Symbolic Violence and the Violation of Human Rights: Continuing the Sociological Critique of Domination

Claudio Colaguori[*]

Abstract

This paper examines the conceptual underpinnings of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic violence" as a recent entry in the sociological tradition that is concerned with the critique of domination. The concept is a source of some debate and confusion and there is an attempt to clarify its meaning and usage through analysis and examples. The paper also considers the usefulness of the concept in examining forms of domination emerging in the present crisis phase of post 9/11 neo-liberalism, and calls for the application of the concept in analyses of human rights violations. It is also proposed that there is a dialectical relationship between symbolic violence and the perpetration of repressive physical violence. Both symbolic violence (soft) and concrete (hard) violence are understood sociologically as forms of social control, and not as biological or psychological expressions of human aggression. The paper reminds the reader of the various challenges in defining violence more generally and also that the way we understand violence has implications for its amelioration.

"You cannot cheat with the 'law of the conservation of violence': all violence is paid for, and, for example, the structural violence exerted by the financial markets, in the form of layoffs, loss of security, etc., is matched sooner or later in the form of suicides, crime and delinquency, drug addiction, alcoholism, a whole host of minor and major everyday acts of violence"

Pierre Bourdieu, (*Acts of Resistance*)

Complexities/Complicities of Violence

While there is a general consensus that the problem of violence is becoming more pronounced, individually and collectively, in both local and global contexts, this proliferation seems to have had little influence on the ways violence is commonly understood. Perhaps this has to do with the difficulty of the subject matter itself: the

* Canada, York University, Department of Social Science, claudioc@yorku.ca

complexities of violence (Malešević 2010); the overdetermined origins of violence (Rappaport 1989); and the multiple forms that violence takes, as revealed in the various types of physical, "concrete" violent crimes such as murder, rape, assault and the varieties of organized violence more generally, from state sanctioned killings, torture, to war and genocide. And then there are the covert forms of soft violence which include the 'emotional control' people exercise over other people at the interpersonal level, in what some people commonly refer to as playing 'mind games', or 'pulling power' or 'passive aggressiveness'. Another area of covert forms of violence would include the multiple representations of violence – what we might call the mediatized violence of entertainment spectacle as depicted in "action" ('guns and murder') movies and violent video games. Although much has been written on the relation between media violence and its relation to real violence, we can rely on the work of Gerbner (2002) who put forth a "cultivation model" thesis where media violence is dialectically related to the promotion of violent conceptions of social reality as a cultural norm. To this variety of violences we shall add for inclusion into the lexicon of critical sociology, Pierre Boudieu's concept of *symbolic violence.*

While the definition of "symbolic violence" may seem self-evident, it is important to note that media representations of violence, although symbolic in their mode of signification, do not correspond to the concept of symbolic violence offered by Bourdieu. His conception of symbolic violence refers to the subordinating effects on people of hidden structures that reproduce and maintain social domination in covert ways. This involves the numerous mechanisms through which overall social domination is achieved from institutions to ideologies. Symbolic control may involve the moral imposition of irrational beliefs on others that work against their own capacity for freedom of thought, as in the ideologies of a group, a religion or a cult as extreme examples, but certainly includes the normal dissemination of ideologies that is required for "the reproduction of the conditions of production" as Althusser explained (1971: 127). Legally allowable activities that disrupt or influence the democratic flow of civil life in favour of "higher powers" and against the well-being or rights of citizens or workers can also be understood as forms of symbolic violence. Thus acts of symbolic violence would also include the coercive/persuasive political actions that generate social policy against the public interest such as corporate lobbying which disrupts the integrity of democratic processes and selectively victimizes certain members of the population. In various institutional structures from state agencies to religious organizations, symbolic violence plays a major role in securing the consent of subjects to accord with the dictates of operational practices.

The function of symbolic violence needs to be understood in relation to an overall social system that is organized on the basis of violent political control – that is, in terms of how social regulation is achieved through *consistently coercive means*. Symbolic violence is not an abnormal expression of power that occurs outside of the otherwise peaceful operation of actions in society. Rather it is the subdued expression of a power that is normally and regularly operating in a mode of violence. I shall remind the reader here of the oft-quoted von Clausewitz dictum that 'war is the continuation of politics by other means' (1977 [1831]). The dictum should not be taken as a cliché or an

exaggeration but rather an accurate assessment of the tyrannical nature of regular politics.

