

**Biopolitics and Humanitarian Citizenship Workshop****16-17 May 2012****Simon Building 4.38-4.60****Department of Social Anthropology and the Humanitarian and Conflict  
Response Institute****The University of Manchester****Organisers: Prof. Steven Robins, University of Stellenbosch, Dr. Tanja  
Müller and Dr. Tony Simpson, University of Manchester****Rationale**

The objective of this workshop is to provide an in-depth intellectual exchange on theory and practice in relation to humanitarian citizenship and forms of biopolitical control. New forms of citizenship increasingly structure relations between persons and entitlements in complex settings. Humanitarian citizenship, where philanthropic rationalities structure allocations to resources in the absence of citizen engagement, presents challenging possibilities for the exercise of human rights and political freedoms. Such interventions present interesting challenges for theories of citizenship, notions of political society and the social sciences, as well as establishing new structures of dependency, legitimated by what is claimed to be an apolitical morality. This workshop confronts the assertions of humanitarianism head on. It asks what happens when these modalities of governance come to mediate between life and death, inclusion and exclusion? To what extent are humanitarian citizenship regimes politically responsible?

The workshop exploits the opportunity of having Professor Steven Robins, a distinguished scholar in the field, from the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch, at the University of Manchester as a Hallsworth Fellow. The workshop is a multidisciplinary meeting with scholars from Anthropology (where Professor Robins is based during his fellowship) and from the various disciplines combined in the newly established Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute, namely Political Science, History, Medical Sciences, and Performance Studies.

It is envisaged that results of the workshop will be disseminated in the form of a collection of essays edited by the organizers or a journal special issue. We hope that the participants of the workshop will be interested in submitting revised essays for such an endeavour.

**Workshop Programme**

There is a growing realisation that conceptions of citizenship and entitlement in the 21st century need to be understood within the poles of biopolitical

control on the one hand and the intersection of humanitarian and development interventions on the other. Such an understanding requires an interdisciplinary lens as well as engagement with work at the intersections of theory, practice and policy. The workshop will provide such a lens in bringing together researchers from different disciplines to interrogate what humanitarian citizenship may mean concretely under present conditions.

## **DAY ONE**

### **Session 1**

13:30 Introduction to the workshop by Steven Robins  
Chair: Tanja Müller

14:00-17:00 The first workshop session focuses on theoretical questions around concepts of biopower and humanitarianism with a view to furthering our understanding of contemporary forms of welfare intervention in the Global South. Subthemes are biopolitics/biopower, health citizenship, and activist strategies for rendering visible forms of structural violence

Peter Redfield, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill: 'AIDS and the Humanitarian Longue Durée'

Vinh Kim Nguyen, McGill University, Montreal, provisional title: 'Dispossession, subjectivity, and repair in Global Health'

Chair and Discussant: Alison Howell, HCRI

## **DAY TWO**

### **Session 2**

10:00 -13:00 The second workshop session focuses on the role of NGOs and social movements that work in what could broadly be thought of as the intersection of humanitarian, welfare, and development interventions. Those include civil society organisations that attempt to pressure the state to respond more effectively to the needs of poor communities, especially in terms of "service delivery", i.e., health, housing, sanitation etc.; and the role of rights-based (health-related) social movements in shaming, blaming, pressuring and lobbying the state to fulfil its responsibilities to its citizens. This session also aims to interrogate the critiques of humanitarian NGOs as either the conduits of new forms of neoliberal governmentality and minimalist biopolitics, or as the 'handmaidens of global capital and Empire' (Hardt and Negri).

Ruth Prince, University of Cambridge: “Suffering”, “survival” and “hope” in the NGO economy, western Kenya: how are people taking up and using global languages of rights and entitlements?’

Hannah Brown, London School of Tropical Hygiene and Medicine, provisional title: ‘Pepfar partnerships in the era of global health’

Andrea Behrends, Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, provisional title: ‘Reversing ‘good intentions’ – translations of the “Revenue Management Law” in Chad’

Adi Kuntsman, University of Manchester: ‘Anti-humanitarian citizenship: coloniality, war and necropolitics in Israel/Palestine’

Chair and Discussant: Diana Mitlin, IDPM, University of Manchester

Lunch Break

### **Session 3**

14:00 – 16:00 The third workshop session aims to bring theory and practice together, considering for example the concept of ‘slow violence’, the case of the Social Justice Coalition in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, and other concrete examples of humanitarian citizenship beyond the state.

Steven Robins and Chris Colvin, provisional title: ‘From humanitarian aid to social justice activism: a case study from Cape Town’

Richard Rottenburg, University of Halle: ‘The Obligation to Protect and New Forms of Domination’

Chair and Discussant: Tony Simpson, Social Anthropology

16:00 – 16:30 coffee/tea break

16:30 Closing discussion  
Chair: Tanja Müller

17:00 end

**Those interested in attending the workshop need to register (free of charge) with Betty-Ann Bristow, HCRI administrator. Please send an email to [HCRI@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:HCRI@manchester.ac.uk) by 18 April 2012.**