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3-2-2018

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Recommended Citation

Allen, Sophie, "The Importance of an Intersectional Approach to Gender-Based Violence in South Africa" (2018). *University Honors Theses.* Paper 526.
https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.531

The Importance of an Intersectional Approach to Gender-Based Violence in South Africa

by

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An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

University Honors

and

International Development

Thesis Adviser

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2018

ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence is an issue of major concern in South Africa and is a result of an intersectionality of oppressors. A culture of violence, firmly established by racist and classist historical institutions, remains prominent. In addition, the culture outwardly focuses on tensions of race and class, rather than the oppression of gender, even though gender-based violence is necessarily relies upon the male domination and female subordination. Historical female oppression and patriarchal cultural patterns existed before the introduction of white rule. This phenomenon of South African culture particularly focusing on race and class as oppressors that contribute to gender-based violence, instead of patriarchal norms, can be observed through two major frameworks: discourses of rape and the greater rape culture and inconsistencies between laws, acts, and the Constitution of the South African government as compared to public consciousness of gender. Including an intersectional approach in South African culture that emphasizes oppressive gender structures in discussions of gender-based violence that also incorporates the ways in which race and class are also influences of such violence, must be considered if gender-based violence is to substantially decrease.

INTRODUCTION

Issues of domination and subordination are rampant in today's society. States that have a historical legacy of institutional oppression experience inherited oppressions that dominate and influence the contemporary lives of everyday citizens and the progression of the nation. In her essay entitled Domination and Subordination, Jean Baker Miller discusses the idea of permanent inequalities, in other words those that are ascribed at the time of birth and function upon a person for the rest of his or her life (1976). According to Miller, certain categories of people dominate over socially defined subordinate groups, where the prescribed dominant group dictates and controls those who have been identified as subordinate (Miller, 1976). While the dominant class defines normal, the subordinate class internalizes these prescribed definitions, struggling to survive within a world in which the norms of the dominant class do not match their own reality (Miller, 1976). Subordination and domination tend to function most clearly and most impactfully along lines of gender, race, and class. The nation of South Africa is no exception of country that continues to deal with the negative consequences of oppression that originate from a coercive and segregated history. Different forms of oppression that currently function in the nation center around the violent and turbulent history of colonialism, slavery, forced black labor, and institutionalized segregation during Apartheid, all of which were based upon intersecting racial, ethnic, and classist lines. This history has created a lasting culture that focuses on the oppressors of race and class in a very strong way, often ignoring the prevailing patriarchal culture that heavily influences and contributes to this violence. The traumatic and lasting effects of intersectional oppression in South Africa remain evident, seen in the high rates of poverty along racial lines, a massive inequality gap, continued community racial segregation, and gender violence.

Gender-based violence as a result of intersectional oppression in South Africa is extremely prominent. The different forms of gender-based violence is a crisis in South Africa which can be observed in the media's common naming and perception of South Africa as the rape capital of the world. Gender-based violence or violence against women, as defined by the United Nations during the 1995 Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, refers to "any act… that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." This does not include every form of violence a woman may experience but rather those such as rape, domestic violence, sexual, and interpersonal violence, and sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, which rely upon the power domination of women by men. Though women are also perpetrators various types of violence against men, gender violence impacts women at a much higher magnitude; the vast majority of domestic and interpersonal violence cases occur with men as the perpetrators and women as the victims. This is due to the trend that gender is often seen as an indicator of "status that determines social position in society, one that typically accords women with less power, privilege, and resources than men" and is based upon a society's ascribed gender roles and status (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). One in five women over the age of eighteen report that they have experienced gender-based violence in South Africa (Wilkinson, 2016). The subordination of women due to their diminished status in society as compared to men is an innate factor of gender-based violence, and these patriarchal norms of female subordination encourage and promote the occurrence of gender-based violence (Koss et al., 1994; Marin & Russo, 1999). Without the ability for men to dominate themselves over women, the systemic use of violence to maintain this domination could not occur, though poverty and substance abuse by a partner are also a

risk factors of gender-based violence (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002; Kilpatrick, 1990; VanderEnde, Yount, Dynes, & Sibley, 2012).

