Rich Law, Poor Law

25th January 2019
Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, London

Call for Papers: Deadline 23rd November 2018

Plenary Speakers:
Kathleen Lahey (Queens, Canada), Linda Mulcahy (Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, Oxford (from January 2019)), John Flint (Sheffield)

We invite submissions for papers for this SLSA-sponsored one-day conference that offer empirical or contextual contributions on rich law, poor law. Focusing on institutional ideologies, frameworks or practices, papers will demonstrate how rich law and poor law practices continue today in social security, legal aid, tax, banking, property, immigration, criminal, employment, and social welfare law. We anticipate that presentations will form pairs, – one on rich law, one on poor law – and expect to publish a collected edition from the papers in due course.

We are seeking contributions which go beyond the subject-matter and themes in Dee Cook’s pathbreaking 1989 book Rich Law, Poor Law: Different Responses to Tax and Supplementary Benefit Fraud (Open University Press). Papers should develop understandings about the contrasting ways in which the rich and poor are treated in different areas. For example, Cook compared responses to tax evasion and welfare fraud. These are similar forms of lawbreaking and yet, as Cook found, the societal reaction to each differs significantly although similar amounts of money are lost to both forms of crime.

For example, papers might address the following questions in their specific areas:

— Is it the case that administrative decision-makers still adopt variable cultures, prejudices and practices in ostensibly similar institutional settings?
— How do people in everyday life experience and/or resist the differential treatment?
— What role does law and legality, and the “rule of law”, play in perpetuating the differential treatment of rich and poor?
— What methodologies and methods might we use to examine the differential treatment?

If you would like to present a paper, please submit a title and abstract to d.s.cowan@bristol.ac.uk by Friday 23rd November 2018. This event is being organised by Katie Bales, Dave Cowan, and Ann Mumford. We anticipate that papers will be organised in pairs, which can be suggested by the authors themselves or by the conference team.

The workshop will cost £70 to attend (£40 for PGR members of SLSA). We will announce the finalised programme and booking arrangements at the end November 2018. Please note that we are not able to cover any travel or subsistence costs for speakers or delegates.