It is becoming less and less possible to accept the conventional view that the world is divided into peaceful liberal democracies and uncivil rogue states (Chomsky 2000; Derrida 2005). What we have been witnessing in the post 9/11 era is a globalizing warfare mode of politics where the vigorous planetary marketization of capitalist interests through various forms of authoritarian-military practices from the declaration of permanent conditions of quasi-martial law by numerous states worldwide is accompanied by the near abrogation of civil liberties in the name of security. This remarkably horrific trend is now becoming a well-known theme in the renewed critique of domination that has developed since the events of 9/11. It has been a major topic of study for the last decade (the post 9/11 era) where scholarship by Agamben (2005), Derrida (2003), newly published lectures by Foucault (2007, 2008) and countless others, have indicated how the shift in political-military power since 9/11 has been re-defined in ways that are described by some as the advent of proto-fascism, the new authoritarianism (Giroux 2005), and the age of the hypersecurity state (Colaguori 2005). The macrosocial violence of war, security and espionage and mass public deception that characterizes political engagement in the war on terror is now the normal expression of neo-liberal power. There are minor, fragmentary expressions as well. These include the use of repressive force in the criminalization of civil dissent worldwide. This was apparent in the G20 summit protests in Toronto in the summer of 2010 where the province of Ontario's own officials later proclaimed that massive human rights violations had been perpetrated by police who were encouraged to use excessive force through a last-minute piece of legislation that delimited the rights of civilians to use city space for public demonstrations.

It should also be mentioned that the violent mode of political control is by no means the exclusive purview of state agencies. Violent forms of control are becoming the norm in the actions of criminal cartels and gangs in many places of the world including throughout North America and across Russia and Africa, with current media attention focusing on the murderousness of Mexico and Central America (Rodgers and Jensen 2009). It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that corruption, deceit and networked criminality is present virtually everywhere in the world in varying degrees, in both the underground economy and the legitimate economy. Although the criminality of organized gangsters is not an exact example of symbolic violence (since it is plain old brute violence and not sanctioned by law), it is nevertheless the by-product of an economic order that is unable to accommodate the material needs of enough people so they may earn legitimate employment. As long as the market system is structured in such a way so as to create the conditions that economically exclude, marginalize, dis-enfranchise, and promote social division, it will simultaneously perpetuate the will for many to pursue criminal opportunities as a means of economic advancement. Violent forms of action are inseparable from illegalities. The various modes of violence, from actual to symbolic, are thus intertwined with the entire gamut of activities generated in the crisis of neo-liberalism.

Violence and Social Control

Violence, in its many forms, is almost everywhere and yet there is no general social theory to account for all of violence – and no specific discipline of "violentology" for example. The numerous varieties of violence may leave some with the impression that violence is enigmatic and can't be pinned down, and that it is too complex a phenomenon to unify within any single theoretical field of analysis. This view is inadequate, and perhaps even poses ideological dangers: It usually leads to the *naturalization*, and in particular the *animalization* of violence (Arendt 1969) – two discursive strategies that work to justify the continued existence of violence as an inevitable, unavoidable 'fact of life' whose deployment is then justifiable for some on the grounds of a hermetic biological reasoning. A critical sociological theory of violence would consider the extent to which human violence is a calculated act of free-will and thus is a form of instrumental and reactive social control. It would also recognize that violence exists beyond the immediate realm of the physical and the corporeal and certainly enters into the emotional and the political realms of social life.

It can be argued that *symbolic* forms of violence and *concrete* expressions of violence have been a consistent, albeit understated, point of concern in modern critical theory and in liberal-humanist discourse outside the academy as well. And thus despite the moral injunction against violence, it seems to be everywhere. Violence insinuates itself into virtually every sphere of social life from law (Benjamin 1978, Foucault 1979, Derrida 1999) to gender relations (Butler 1997, Lerner 1986) to practices of racialization (Fanon 1967, Goldberg 1993) to class domination (Sorel 1961, Marx, Marcuse 1964). These articulations have done much to define the role of violence as a major dimension in the operation of social control. It is beneficial for a sociological understanding of symbolic violence to realize the extent to which it is also united with concrete physical violence as a form of social control – the so-called "hard" and "soft" forms of power.