Negative impacts of gender violence are multifold, including various poor mental and physical health effects (Campbell, 2002; Jewkes, 2016; Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002; Lloyd, 1997). The negative health consequences due to gender-based violence are perhaps some of the most researched aspects of the issue, as gender-based violence impacts many different forms of health. Reproductive health is one aspect of health that suffers when a woman experiences gender-based violence, and it is suggested that poor levels of reproductive health are more highly correlated to the prevalence of domestic violence than poverty (Kishor & Johnson, 2006). Examples of the ways in which reproductive health is impacted by gender-based violence include lowered access to contraceptives, higher rates of unwanted pregnancies, lower obstetric outcomes, and a higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases (Jewkes, 2016). Higher rates of HIV/AIDS in women is particularly correlated with the experience of gender-based violence (Guedes, 2004; Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna & Shai, 2010; Kishor & Johnson, 2006). This is especially problematic and of major concern in South Africa, as the HIV rate of women aged 15-49 in 2015 according to UNAIDS was 23.8, one of the highest in the world (2016). The consequence of severe mental health issues also occurs when women are subject to gender-based violence. Depression and severe post-traumatic stress disorder are the two most prevalent mental health diseases that share comorbidity specifically with intimate-partner violence (Campbell, 2002). In fact, it is found that the occurrence of violence is often what triggers depression and PTSD among women who have experienced violence (Campbell, 2002). Though this constitutes a short summary of the negative health consequences that women who have experience violence face, this discussion highlights the severity of the issue in regards to health worldwide.

The extensive use of healthcare facilities by women who have experienced violence at a much larger rate than those who have not is a large scale compilation of the discussed negative health outcomes as a consequence of gender-based violence, consequently resulting in these women being less productive in society (Campbell, 2002). The extensive use of healthcare facilities by victims of such violence has major economic consequences (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). In South Africa specifically, a conservative estimate of the costs of gender-based violence in 2012-2013 was at least R28.4 billion and R42.4 billion, or .09-1.3% of the nation's gross domestic product (K.P.M.G., 2015). In addition, nation's with high rates of gender violence have lower education and employment rates for women, and that the children of women who experience violence have lowered education and health outcomes as well (Morrison & Orlando, 2004). Based on this information, it is clear that gender violence in any country, including South Africa, is a problem that needs to be confronted due to the various facets of life and that are influenced and hurt by the occurrence of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, because of these negative outcomes of gender-based violence, the high proportion of women who experience such violence paints a worrying picture that should concern those doing social work or who are devoted to studying gender relations. Though rates of gender violence are variable depending on the examined source, it seems that as recently as 2016, at least one in five women over the age of 18 have experienced violence within a relationship during their lives in South Africa (Statistics, South Africa, 2016). In addition, specifically rape prevalence is also high, with the reported rate of rape 71 per 100,000 women in 2016 (Wilkinson, 2016). Analysing and confronting these rather high statistics of gender-based violence, though difficult, must be done, as the costs of such violence both on a national scale and for the individual victims of the violence is severe.

In order to adequately address gender violence, intersectional approaches include each the various axes of oppression such as race, class, and gender, are integral, as oppression and subordination occur and intersect along every level of identification, of which gender is just one. South Africa's history of racism and classism act as oppressors that contribute to a culture of gender and gender-based violence. Historically, colonial assumptions and stereotypes were created to protect white lives and moralities which necessarily oppressed those who did not assume roles of power, namely rich, white men. Due to this past of intense and systematic racism and class division, within conversations surrounding all forms of violence, racism and classism are blamed rather than gender oppression (Meyer, Durrheim, & Foster, 2016). In other words, in South Africa there is a tendency to overemphasize the importance of the axes of oppression of race and class instead of gender oppression while discussing the culture of violence. Consequently, a large-scale intersectional approach that includes race, class, and gender, in the roots of general violence has not yet been achieved. This has established a culture in which discussions of gender-based violence center around issues of race and class instead of gender based oppression. Though the axes of race and class do play a significant role in the prevalence of gender-based violence, the subordination and oppression of women in the society must be examined, as gender-based violence necessarily rests upon the subordination of women under men.

