



Call for Papers

The Fifth Annual Conference of the Toronto Group for the Study of International, Transnational, and Comparative Law

Toronto Group Conference

The Toronto Group invites participants to the 5th Annual Conference on January 27-28, 2012

Conference Theme

Contests in Security & Risk: Releasing the Legal Imagination

There is a growing tendency in recent years for conceptions of 'security' and 'risk' to dominate political discourse and to transform our understandings and application of the law, including the local, the transnational and the international spheres. As academics have begun to state, security has become a more important export from the United States than 'democracy.' Security, conceived in this way, is thus a prerequisite for 'democratization' and economic 'development'. Dominant conceptions of security and risk have come to fundamentally determine constructions of democracy, economics, and human well-being, as well as the laws that facilitate these developments. Some have viewed this as an extension of neo-colonialism, others as the construction of a new kind of imperial network, while others have examined these phenomena as new forms of post-modern governmentalities that seek to reconstruct human life in terms of security defined as freedom from danger and risk, and governed through force and far-ranging techniques of risk management. This conference seeks to explore these developments in the 'securitization' of the law, asking such questions as how should security and freedom from risk be defined and provided? How can social movements contest and challenge dominant constructions of security and risk? What can we infer from the outcome or security for whom? What can we deduce about the operational logic that underlies this effort?

'Securitization' also extends to risk, and the emerging prominence of risk management in law and in fields as diverse as finance, the environment, crime prevention, protest policing, and the 'war on terror'. We welcome abstracts which engage 'securitization' in any of the following themes, seeking to inquire into the methodologies of critical scholarship, and engaging with other disciplines, so as to release the legal imagination and shed new light on these problems. We seek conference papers, which engage "securitization" in any of the following themes:

Rationality Rules: Explorations of Reason vs Rationality

The cautionary metaphor, which we confront in this theme is that of the “cheerful robot.” (C. Wright Mills - The Sociological Imagination) The robot operates in a way guided by pure rationality, unwavering devotion to external justificatory authority, and devoid of human reason. To be clear, reason more than rationality, connotes a *process* of *internal* reconciliation exclusive to the individual. Rationality exists externally to the individual who resigns to outwardly seeking assurances found in the authority of “legitimate” social structures.

This theme is intended to provoke a critical examination of legal theory that enables rationality over reason; of securitization as a rationale that precludes a critical perspective on law. Where pre-emptive arrests and military strikes have become the norm, we must ask what becomes of the role of law. Do our laws encourage or protect us from becoming a society of cheerful robots? What can be said for the rationale underlying existing and innovative legal frameworks? What is gained and what is lost when decision-making authority is ejected from its traditional position in the human consciousness?

Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Rabbit Hole: Law & Economics Redux

The contemporary crises of the global economy are once more the subject of fierce ideological debates. At the core of these debates and in the heart of critiques of contemporary market economics is the idea that ‘demoralized economics’ not only depoliticizes the discipline but also casts away issues of ethics altogether. Law, often identified as the realm of justice and ethics, however, has a paradoxical relation to the idea and the reality of the market. Law provides both the challenge and the sustaining force behind the market, as we know it. This stream welcomes abstracts, which engage notions of the market or capitalism including those, which broadly address the question of ‘what is the economy for;’ challenge conventional theories about regulation/deregulation; theorize the financial turn in profit making and critique the predominant positivist scientific ethos driving contemporary capitalism.

Crisis, Critique and Legal Methodology

In response to the ‘crisis of critique’, this conference seeks to explore the reconstruction of critique, while highlighting the limitations of traditional ideological schemas (Boltanski & Chiapello:2005). Contrary to doomsayers, Critical Legal Scholarship is alive and well but in which discipline it thrives and dwells is another matter. The emergence of interdisciplinary critical legal scholarship in ‘Socio-legal Studies,’ ‘Legal Anthropology,’ and ‘Legal Geography,’ represent both breakthroughs and the continuing barriers that need to be crossed in critical legal scholarship, and in particular, critical legal methodology. This stream invites submissions from applicants whose projects engage the law as ‘power’ and explore the role of law in constructing notions of ‘risk’ and ‘security.’

Participants whose projects cover interdisciplinary explorations of critical legal methodology including those which posit 'alternative approaches' to law (e.g. Queer, Feminist and Third World Approaches) are invited to submit under this stream.

