

Section on Sociology of Human Rights

(Submitted August 2009)

Mission

The Section on the Sociology of Human Rights seeks to promote and support scholarship, teaching, and the fostering of an interdisciplinary, international, and critical engagement in both the sociological study of human rights as well as establishing a human rights approach to the sociological enterprise. The Sociology of Human Rights is conceived broadly and inclusively as a scholarly and human pursuit of understanding the social, political, cultural, and comparative construction of human rights histories, institutions, discourses, and futures as well as the social structures, relations, and practices that will most fully support the realization of human rights in the world. The Section on the Sociology of Human Rights encourages the growth of dialogues regarding human rights as method, as epistemology, as theory, and as praxis in the sociological understanding of the world in which we live. This section will strive to bring international perspectives to the Sociology of Human Rights globally and to the United States.

The Section will facilitate these goals through the active support of and creation of structures, activities, and practices that promote: 1) the free exchange of ideas, experiences, research findings, pedagogical strategies, and best practices in the research on the sociology of human rights and the discussion of human rights within the sociological enterprise; 2) the collaborative development of resources dedicated to enhancing research, teaching, and practice of the sociology of human rights; 3) communication among members both nationally and internationally regarding events, practices, experiences, research, and teaching on the sociology of human rights; 4) the forging of linkages and relationships with sociology of human rights scholars across the globe, including community activists, grounded movements, communities, and individuals; and, 5) opportunities for the dissemination, distribution, and publication of research in the sociology of human rights across the world.

Officers of the Section

The officers of the Section will be a Chair, a Chair-elect, a Past-Chair, and a Secretary-Treasurer. The Chair-Elect will serve for one year, after which he or she will assume the position of Chair. The Chair will serve for one year, after which he or she will become Past-Chair. The Secretary-Treasurer will serve for a period of three years. There will be a Council consisting of six members, each serving for three years, with two Council seats being vacated each year. In the first election of the Council, two Council seats will be identified as one-year seats, two as two-year seats, and two as three-year seats. Officers will not succeed themselves. In addition, the Council will include two student representatives. Each of the two student representatives will serve for two years, and one new student representative will be elected each year by the Section's student members.

The Nominating Committee (see below) will strive to encourage the participation and leadership of academics from non-OECD countries in the section.

The Chair, Chair-elect, and the Secretary-Treasurer will serve as ex-officio voting members of the Council, with the Chair of the Section acting as Chair of the Council. The duty of the Chair-elect will be to plan the program for the Annual Meeting of the association. All other Section business will be facilitated by the Chair. Newsletter editor(s) and website director(s) will be appointed by the Council and serve ex-officio on the Council. No member can hold two offices simultaneously or serve more than two terms in any ten-year period for all official roles in the Section (except for newsletter editorship and website director). If an elected officer is elected to another office, the prior office will be declared vacant. If an elected office is vacated before the term is completed, it will be filled through appointment by the Chair for the unexpired term, subject to confirmation by the Council at its next Council meeting. Only voting members of the Association will be eligible to hold office.

In the event of death, resignation, incapacity or inactivity of the Chair, Chair-Elect, or Secretary-Treasurer, the council, acting on the initiative of any member thereof, may designate an interim officer to perform the functions of that office for a period of at most one year. Such action will require the approval of two-thirds of the council members. The interim officer so designated may be any member of the Section, including a member already holding another office or membership on the Council. In the case of death or resignation, or in the case of the continued incapacity or inactivity of an officer for a period longer than the one year permitted for an interim officer, the Council will call for the election of a replacement at the time of the regular annual election, and the elected replacement will call for the election of a replacement at the time of the regular annual election, and the elected replacement will fill the remainder of the term of office.

Powers of the Officers

The Chair will preside over meetings of the Council and the Section Business Meeting. The Secretary-Treasurer will present to each new council member the current By-laws, and also the current *ASA Manual on Sections*. The Chair will plan the program on the sociology of human rights for the Annual Meeting of the ASA. The Chair-Elect will assume the duties of the Chair in the latter's absence or incapacity. The Council will make decisions by majority rule of its attending members, acting as the representative of the membership of the Section in order to carry out all necessary operations. Any action of the Section, including changes of the By-Laws, may be brought to the vote of the Section by the Council, or by a petition of 51% percent or twenty-five of the members, whichever is less. Questions that are interpreted by the Council to be matters of new program development or policy will be brought before the membership for discussion.

Elections and Voting

The elections of the Section will be carried out in cooperation with the American Sociological Association and coordinated to their schedule. The exception will be the first election, which will be carried out concomitantly with the formation of the Section. Newly elected officers and Council members will assume office on the day following the annual business meeting of the Section at the American Sociological Association's Annual Meeting. Newly elected officers and Council members are urged to attend meetings of the Council prior to assuming office as non-voting members.

Meetings of the Section will be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, the enforcement of which may be requested by any member of the Section.

Committees

There will be a Committee on Nominations, formed each year at the annual business meeting of the Section. The Nominating Committee will consist of three members: the Past-chair, one member appointed by the Council, and one elected from the floor at the business meeting. No member will serve on the Nominating Committee for more than two consecutive years. Two candidates will be presented for each office by the Committee on Nominations. Other Committees will be appointed by the Chair with the approval of the Council on an ad hoc basis.

There will be a Program Committee, consisting of at least three members to be appointed for two-year terms, including at least one currently elected member of the Council. The Program Committee will be chaired by the Chair-elect of the Section, who will appoint the other members in consultation with the Chair of the Section. The purpose of the Program Committee will be to develop sessions of interest to the Section at each Annual ASA Meeting, in cooperation with the ASA Program Committee.

There will be a Publications Committee consisting of at least three members to be appointed for two-year terms, including at least one current elected member of the Council. The Chair of the Publications Committee will be appointed by the Chair of the Section, and will serve as Editor of the Section Newsletter, in addition to appointing the other members of the Publications Committee. The purpose of the Publications Committee will be to prepare a Section Newsletter to be distributed to all Section members four times a year through the American Sociological Association.

There will be a Membership Committee consisting of at least three members to be appointed for two-year terms, including at least one current elected member of the Council. The Chair of the Membership Committee will be appointed by the Chairperson of the Section. The purpose of the Membership Committee will be to increase membership of the Section.

The Council may create such temporary committees not provided in the By-Laws as may seem useful for promoting the work of the Section. The Council may create such temporary liaisons and/or committees not provided in the by-laws as may seem useful for promoting the work of the Section.

Referenda

Any action of the Council, including changes of the By-Laws, may be referred to an email ballot of Section members by means of a petition containing the approvals of 51% of the Section members or of 25 members of the Section, whichever is less. Any resolution passed by the annual Business Meeting of the Section will be referred to Council. If such resolutions are not accepted by the Council, they will be submitted to the membership by mail ballot.

Membership and Dues

The membership of the Section is open to any member of the American Sociological Association without regard to the classification of the membership. Members who do not pay their Section dues will be suspended, and dropped from the rolls after two years.

Dues will be set by the Council to cover the operation of the Section in accord with the requirements of the American Sociological Association.

Annual Meeting Participation

Section members support the scholarly aims and organizational integrity of the Section by requiring all who present papers or take part in discussions on referred roundtables at the Annual Meetings to become Section members in their appropriate category, effective as of the 2009 ASA Meetings.

Amendment of By-Laws

These By-Laws may be amended through a favorable majority vote of those voting at a Business Meeting, provided this action is subsequently confirmed through a favorable majority vote of those voting by a mail ballot to the Section membership.