South Africa's overemphasis of race and class in comparison to gender in discussing gender-based violence is understandable, as racial and class divisions have been accentuated and exacerbated throughout the nation's history. Yet gender violence as an issue of importance needs to be discussed through an intersectional lens that is inclusive of the patriarchal norms that encourage violence in conjunction with, instead of only, issues of race and class. In addition, the lack of emphasis and the tendency to ignore gender oppression and the patriarchal culture in South Africa in favor of other

relevant forms of oppression, such as race and class, has emphasized the prevalence of gender violence and gender discrimination in South Africa (Koss et al., 1994; Marin & Russo, 1999).

The phenomenon of South African culture particularly focusing on race and class as oppressors that contribute to gender violence, instead of patriarchal norms, can be observed through two major frameworks: discourses of rape and the greater rape culture and inconsistencies between laws, acts, and the Constitution of the South African government as compared to public consciousness of gender. In order to fully understand this reality, it is crucial that one understands and has knowledge of the history of South Africa and the institutions and events that have facilitated the deep and severe pattern of gender oppression, and thereby gender violence, that South Africa currently experiences. It is this past and the nation's subsequent trauma that has created a racial and class-based hierarchical society. Yet, South African society has also suffered from massive gender oppression from both European and African cultures of patriarchy, leading to high rates of gender-based violence. It is all of the factors of oppression that have led to high rates of gender violence in South Africa and the lack of a fully intersectional approach of all levels of oppression created a society in which gender-based violence endures. Including an intersectional approach in South African culture that emphasizes these oppressive gender structures in discussions of gender-based violence would be most beneficial to reducing gender violence.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The Importance of Intersectionality and Feminist Theory

Intersectionality is the concept that different social identities, especially those of gender, race, and class, intersect to have impact on one's level of subordination and oppression within a society (Crenshaw, 1989). According to this feminist theory all social

identities must be broken down and analyzed if one is to fully understand the level and types of oppression that a person faces through a complete social justice lens (Crenshaw, 1989). In other words, a single social identity is not the basis of how one experiences oppression, but rather every category that one identifies with, where oppression refers to "the *absence of choices,*" (hooks, 2014, p.5). Through this intersectional and multidimensional approach to oppression, those who face subordination on multiple social levels are able to acknowledge how their personal and specific identity experiences oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). This theory evolved from a desire to include black women during the second wave of feminism in the Western world to combat a movement that prioritized the liberation of heterosexual, white, middle, and upper class women and ignored the realities of women of other races and sexualities (Crenshaw, 1989).

Feminism, initially characterized as a system that excluded black and lower-class identities, was therefore defined during feminism's Second Wave as the equality between men and women (hooks, 2014). Questioning this, bell hooks discusses in her book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* that men themselves are not equal (1984). Therefore achieving equality between the sexes would be considered a contradiction: to which class should women strive to achieve equality (hooks, 2014)? hooks continues to elaborate that feminism must "be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural bias and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression" (p.33). Without the inclusion of different forms of oppression that include the intersectionality of race and class, feminism will fail to improve the social status of all women (hooks, 2014).

The utilization of an intersectional lens is of great importance when analyzing of the levels of oppression that a society may face that contribute to a culture in which gender-based violence is distinct. Women of color, of sexualities other than

herteosexual, and of low economic class face multiple layers of intersectional oppression already on top of, or within, their experience of gender oppression. Each one of these levels is incredibly important in discussing the roots of gender violence and each one cannot be analyzed independently from one another. As bell hooks articulates in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*:

> … male violence in the family is an expression of male domination... violence is inextricably linked to all acts of violence in this society that occur between the powerful and the powerless, the dominant and the dominated. While male supremacy encourages the use of abusive force to maintain male domination of women, it is the Western philosophical notion of hierarchical rule and coercive authority that is the root cause of violence against women, of adult violence against children, of all violence between those who dominate and those who are dominated. It is this belief system that is the foundation on which sexist ideology and other ideologies of group oppression are based; they can be eliminated only when this foundation is eliminated (2014, p. 199).

Male dominance, especially when built upon this Western foundation, creates an excuse in which men are allowed to continue to use violence as a form of power against women as their subordinates. This is also seen in cases of sexual oppression against women. Sexual oppression through violence functions with the permissible trend of gender-based violence which enhances the occurence of rape, perpetuates rape culture, as well as other forms of violence against women (Burt, 1980; Marin & Russo, 1999).

