



African Safety Promotion

A Journal of Injury and Violence Prevention

UNISA Institute for Social and Health Sciences,
SAMRC-UNISA Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit
PO Box 19070, Tygerberg, Cape Town, 7505
Tel: +27 +21 938 0441
Fax: +27 +21 938 0381

Call for Papers

Special Issue of African Safety Promotion: A Journal of Injury and Violence Prevention

Symbolic Violence: Enactments, Articulations and Resistances

Editors: Rebecca Helman, Sipho Dlamini & Nick Malherbe

Symbolic violence is a kind of power that imposes particular meanings as legitimate, while working to obscure its own foundational relations of power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). For example, symbolic violence operates to construct deviations from hegemonic gendered, sexual, and racial norms as *wrong*, thereby naturalising and sustaining oppression. It follows then that we observe symbolic violence in familiar, everyday occurrences such as language, legislation, material formations, spatial arrangements and visual imagery.

Developing understandings of symbolic violence is necessary in a global context where rates of violence are alarmingly high and unevenly distributed. For example, higher rates of direct violence are reported in low- and middle-income countries, including in parts of South America and Africa (World Health Organisation, 2014). These disparities can be understood in relation to histories of direct, structural, epistemic and symbolic violence that are enacted through ongoing systems of colonialism (Bulhan, 2015; Fanon, 1967).

Direct or interpersonal violence has received much-needed attention within academic research, as well as in other sectors of society, including but not limited to non-governmental and state sectors. Whilst the etiology and effects of physical violence have become a predominant focus in much research, policy and public discourse, there appears to be a gap with respect to work on other, more subtle forms of violence.

Increasingly, social movements are calling attention to and challenging symbolic violence. Some examples in this respect include the removal of statues considered to be symbolically violent (such as those at the University of Ghana and the University of Cape Town in South Africa, as well as numerous Confederate Monuments in the United States), contestation of naming legacies (for example Rhodes University in South Africa and street, town and city names in Canada), the dearth of gender-neutral bathrooms (legally reified by numerous discriminatory ‘bathroom bills’), as well as the arbitrary and ideologically-infused bourgeois politics of respectability to which poor and working class people are held. These movements, and their attempts to visibilise forms of symbolic violence, are repeatedly met with strong opposition from state authorities, as well as those on the political right.

As articulated within a resistance framework that emphasises disruption in knowledge work, this Special Issue is conceptualised and led by a collective of doctoral students. Accordingly, the Special Issue is interested in scholarship that focuses on symbolic violence, how it is enacted, the means by which it conceals itself and ways through which it can be resisted.

We welcome contributions from emerging and established researchers, students and practitioners that speak to any of the following related topics:

- Empirical quantitative and qualitative studies that explore symbolic violence in its broadest definition
- Theoretical and conceptual work on symbolic violence
- Personal and creative reflections on and responses to symbolic violence
- Meta-syntheses of work that has been conducted on symbolic violence

As symbolic violence so often functions beyond people’s conceptions of what constitutes violence (Stewart, 2014), submissions are not limited to conventional formats. We therefore encourage innovative formats¹ and/or takes on this topic, such as:

- Photo-essays

¹ See Department of Higher Education and Training policy for information regarding which formats may be subsidised; certain South African higher education research outputs are subsidised, but not all: <http://www.dhet.gov.za/Policy%20and%20Development%20Support/Research%20Outputs%20policy%20gazette%202015.pdf>

- Original reviews of books/films
- Artistic treatises
- Poetry

Please submit your contributions to the Managing Editor, Nancy Hornsby (nancy.hornsby@mrc.ac.za), by **15 April 2018**. Journal guidelines can be found at www.mrc.ac.za/crime/aspj.htm.

For further enquiries, please contact Special Issue co-editors:

Rebecca Helman (rebecca.helman@mrc.ac.za),

Sipho Dlamini (sipho.dlamini@mrc.ac.za)

or

Nick Malherbe (nicholas.malherbe@mrc.ac.za).

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