It is in this critical context that we must interrogate Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic violence". Is symbolic violence a valid and useful concept that captures some social scientific fact that adds understanding to the sovereign role of violence in the geopolitics of the present age? Or is symbolic violence an imprecise way to speak about power relations and forms of domination that are better accommodated within the existing lexicon of critical sociology? We shall explore these questions in what follows.

It seems imperative, given the increasingly central place of violence in the current world order of the post 9/11 era, that the social sciences work towards a more coherent understanding of *violence as an organizational mode of social control*. This is certainly a challenge since, as Robert Paul Wolff reminds us, "the concept of violence is inherently confused" (1969: 601). We have come to hear about violence as something natural, instinctive, productive, destructive, playful, enjoyable, behavioral, both a powerful and a weak, insecure force among other (mis)conceptions. We therefore continue to be challenged by the perennial question of violence. Addressing this challenge requires not only the demythologization of naturalistic and reified ideas about violence that continue to abound in both academia and in popular culture, but also requires a broader conception of violence that addresses its social genesis and its central

role in social processes (Brown 2000). It also makes sense to address the breadth and scope of violence, both conceptually and in practical terms, as we move towards an understanding of the dialectical relation between the covert symbolic forms and the overt concrete forms as they relate to social organization and control at the microsocial level as well as to the macrosocial warfare mode of politics that has come to characterize geo-politics in the post 9/11 era.

In the attempt to outline a dialectical theory of symbolic and concrete violence, this paper will explore the extent to which violence is primarily a *generative* social force, that is, the ways in which forms of violence constitute, uphold and organize existing social relations. In this view violence is not only instrumental and functional but it is 'generative' insofar as it makes social life happen in specific ways that depend on violent meanings, expression and actions. This generative view of violence differs from a merely functional view in so far as a functional view considers violence as a mechanism or instrument of social action that does not necessarily transform the very nature of social life that occurs under its purview. *Violence is therefore not only an active mechanism of social life, it establishes the political ontology of social life*. This view is in contrast to the conventional view that sees violence as purely destructive and dysfunctional, deviant and aberrant. Although violence is no doubt also tied to the order of domination and destruction.

While it is apparent that ideologies of competition, conflict and violence are becoming a mainstay of the culture industry, and one might argue that competitive violence constitutes the dominant theme both symbolized and represented in television programming and media culture more generally – all of this is not exactly what Bourdieu means by "symbolic violence". As a preliminary definition, *symbolic violence* for Bourdieu is at its most basic level an unequal relationship, a power imbalance between people whose effects involve voluntary submission to relations of domination that have legal sanction. It is a covert type of inequity because it is based on the willing consent people give to higher-status others within a social hierarchy which then places them in a position of status subordination. This happens when people follow cultural codes of conduct – from participation in ritual to 'behaving in the proper prescribed manner', and according to role expectations for one's class, gender, race or other marker of social subjectivity. Social actors become enmeshed in power relations that negate (dis-empower) them in some way by reinforcing institutionalized forms of social subordination.

The use of violence and other forms of coercion have a documented history in the sociology of social control. It is to this traditional critique of domination to which we shall now turn as a prelude to how the concept of symbolic violence follows in a particular history, and how despite the difficulties with the concept, it can be extended to apply to forms of domination and repression such as human rights violations.

Pre-existing Concepts of Domination and the Origins of the Concept of Symbolic Violence

Table 1.1 – A Comparison of Social Control Concepts

Hard Control	*Soft Control*
murder	law
torture	cultural tradition
carceral punishment	religious tradition
military intervention	reification
rape	ideological deception
physical assault	symbolic violence

Sociology has maintained a tradition of thought that seeks to identify the social mechanisms of human domination (Shroyer 1973). From Hegel's concept of the "unhappy consciousness" to Marx's "false consciousness" to Lukacs' and then Adorno's "reification" and onto Weber's analysis of rational-legal discipline and status hierarchy as forms of social regulation (O'Neill 1986) – sociologists have often conceptualized the various social forces involved in the repressive aspects of social order. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence follows in this particular tradition and is yet another attempt to identify a form of domination that emerges from the repressive functioning of social order and the ways in which subjects are regulated as objects of social processes.