Rape culture refers to the trend in which violence against women is normalized and prevalent due to patriarchal domination of women and conceptions about the role and status of women within a society (Nicoletti, Bollinger, & Spencer-Thomas, 2009; Olfman, 2009). Myths that surround rape, including those that blame women for their rapes and those that the perpetrators of rape have ravenous sexual appetites they must

quell, excuse the crime of rape and dictate how people interact with conceptions, definitions, and even influence how laws are written about rape (Burt, 1980). These myths are based upon the conception that rape and gender-based violence is a form of legitimate coercion and control of women by men (Burt, 1980; Russo & Pirlott, 2006). All of these myths and conceptions about the ways in which violence is allowed to be used against women forms and crystallizes rape culture within patriarchal societies.

In addition, within the context of the sexual oppression of women, there is an emphasis on the norms and rules of heterosexuality. As gendered interpersonal violence generally occurs within heterosexual relationships they are the focus of this paper. The heterosexual emphasis within sexual oppression and violence"promotes objectification [and]... makes everyone, especially women, into sex objects" (hooks, 2014, p. 157). Women then, because of their diminished status to men, do not have the same level of choice in their sexuality as men, which creates a pattern of sexual oppression that has created and perpetuates rape culture and violence (hooks, 2014). Sexual oppression and violence are therefore forms of gender-based violence. However, it is important to consider that within discussions of sexual oppression, issues of race and class are not excluded, as they as well are components that influence a woman's level of oppression.

Having knowledge and understanding of feminist and intersectional theories is essential for combating gender-based violence and must be used to approach the issue in every nation. This is true in every nation, but especially in South Africa as oppression continues to function upon and greatly influences the levels of violence in this society. Though the problem of gender-based violence is acknowledged, without recognition of the ways in which the patriarchal culture in South Africa contribute to and influence the oppression of women through gender violence, the levels of gender-based violence cannot decline. This being said, understanding how and why race and class function as oppressors must also not be forgotten. To do this, the history of South Africa, with the

inclusion of institutions of slavery and segregation, must be understood and acknowledged.

A Brief History of South Africa

Early history that predates European arrival to South Africa involved both class and gender forms of oppression. The overarching culture of the region was hierarchical, based upon inequalities and power relationships in which "men controlled women… patrons controlled clients, and… chiefs controlled consumers" (Thompson, 2014 p23). In addition, the dominant culture valued kinship relations of clans. Class oppression in the form of private ownership and material wealth functioned as leading ideologies, along with the security and the possession of this wealth as a tools of power (Thompson, 2014). Notably, extensive competition between these men for powerful positions and property ownership was a common theme throughout the region (Thompson, 2014). Gender oppression also occurred in traditional South African cultures in response to the acknowledgement of men as the owners and those that held the positions of power (Thompson, 2014). For women, the class and gender norms which functioned on hierarchal definitions of status, translated into a subordinate role in comparison to men, as they were not owners nor leaders. In addition, a strong division of labor impacted the spaces in which women were present as well as the tasks that women performed. These roles created a culture in which women had a strenuous and difficult role, charged with the management of everything related to the keeping of the home, children, and planting and caring for crops (Thompson, 2014). In addition, the culture of marriage was another form of gender oppression, which functioned through the exchange of bridewealth, or *lobola,* in which the husband's family or the husband himself pays the bride's family for the right to marry the daughter (Thompson, 2014). This economic exchange for marriages represent marriage culture and norms of hierarchical, economical

relationships between men and women, parents and their children, and powerful men and subordinates. In this way, women functioned as another form of property that men exchanged and used as tools of power, status, and consequently marriage became a symbol of oppression. This was true especially in the form of polygamy, as chiefs would show their power and wealth with the accumulation of brides (Thompson, 2014). As evident in this history, both a classist and patriarchal society were already present and established before the arrival of Europeans, which created different identifications of oppression in South Africa.

