

The Committee for Political Sociology (CPS)

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Bentham called them “nonsense upon stilts” but at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the discourse of rights has never been more pronounced or contested. Around the globe, people mobilize on behalf of human, civil, political, ethnic minority, aboriginal, women’s, gay, alien, children’s, transgender, corporate, (sub)national, environmental, and animal rights. Some of these are established rights that advocates seek to expand for those previously excluded from their ambit. Others are new rights. At the same time, the abrogation of such rights as habeas corpus and the use of so-called “enhanced interrogation techniques” by governments in established as well as new democracies in the last decade have engendered new alliances of progressives and rule of law liberals to defend the restoration and refurbishment of rights. Movements to expand, create, defend, and entrench rights into national and international law generate counter-claims, put rights under pressure and, some argue, problematically privilege courts, legal and centralized national institutions over other more democratic or popular mechanisms of policy formation and self-governance. We propose that the discipline bring its empirical and normative lenses to reflect on the complex politics of rights.

In line with the APSA call, CPS is looking for papers that consider the mobilization of movements to extend rights (new rights or the extension of existing rights to new groups), that analyze the expansion of the language of rights into existing movements and organizations (such as political parties).

Please note that all presenters must be members of the CPS.
<http://www2.spbo.unibo.it/cps/homepage.html>

Submit your paper proposal on <http://www.apsanet.org/> and mention the Committee of Political Sociology as one of the subdivision to which your paper should be sent.