In comparison to the concepts listed above in table 1.1 of social control concepts, Bourdieu's concept is most closely related to the Weberian conception of power where social control is exercised through forms of "legitimate", ie. state-sanctioned legal, domination, and through a status hierarchy of unequally stratified groups of people. This is one example of social regulation from the three classical traditions within sociology. The three traditions of power analysis and social regulation from classical sociology are as follows:

- Marx: power takes the form of economic class domination – this leads to immiseration, alienation, economic exploitation and increasing poverty alongside increasing wealth.

- Durkheim: social regulation as group cohesion – the individual is subordinated to the group through subjective integration. In Durkheim's conception the anomic loss of self can occur through both the under or over-regulation of individuals.

- <u>Weber</u>: unequal status relations create pluralistic conflict – and the bureaucratic administration of society creates an "iron cage" type of disciplinary order that is the defining form of power in modern society.

The concept of symbolic violence can thus be understood in relation to a constellation of concepts aimed at the critique of domination. A second generation of critical concepts of domination can be identified as follows:

o <u>Adorno – Horkheimer - Marcuse</u>: the reification of consciousness, instrumental rationality and the technical domination of nature and humankind.

o <u>de Beauvoir – Smith – Butler</u>: the feminist critique of the patriarchal order, gender domination and the microrelations of ruling.

o <u>Foucault</u>: the practice of power as institutional discourse and disciplinary control over the subject, and the advent of modern biopower, which is the sovereign right over life and death.

Although each of the critical traditions of thought listed above have developed indispensable analyses of modern domination, significant differences exist between them and Bourdieu's own analysis of power. They are not, however, incompatible with the concept of symbolic violence. Bourdieu's own intellectual trajectory is influenced also by the French school of anthropology where the concept of the symbolic is clearly evident as the locus of meaning in defining social relations. Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) identifies the role of gift-giving as part of an exchange process where the aim is to preserve symbolic structures of power rather than the mere mutual provision and sharing of implements for living. Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) similarly considered human culture to be based on systems of symbolic meanings. Bourdieu's development of the concept of the 'symbolic' should be understood in the context of French anthropological and sociological discourses of the mid to late 20th century and in particular how these could be applied to the social and cultural forms of power within "the scourge of neo-liberalism", which Bourdieu explicitly identifies in his sociology (1998: vii).

Bourdieu's hybridization of a Weberian sociology of social stratification and the French anthropology of culture and symbolic meaning can be used to examine the power dynamics behind the social action of symbolic power. Bourdieu's own twist on the analysis of power takes into consideration the larger geo-political context of "neo-liberalism" which results in a critique of capitalist culture in its current market expansion phase.

In the same way that tribal cultures ascribe social meaning to symbolic acts among members that reinforce hierarchy, the symbolic dimension of social life in neo-liberalism is evident in the social hierarchies that are reproduced right through to the subjective level of personal taste. In *Distinction* (1984) Bourdieu clearly identifed how

class positions in the social hierarchy are maintained by status preferences that are also markers of symbolic capital.

Bourdieu is making an explicit value judgment in identifying the micro-relations that exist between people of differential status as being "violent" in their action-orientation. Actions that compel people to conform to social structures through symbolic power are not neutral exchanges but exchanges that maintain relations of domination. For example, Bourdieu writes, "Casualization of employment is part of a *mode of domination* of a new kind, based on the creation of a generalized and permanent state of insecurity aimed at forcing workers into submission, into the acceptance of exploitation" (1998: 85).

Exposing labour legislation as exploitative is an attempt to demarcate them as tactics of power and not the neutral mutual exchanges that form part of many other economic exchange actions. This infusion of symbolic violence relations with power is a conceptual move at de-naturalizing political acts and judgments that are explicit articulations of power exercised through human subjects. Bourdieu has emphasized repeatedly in his sociology that "naturalization" is a significant strategy of power. The "naturalization of the schemata of neo-liberal thought" that Bourdieu and Wacquant identify as part of the new hegemony of 21st century imperialism is an example of the ways in which power relations can be made to appear neutral and natural in an effort to gain public consensus and political mobility (1999: 42).

