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28 June – 1 July  
Johannesburg  
South Africa

# 2015 CONTOURS OF VIOLENCE

22<sup>nd</sup> Annual SASA Congress at the University of Johannesburg



## 22<sup>nd</sup> SASA Annual Congress 2015

### 1. Introduction

The Department of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) hosted the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Congress of the South African Sociological Association (SASA) between Sunday 28 June and Wednesday 1 July 2015. The Congress theme was **Contours of Violence**. Following the Congress, a doctoral workshop was offered on Wednesday 1 July and Thursday 2 July, 2015.

### 2. Academic and scientific relevance of the congress

This congress explored the possibilities of using the analytic category of violence – understood in its narrow sense as physical force associated with injury, infringement or transgression and therefore as potentially life- threatening, but also in its broader usage – to map and illuminate the contemporary social order and to refract or recast key questions and concerns related to the making and shaping of the democratic South African body politic. In the different sessions the notion of violence – be it physical, structural, discursive or symbolic – was problematised in issues around poverty, inequality, gender relations, and social welfare provision.

### 3. Opening ceremony and keynote address

The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Prof Alex Broadbent, opened the Congress formally on 28 June 2015. After a thought provoking Presidential Address by Dr Irma du Plessis, SASA President 2014/2015, the Keynote Address with the theme **Sociology Matters: Addressing Violence Through Research and Activism** was delivered by Professor Margaret Abraham, President of the International Sociological Association, which set the scene for the discussions during the remainder of the Congress.

#### **4. Plenary sessions**

Three plenary sessions were linked to the Congress theme, “**Contours of Violence**”. The themes of the three plenaries were respectively: *Un-disciplining violence: Interdisciplinary perspectives*; *Violent intersections: Techniques of control and resistance*; and *Rethinking violence: Methodological and theoretical provocations from the field*. The plenary sessions were all very well attended, and there were vibrant discussions, including the participation of postgraduate students.

#### **5. SASA AGM**

During the well-attended Annual General Meeting of SASA during the afternoon time-slot (15:15 – 17:15) on 29 June 2015 Prof Grace Khunou (Vice-Dean: Research, Faculty of Humanities, UJ) was elected President of SASA.

#### **6. ISA publication workshops**

Eloisa Martin, Editor of *Current Sociology*, presented two workshops advising delegates on issues related to publishing in international journals.

#### **7. Split sessions**

Abstracts for 188 papers/presentations were approved by the Working Group Convenors of the 19 SASA working groups. These submissions were organised into 54 thematic sessions and there were 6 timeslots. Research Committee 46 (Clinical Sociology) of the International Sociological Association hosted their interim conference in conjunction with the split sessions of the Clinical Sociology Working Group of SASA. The Congress was concluded by a public panel organised by Carin Runciman (Working Group Convenor: Social Movement and Popular Protest) with the theme “Debating a New Left in South Africa”.

#### **8. Doctoral workshop**

The doctoral workshop was organised by Tapiwa Chagonda (Sociology Department, UJ). It was held over two days with 29 doctoral students from various reputable institutions in South Africa in attendance. This included the doctoral students attached to the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Human Development. The group of students included new PhD students and a number of senior students who had already started working on their doctoral theses and proposals.

Attendees of the workshop were addressed by highly regarded academics. Margaret Abraham (President of the International Sociological Association), enlightened the students about the importance of a PhD while reflecting on her own experiences. She was followed by Grace Khunou (Sociology Department, UJ), newly elected president of SASA, who placed specific focus on doing a PhD in South Africa. She stressed the importance of time management while also emphasizing important life issues and challenges that one may encounter while doing a PhD. The students then separated into two groups. One group comprised of students beginning the PhD, while the other group consisted of senior students who have already made progress on their PhD's. Jan Marie Fritz from the University of Cincinnati addressed the first group on starting the PhD journey and submitting a proposal. Jan Fritz provided students with a step by step account of how to write a proposal. Eloisa Martin (editor of *Current Sociology*) addressed the senior students on publishing in the process of completing the PhD and beyond. After these sessions were completed, the workshop closed and reconvened the next day.

The next day began with Jan Marie Fritz addressing the students on conducting fieldwork. In her address, she noted the importance of ethics while also placing emphasis on taking notes in the field. Thereafter, Margaret Abraham addressed the students on the writing process, placing

importance on writing consistently on a daily basis. After her address, Bernard Nthambeleni (National Research Fund, NRF) enlightened the students on the various funding avenues they can access from the organisation. Following Nthambeleni's address, Tracy Morrison (HSRC) addressed the students on Postdoctoral opportunities and career paths. Tracy Morrison made reference to her own experiences and appointments. After Tracy Morrison finished her presentation, Tapiwa Chagonda offered concluding comments and then closed the workshop.

## 9. Congress attendance

In total 249 delegates participated in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual SASA Congress. Delegates from ten countries, 23 universities and seven scientific agencies and cognate disciplines registered. Research Committee 46 (Clinical Sociology) of the International Sociological Association hosted their interim conference in conjunction with the split sessions of the Clinical Sociology Working Group of SASA. A significant number of the delegates were postgraduate students presenting on their research.

Tina Uys (LOC Chair)

LOC members: Kezia Batisai, Tapiwa Chagonda, David du Toit, Anthony Kaziboni, Grace Khunou, Bonisiwe Moagi (Administrator), Kammila Naidoo, Pragna Rugunanan, Heidi Scheepers, Anton Senekal, Luke Sinwell, Muhammed Suleman

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Prof Alex Broadbent (Dean), Anthony Kaziboni (LOC), Prof Maggie Abraham (ISA President), Prof Tina Uys (LOC Chair), Dr Irma du Plessis (SASA President 2014-2015), Prof Kammila Naidoo, HOD Sociology UJ