The Globalization of Security Governance: War, Policing, Terror and Risk

Contests over the definition of security, the manner in which security is to be provided and risks are to be managed, have transformed the use of force and the laws that govern force by state militaries, state police and private security providers. These developments are occurring in such diverse fields as the War on Terror, military interventions, counterinsurgency, protest policing, the use of force against labor and social movements, the provision of humanitarian aid, crime prevention, and the protection of capital and private property. Security governance and risk management cross boundaries, creating new international and transnational legal regimes, often regulated through private and contractual means. It is also having an impact in international law and administration, disrupting, for example, the implementation of the United Nations Responsibility to Protect Protocol and plans for security sector reform. This stream welcomes abstracts that offer critical and philosophical perspectives on 'security', 'risk', the use of force, and legal developments on these matters within and beyond the state.

While the conference's objective is to facilitate engagement with issues arising from these and related areas of legal scholarship, submissions from graduate students in other disciplines of law or disciplines other than law are very much encouraged.

The speakers for this year's conference are:

Professor Saskia Sassen

Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology
Co-Chair Committee on Global Thought
Columbia University

January 27, 2012 (Opening Plenary Keynote Speaker)

and

Professor Peer Zumbansen

Professor of Law and Canada Research Chair
in Transnational Economic Governance and Legal Theory
Director, Critical Research Laboratory in Law & Society,
Osgoode Law School at York University

January 28, 2012

Venue:

This year's conference will be held in the York University campus and the newly renovated law school building.

Submission Procedure:

We invite proposals for presentations, panels and other interventions. Please submit an abstract of no more than **300 words** by **Friday, 28 October 2010**. You may specify that your submission relates to one or more of the streams below, or add a short paragraph explaining how it relates to the general conference themes. Please include all relevant contact information and indicate current title(s) and academic affiliation(s). Authors of all submissions will be notified by **Friday, 18 November 2011**. Submissions and general inquiries should be addressed to torontog2012@gmail.com. This year, presenters can submit their completed papers to the Comparative Research in Law and Political Economy Working Paper Series as part of a special event Publication. Additional information will be made available closer to the conference date.

Check: <http://www.torontogroup.wordpress.com> regularly for updates.

Presentation Format:

This year the Toronto Group Conference will be inviting participants to present in 'Workshops' or 'Panels.'Applicants are requested to indicate a preference when submitting their abstracts. Those who are invited to do a workshop will be required to submit a draft of their paper three weeks before the conference. This will be taken into consideration by the Committee during the selection process.

The idea behind this conference is to provide an opportunity for graduate students and new faculty members to do more than simply present their work; it is an opportunity to engage openly with a sympathetic and engaged peer group in the dialogue of ideas.

Panel Presentations:

Presenters invited to panels will be strictly limited to 15 minutes to introduce their projects, arguments, or any theoretical or practical problems with which they may wish to engage the audience. Rather than expecting to provide an overview of your whole paper, panel participants should stick to a brief overview of the topic and focus primarily on problem areas or areas of particular concern to your argument or ongoing work. Panels are organized according to a common theme

and usually include 3-4 presentations. An invited panelist expert/professor is given time to comment on the presentations.

Workshops:

Presenters for Workshops shall be required to submit a draft in progress in advance, which shall be circulated to a team of peer commentators. The workshop hopes to focus on dialogue, peer interaction, immanent critique, and include engagement with peers, rather than merely the presentation of ideas. We hope that this might then provide a constructive forum to discuss and improve your ideas as you explore your paper. Workshops are meant for participants who have a relatively polished draft-in-progress that can benefit from an interactive and in-depth discussion in preparation for submission and/or publication.

TG 2012 Organizing Committee

Carolina S. Ruiz Austria, SJD Candidate, University of Toronto
Tracey Dowdeswell, Osgoode Law School, York University
Hélène Mayrand, SJD Candidate, University of Toronto
Timothy Petrou, J.D., LL.M., Osgoode Law School, York University

The Toronto Group for the Study of International, Transnational, and Comparative Law consists of a group of graduate students from the University of Toronto Faculty of Law and Osgoode Hall Law School, York University. The Group's interests include legal, social, and political theory, public and private international law, and constitutional law and politics.

Visit our Website at: <http://www.torontogroup.wordpress.com>