It is not surprising that Bourdieu's ideas about 'power concealing their own mechanisms' are analogous to the analysis of power dynamics made by Foucault, who also makes much significance of *normalization* processes, especially in *Discipline and Punish*. For Foucault normalization serves the role of routinizing coded practices that become a 'normal' part of institutional functioning in the regulation of the self. This is a strategy of power that produces 'disciplinary control' at the institutional level and 'docility' at the subjective level. Foucault's analysis is relevant to an understanding of symbolic violence because it is also an examination of power beneath the surface – power that is enmeshed in the very same practices that are also socially functional.

Bourdieu did not devote a book specifically to the topic of "symbolic violence". Instead it is a term he employs randomly in various works to refer to the latent violence that is involved in various forms of social regulation from institutionalization to hegemonic domination. Symbolic violence as Bourdieu explains, "is a type of submission… a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition, [more precisely, mis-recognition], recognition or even feeling… [and which] grasps the logic of domination exerted in the name of a symbolic principle…" (2001: 1-2).

Symbolic violence is a concept that attempts to highlight the social practices of conformity imposed on subjects in the course of living out daily rituals that create and sustain institutionalized forms of social stratification and regulation. Its power lies in the fact that it is embedded in the forms of subjectivity that that serve to maintain the social order. Symbolic violence often initiates subjects into behaving in conformity with dominant power structures; it can thus be understood as both coercive and voluntary. The use of the term 'subject' rather than 'person' or 'individual' or 'self' here is deliberate. As Foucault made clear, subjectivity implies subjection to an order of

power of some sort. And symbolic violence is one way of speaking about a subjectivity that is socially regulated via an order that reproduces social domination. It is not a simple matter of recognizing that a subject is being dominated or controlled, especially when conformity to control may be unconscious, freely-willed and even 'gentle' as Bourdieu puts it.

As Bourdieu has stated, "symbolic power cannot be exercised without the contribution of those who undergo it" (2001: 40). Therefore, to a large extent symbolic violence works through voluntary submission, which is the epitome of subjection, or what Foucault terms "docility". Because symbolic violence is a speculation on the sociology of consciousness it often escapes the quantifiable realm of the empirical. This makes it contentious, intellectually suspect and conceptually hazardous - not a category of violence the rigorous analyst of social life is eager to add to the already troubled field of violence studies.

The concept of 'symbolic violence' is surely a contested one. Randall Collins for one, writes that,

> macro-cultural approaches to violence become vacuous when they reach the concept of 'symbolic violence'… "symbolic violence" is mere theoretical word play; to take it literally would be to grossly misunderstand the nature of real violence. Symbolic violence is easy; real violence is hard.
> (2008: 24-25).

Collins' rejection of symbolic violence as a concept of sociological validity may have something to do with Bourdieu's lack of specific and detailed elaboration on the idea. Were it to be presented as one component in a dialectical theory of violence, this would go some way in explaining its role in the structures of domination. It is also that Collins has a particular understanding of violence as something 'hard', by which he means difficult to do. This may be the case for many people as violence does contradict the more powerful human compulsion for cooperation (Axelrod 1984). But for some people violence does come easy. Another problem is Collins' conception is that violence is an impulse. This characterization of violence moves it to close to the psychologistic conception of violence as aggression, which is an individual behavioural trait. Clearly the most destructive acts of violence are the macrosocial forms such as war and genocide, all of which are not impulsive but the rationally calculated acts of leaders in command situations. Collins' analysis of violence is an indispensable contribution to the study of violence and we cannot deal with it further here. The minor debate Collins has with Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is mentioned here as an example that indicates the difficulties of defining violence alluded to earlier in this paper.

A difficulty with the concept of symbolic violence also emerges from the fact that we already have recourse to existing concepts (as indicated above) that apply to the reality Bourdieu's concept seeks to name. What is more at issue is whether or not the domination that 'symbolic violence' refers to is actually a form of violence at all. Hence the attempt in this paper to extend upon or reconstruct the concept by putting it closer to acts of violation, rather than leaving it as a concept of soft social control as in Bourdieu's formulation.

