Reviewer’s report

Title: Human rights' interdependence and indivisibility: A glance over the human rights to water and sanitation

Version: 0 Date: 21 Jun 2018

Reviewer: Beniamino Cislaghi

Reviewer's report:

Introduction

I wonder why no mention of the universality/relative nature of human rights is made. Even though this is not the main point of the paper, I would think a qualitative case study in Brazil should at least acknowledge the authors' perspective on it?

Review of the literature is mostly descriptive. It would be helpful to understand the critical perspective through which the review is being conducted. That is, in other words, what questions are you trying to respond to through your review. It might be as easy as to include a paragraph at the beginning of the section explaining that the indivisibility of human rights is a contested point, on which scholars disagree. At the same time, the literature should be made more relevant to your point. As it is, it comes across as being slightly patchy, that is, every paraph describes what some authors have said, but it's difficult to understand how these authors' standpoints are informing your argument.

You seem to start from a legalistic approach to human rights, but then in your data you really use human rights as a relational concept, looking at the ways in which human beings affect each other's' life (getting a job, being isolated etc). You would need to reconcile this double approach to human rights by expanding your idea of dignity, and how human rights must be protected by people too, not only by states. You could find helpful the idea of bringing in the concept of responsibilities too: it is everyone responsibility to protect and promote these homeless people's rights, not only States - and we are failing at that because of the way they look or smell. Then you can resume the state approach when you talk, for instance, of the police or how the government doesn't listen to them.

I think what you need here also is a theory of social behaviour that can help you explain how the way on looks is linked to the way other will interact with that person. When your participants say they are ostracised because they look as homeless, you could draw from social theories to show that the way other see us affects profoundly the way they behave with us.
Methods

I think this section could be less detailed and include instead a description of the HRWS-related challenges that people in general, and homeless people more specifically, experience in Belo Horizonte. This could help understand more the need for your article. This should also include a table with the key themes touched in the interview guide and possibly a description of the sample: how many people did you interview in total? How many in focus groups? Why did you use both a focus group and individual interviews? Actually, why did you use qualitative research at all? Did you have an observation checklist? How did you use the observation data? What did you change as a result of the pilot interview?

Results

I would suggest you separate results and discussion sections. As it is now, results are mixed with a lot of literature, and the voices of your participants get lost in across the paper. I suggest you frame your results by theme, engage descriptively at first with those themes, evidencing common patterns and key concepts, and then include a discussion session where you use the literature presented earlier on in the paper as a conceptual framework to engage analytically with the data.

As you present the data, I would not suggest clustering all the data at the beginning of the theme and then use your literature to explain it. Rather, I would present key themes and sub-themes with a narrative at first, then I would show how this emerged in key quotes strictly relevant to that theme or sub-theme, then point at any variation or difference and explain why those quotes are relevant. As it is now, I am not sure I fully understand how you interpret what the homeless said, I am not sure what they actually said at all and the context in which their reflections emerged as relevant in the analysis.

There are a few typos, for instance:

Line 47 - do you mean "Covenants"?

Line 57 - do you mean "their consequences"?
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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