies (“culture-jamming”) to end the cultural conditioning (“rape culture”) which allows sexual

violence to be ignored or minimized.

Dr. Sinclair is a philosopher appointed in the undergraduate Faculty of International Liberal Arts (FILA), and is also appointed to teach graduate courses in the SIPS program. He taught in Canada and the United States before he came to Soka University. His area of expertise is pragmatist philosophy, specifically, American Pragmatism, a scholarly approach that stresses the practical relevance of philosophy to society. Currently, he is expanding his research interests to include exciting new work being done at the intersection of ethics and epistemology: theorizing epistemic injustice, a concept introduced by English philosopher Miranda Fricker, and its implications in gender relations. Fricker’s work on epistemic injustice gives us the resources to theorize the persistent derogation of women, the systematic campaigns against women’s credibility, and the corresponding assumption routinely furnished to men in public life: that they are competent professionals who can accurately grasp and describe reality. All of these harms—demeaning, disbelieving, dominating—are epistemic ones, and they are defining characteristics of the phenomenon of “rape culture,” a pervasive environment not just of explicit sexual violence, but of varied manifestations of disrespect for women’s personhood. When we look around the world at the many countries that are having, in their own distinct ways, #metoo moments and #metoo movements, we can see that we all have something to learn about justice and human rights from the ways these moments and movements are being voiced and being responded to. In both his teaching and his research, Dr. Sinclair examines these concepts and institutions from a socially-engaged critical standpoint.

Dr. Zulueta is a sociologist whose research specializations are

in gender and global migration. She has research and teaching expertise in issues of human trafficking and the role of gender in rights violations. Like Dr. Sinclair, she is appointed in FILA and cross-appointed in the SIPS graduate program. Dr. Zulueta was part of the inaugural faculty of FILA, appointed to teach in sociology and Japan Studies. As a researcher in Japan Studies and in the causes and effects of global migration, she brings an extraordinary cultural literacy to our discourses about justice and rights. Her research and teaching into the life chances of women who experience the added vulnerabilities of statelessness, dislocation, and poverty brings a set of skills in comparative analysis to our collaborative project. She too is interested in researching the cross-cultural discourse on gendered abuse and exploitation that is taking place under the label of the recently-emerged and rapidly globalizing “me too” movement, and is paying particular to developments in the Philippines and in campaigns of solidarity with stateless victims of sexual violence and other gendered harms, like the Rohingya.

In that first meeting of our three-member research team, it quickly became clear that our respective research interests all overlapped on the matter of gender equality as a basic principle of justice. As members of Soka University’s Peace Research Institute (SUPRI) and researchers in areas that overlap on questions of global justice and human rights, we agree that gender equality is a fundamental aspect of justice, and of human rights. In particular we see the importance, in our current global human rights context, of exploring the theorizing that noted scholars and activists from Japan and around the world have been doing, from a gendered perspective, on the topics of justice and human rights. As two of us are trained as philosophers, our dominant approach to methodology emphasizes

theoretical analysis of concepts and research problems. This is reflected in the project we have designed, but the addition to the team of a sociologist means we will also be doing data-driven comparative analysis.

Trends in our respective disciplines support our overlapping research interests and justify our consensus decision to explore the gendered aspects of global justice and human rights. These trends include philosophy’s recent growing interest in the intersection of epistemology (theories of knowledge) and ethics: a commitment to socially responsible philosophy epitomized by Miranda Fricker’s groundbreaking work on the concept of epistemic injustice.¹ This type of injustice occurs either when the harm that is experienced by a person is something for which their social world lacks the concepts required to make sense of their experience (a harm the person does not know how to name) or the person is not recognized as a believable holder of knowledge (a harm to one’s testimonial credibility). Another current and influential discourse, in peace studies, focuses on the concept of “structural violence” as an innovative way to understand social injustices such as poverty, racism, and sexism as forms of violence.² It furnishes us with a way of speaking about violence and injustice that does not depend on identifying individual acts of malevolence or harm; a social structure can bring violence into a person’s life by denying him or her the opportunity to meet basic needs, social needs, or self-actualization

1 Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

2 Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 6.3 (1969): 167-191; Galtung, “Cultural Violence”, *Journal of Peace Research*, volume 27.3 (1990): 291-305.

needs. Both “epistemic injustice” and “structural violence” offer robust explanatory schemas for the empirical observation that the “average woman” has fewer and more constrained opportunities for a stable and successful life than her male counterpart in the same society. Additionally, global best practices in gender studies and sociology of gender have intensified feminist analysis and activism in the area of rape culture and sexual violence, and have contributed to the worldwide education movement about women’s experiences that many of us know as #metoo. Much of this analysis, activism, and education has been responsible for the legal reforms we see globally in areas such as updated legal definitions of rape, for example.