Human Rights Violations as Acts of Symbolic Violence

What needs further elaboration is the extent to which the overt, "hard" violence in human social life is dialectically associated with and supported by the "soft" forms of subtle coercion that compel people to obey social codes, even when doing so works against their own self-preservative interest. Symbolic violence as one form of this soft coercion may seem a far cry from murder or physical assault, but do not the official policies that govern the unequal distribution of wealth also produce human death and social suffering (Bourdieu et al. 1999)? This is certainly the rationale of anti-globalization activists who deny that the destruction of corporate property as part of their public protest is anywhere near as grave as the violence perpetrated against people on a mass scale who suffer from the effects of neo-liberal policies of economic development and trade – especially when these economic-legal arrangements foment civil war that in some places has created a child-soldier-killers (Singer 2005) and a 'global rape culture' (Parenti 2006).

Let us depart from conceptualization and explore some real-world examples of symbolic violence:

1) Does the official and long standing decree of the Catholic Church against the use of condoms and the concomitant rise in sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS constitute an act of symbolic violence? If devotees of the religion obey this decree and yet violate other Church rules such as the injunction to not engage in extra-marital sex then most certainly there is an exposure to life risk, which is then spread out to other people including sexually active mothers and their children (Wilkens 2006).

2) If a community in an impoverished nation for example, relies on water that is rendered unavailable or prohibitively expensive because an official decision has been made to control the distribution of water to residents, this inevitably forces some people to use polluted water who then invite the risk of disease and death. Are the corporate-legal instruments that configure this economically constructed reality of aqueous domination not as lethal as a festering bullet wound from an AK47 (Shiva 2002)?

3) If in a democracy people make voting decisions on the basis the official information which is presented to them and which is deemed to be truthful, accurate and valid, and yet with the passage of time is revealed to be not only "spun" in error but deliberate misinformation in violation of the rules of governmental and media integrity, which has retroactively affected one's voting decision and the outcome of political process – does this democratic mass deception not constitute symbolic violence (Rampton and Stauber, 2003)?

In these three examples the aim to exercise moral regulation, economic servitude or political control through the direct manipulation of the thoughts and behaviours of

people results in destructive harm that is incompatible with the values of individual freedom of choice and the right to self-protection. Symbolic violence is evident in each of these examples insofar as the 'violation' of conscious choice to act in one's own best interest has been tampered with, violated if not denied – and this is done as part of the normal functioning of the agency that survives on the basis of allowable subjective manipulation.

Buffachi (2005) has written about the essence of violence as *violation*. The violation of person, of human rights, and also the violation of the integrity of non-human elements of the shared world, including the natural environment and the ecology of flora and fauna can also be included in the purview of symbolic violence. Does the violation of the shared ecology of the planet by others not constitute a destruction of the global commons? For Bourdieu it depends on the how the destructive act is sanctioned by law. Legal power makes an act of symbolic violence permissible thereby protecting it and securing its continuation. For Bourdieu symbolic violence is realized most directly through law which authorizes the use of power that people must obey or risk punishment. As another example would indicate, there is an official treachery of legal power cum symbolic violence of the grandest proportion as one finds in historic "treaties" prepared by former colonizing powers and "entered into" by leaders of Native peoples, and through a legal agreement thereby sanction the most odious of historical practices that seem to have no date of expiration (Churchill 2002). Through a creation in law certain symbolic violences have become quasi-permanent aspects of society which can evidently only be overturned by another act of law.

Symbolic violence in the above examples is a legal or moral power that constructs social reality in ways that enable or are likely to enable various form of harm to persons. Symbolic violence in this sense is only one step removed from the physical destruction of concrete, hard violence, which gets enacted in turn but is previously mediated through an institutional action before being realized as violation.

Conclusion

Violence is about much more than acts of physical destruction, it is also about the dominant rationality that maintains other forms of destruction, including the destruction of life, of economic opportunity, of personal liberties, of freedom of action and conscience. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence follows in a tradition of critical sociology that concerns itself with the critique of domination. It has applicability to those aspects of the social order that are problematic insofar as they transmute power through human behaviour, but are not adequately grasped by the existing lexicon of critical concepts. As the discipline of sociology must by necessity be guided by historical contingency and not be tied to static conceptions of social order, its concepts also must be added to and re-invented as to be in accordance with the changing temporal nature of social practices and new formations of power. The current crisis phase of neo-liberalism – compounded by market failures, wars and other troubling authoritarian measures of the post 9/11 era, is surely a time when global human rights are under increasing pressure.

Developing a critical sociology of violent control that is attuned to the reflexes of power seems imperative if the critique of domination is to rigorously continue.

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