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Masculinities in relation to male-on-male violence: exploring male perceptions of safety and vulnerability in public spaces

Mveng, Angeline Amombo

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Abstract

This research is concerned with men's vulnerability to violence victimization. Through viewing their talk as 'small stories', discourse analysis was deployed to discover the men's construction's regarding safety & threat in public space. Most research concerned with violence and masculinity tends to frame masculinity in terms of being indicative of perpetrating violence. There is scant research which considers male vulnerability to violence inflicted by other males. This has influenced dominating social discourse which fails to acknowledge the vulnerability which men experience in relation to violence. This study interviewed seven black men who reside in South Africa, aged between 23 and 30 years old, querying them on their experience of vulnerability when navigating public space. Affective experiences of anxiety emerged in the men's constructions of vulnerability and safety in space. The study found that all the men experienced themselves as vulnerable to violent victimization, even though they tended to make invisible their experience of this in their daily lives.

Keywords: masculinities; vulnerability; violence; affect; public space