In the course of our discussions of these trends, we developed a three-year research project that has formed the basis of our 2018 application for a Grant-in-aid for scientific research (a KAKENHI application).

2. KAKENHI proposal

title: “Understanding Sexual Violence: Epistemic Injustice, Law, and Social Awareness” (Grant-in Aid for Scientific Research (C) (General), submitted October 2018)

We have proposed a comparative theoretical project that looks at philosophical and sociological thinking about global justice and human rights through a gendered lens: social action to reduce (ideally, eliminate) sexual violence against women. While women are not, of course, the only victims of sexual violence, the larger social climate that normalizes and perpetuates sexual violence—the misogyny, objectification, and exploitation known as “rape culture”—is a set of

conditions that disadvantages women, in particular, as citizens and social agents. The focus of our project is:

- I. theorizing sexual violence as a form of structural violence—defined as any social organization in which *“human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic [physical] and mental realizations are below their potential realizations”* (Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” p.168) and
- II. examining the types of epistemic injustice—injustice done to people as knowers—that serve to promote, or work to reinforce, sexual violence within rape culture.

Our research project draws on different strands of academic thought—philosophy, for its theoretical precision; sociology, for its empirical and comparative focus; peace studies, for its analysis of violence; and gender studies, for its analysis of social equality—to examine sexual violence, in particular, as a human rights violation of concern to those who seek to build global justice. In proposing to analyze sexual violence as “structural violence,” we intend to highlight how social institutions can cause or enable harm and injustice, and in proposing to analyze sexual violence as “epistemic injustice,” we aim to highlight how both institutions and interpersonal relationships can hide or conceal its harms. The overarching purpose of our project—what makes it original—is that we will be producing an innovative and comprehensive interdisciplinary theoretical analysis that makes all of us, as social actors, more aware of the ways we need to restructure our social world so that we can reduce harm and end unnecessary suffering.

We plan to do this by bringing together experts in a range of relevant fields from around the world: to create a video library of

the expertise demonstrated in the public lectures they will give and the workshops they will participate in, and to invite them to contribute essays to a book we will edit—a collection of innovative theory on how to educate people and how to reform institutions so that sexual violence and harms are reduced. We are going to survey the best practices in academic theory on justice and human rights, and in social reform and activism, on the question of how to teach individuals and how to shape institutions so that we all take collective responsibility for reducing sexual violence. Our research project, through the events and publications we produce, will contribute to greater knowledge of the harms of sexual violence, greater ability to make social progress towards a more just and gender-equal world, and the greater peace and development that can be harnessed in a world where women are equal contributors of knowledge, instead of being victims of sexual coercion and unevenly distributed social privilege.

During what we hope will be the first year of funded research (academic year 2019), we plan to begin work on a journal article that presents our own theoretical analysis of innovations that offer a better understanding of the injustices of sexual violence, and we will also be working on extending invitations to the speaker series we are planning for academic year 2020 and the workshops we are planning for academic year 2021. Our co-written essay, to be produced and published in academic year 2019, will form a conceptual and discursive framework for our project, including the edited collection we will produce in the third year (academic year 2021). In the second year, we will host an interdisciplinary speaker series on gender justice and sexual autonomy, inviting a maximum of eight speakers to campus for public lectures (Spring term: April—July 2020, and

Fall term: September—December 2020) to share their expertise in analyzing legal reforms in the area of sexual violence, in comparing Japan’s legal and cultural climate with other jurisdictions, in demonstrating how advertising messages can enable sexual violence, in organizing responsible education and victim-support campaigns at the university level, and other questions relevant to understanding connections between sexual violence and gender inequality, or gender injustice. In the third year of funding (academic year 2021), we plan to host two day-long workshops that will call for both speakers on structural violence and speakers who can analyze epistemic injustice through a gendered lens, in order to establish links between the ideas produced in our speaker series, arguments developed in the separate research paper we co-write in academic year 2019, and the work currently being done by philosophers in epistemology and ethics on epistemic injustice, in particular as it pertains to gendered epistemic injustices. This would include questions such as why rape victims are disbelieved. All events, speaker series and workshops, will be recorded and transcribed, for permanent archiving—ideally, on the Soka University Peace Research Institute website—and selected speakers will be asked to contribute to the edited collection we produce. The edited collection will offer comparative and theoretical analyses of ways to correct and prevent the harms that sexual violence brings about: both to individual human beings, and to the concept of gender justice. When the manuscript is completed at the end of the research award period, it will be submitted to a university press for publication.

We anticipate inviting scholars whose research considers ways that universities and university students are working to reduce sexual assault and educate their communities about consent; ways that

advertising (of alcohol, in particular) normalizes lifestyles that lead to or are strongly correlated with sexual violence; and ways that we need to reconceptualize our understanding of justice in order to see the gender bias (or lack of sensitivity to the impact of gender) in our current grasp of what counts as justice or injustice. We also want to include activist voices who can offer the perspective of victims of this violence, and talk from a victim-advocacy standpoint about how they have learned to survive and heal from the harms they have suffered. By the end of the research period, there will be a permanent archive (the video library mentioned above) of the speaking and workshop events we organize around these researchers, and a collection of the best of this knowledge in a book we (Drs. Nicholls, Sinclair, and Zulueta) will be editing. The 2019 article we co-write, our theoretical analysis of the injustices of sexual violence, will be reworked to conceptually frame the other contributions to innovative thinking on eradicating sexual violence. We hope that the video library will be housed permanently on a stable Soka University website and, together with the book, will comprise a lasting resource for how the social problem of sexual violence needs to be theorized.

3. Activities of team members (articles, presentations, seminars, conferences)

As we are a newly-formed team awaiting the results of our first application for funding for this project, an overview of our research activities relevant to this project is largely a report of present and prospective achievements.

In present achievements, Dr. Sinclair recently presented a paper called “Dewey’s Unmodern Philosophy and the Ideology of

Technicism” at the University of Helsinki, Finland, in June of 2018. The analysis of epistemic justice he offers in this paper represents the philosophical research base he brings to our project. Dr. Zulueta has obtained a book contract with Palgrave MacMillan, to publish her new book on migration and transnational identities in military bases in Okinawa.

Our goals for academic year 2019 include writing and submitting for publication two separate co-written articles, both in SCOPUS-indexed journals, and creating a partnership with Soka students to produce a #metoo-related art installation.

The first collaboration is the article the Drs. Nicholls and Zulueta are co-writing on how to understand “me too” as a globalized phenomenon. We will argue that the best way to understand #metoo is as an umbrella concept that links various national movements for gender justice and social equality. We will be making this argument through multiple theoretical lenses—mobility studies; peace studies; gender studies—that all have important insights for interpreting the significance of this most recent rupture of institutionalized gender roles. To achieve the widest audience for our argument, we will be looking at publishing in either *the Journal of Peace Research* or *Gender and Society*, both noted and widely-cited journals.

The second collaboration involves all three of us co-writing a theoretical analysis of the injustices of sexual violence. Here we will make our arguments for understanding sexual violence as “structural violence,” and the need to hold accountable social institutions can cause or enable harm and injustice, and as “epistemic (testimonial) injustice,” which, in its emphasis on interpersonal relationships and its identification of power inequities and abuses within those relationships, mirrors much of the “me too” discussion we are seeing

these days. This article, written to be publication in SCOPUS-indexed *Philosophy Compass*, will form the initial framework through which we announce and explain our project; we anticipate that a substantially reworked version will later form the conceptual-editorial framework for the edited collection we plan.

In addition to those interventions into academic discourse, we also want to harness the power of art to educate and to understand. We plan to involve students with interests in peace studies and gender justice in an on-campus presentation of samples of #metoo-related artwork as a way of educating the university community about sexual and gender-based violence. As #metoo-related movements take hold in countries around the world, we have begun to see a great deal of visual creativity in how these ideas are being presented, so we would like to have posters made of some of the most eye-catching of these images, and situate them around the Soka campus for a limited period of time. This would be an excellent way to involve students from the Believe Campaign: they could lead walking tours of the installation pieces and educate people about their student group, which promotes the importance of consent in respectful human relationships. And, should we find a suitable place on campus, this could perhaps be a permanent installation, paying tribute to Soka University's ongoing commitment to developing our students as creative agents of social justice and peacebuilding.