The introduction of Europeans in the region of South Africa drastically changed and exacerbated .class and gender hierarchies and created the oppression of race. Both the Dutch and English colonized the region, and both forcibly removed Africans from their homelands to provide European citizens land to farm and prosper from. The removal of people from their lands based on race and the subsequent violence, solidified and heightened racial tensions between the Europeans groups that now inhabited the nation, increased poverty levels of Africans, and established racism against the indigenous populations (Thompson, 2014). To complicate racial tensions was the crucial dependence on both imported slave and indigenous labor that Europeans used to form colonial culture and institutions, both in rural and urban areas. Slave labor used worldwide was incredibly exploitative and brutal, and this was no exception in South Africa. Brutality against slave women was especially violent, as they were often regarded as sexual objects (Thompson, 2014). Further convoluting racial oppression was the creation of a third racial class: the "colored" population, created both by imported Indian slave labor and lighter skinned indigenous populations. In addition, tension and competition between the white Afrikaner Dutch population and the white British population was rampant as British established rule of territory in the region (Thompson, 2014). With continued violence and subjugation of black and colored populations, it did

not take long for the white, specifically British, population to dominate the region: the Union of South Africa of autocratic white rule was officially established in 1910 (Thompson, 2014). Colonial history created a society and culture in which whites were divided between the more affluent British population and the poorer Dutch farmers known as Afrikaners as well as between and the division and formed distinctions of different races. Racial and class oppressions, with upper class and rich White, specifically English men, continued to dominate South Africa for the next 80 years. The original oppressors of class and gender, which had already functioned within the culture of the peoples of this region, were exacerbated, and the oppressing force of race was added.

The conditions of subordination were defined by the European, patriarchal and classist men in power which continued the oppressions of race, class, and gender in South Africa. Though race and class were the most flagrant and enforced oppressions under white rule, gender oppression continued as a custom, resulting in women being left to the shadows of South African History. The creation of the Union of South Africa in 1910, a nation-state independent from Europe, was dominated by white rule, in a society in which class and race distinctions between both the Afrikaner and English populations, as well as between whites and blacks and other racial minorities, relied in large part due to white dependence on exploitative black and colored labor (Thompson, 2014). Intense racial stratification was maintained between whites and blacks, but also between whites, as characterized by the relative poverty of the Afrikaner population in comparison to the English. Consequently, this led to the unrest and desire of Afrikaner for higher status and power (Thompson, 2014). Afrikaner unrest and their desire to establish greater power depended upon their lower status compared to the British population, and was characterized by the fear of a potential black uprise The actions they took, included the establishment of early pass laws and color bars and eventually the implementation of

institutionalized racism in the form of Apartheid, further exploited the black and colored peoples.

Apartheid, the institutionalized enforcement of segregation between races, was based upon four racial categories that continue to function in South Africa today: Indian, Colored, African, and White. These categories were officially created during Apartheid to facilitate and direct the segregation of peoples, and were created to disenfranchisement non-White populations, especially African, and to divides races to combat any potential resistance (Thompson, 2014). Major negative consequences of Apartheid that continue in South African society include massive wealth and health inequalities and violence within and between classifications of different populations (Thompson, 2014). Oppression was based upon race and class within the culture of Apartheid. Yet women, also oppressed on the basis of their subordinate status compared to men, remained active and resilient, yet silenced by the oppression of two patriarchal societies.

As resistance to Apartheid grew internally and internationally, the the white, predominantly Afrikaner population, fought to maintain Apartheid and the racist and consequential classist segregation it provided. To do this, the Afrikaner-led government devised to amend the system to appease resistance while still maintaining white supremacy. The Afrikaner National Party subsequently made adjustments to the system that ensured race and class oppression, allowing them to hold their power of domination. Yet the resistance continued, which resulted in extreme violence. The government responded to violent protests against Apartheid with more violence, arrests, and a declaration of a state emergency. The government's use of violence were tools of further oppression, which demonstrates the reality of the culture of violence that South Africa continues to live within (Thompson, 2014).

Eventually the White political elites, with understanding that the culture of the country had changed in favor of ending Apartheid and thereupon agreed to a make

negotiations with the African National congress, with Nelson Mandela as the African spokesperson, in 1989 (Thompson, 2014). It was not until five years later however that the new government and constitution were established. A substantial factor in the delay of a working government was the difficult balance that had to be found pleasing both the white political elite as well as the new ANC leaders; the history of race and class oppression was difficult to satiate for the white government officials (Thompson, 2014). This interim was characterized by yet more violence and oppression within African communities as well as between White and African ones (Thompson, 2014). When a constitution was established five years later, it became one of the most progressive in the world, promising racial, class, and gender equality (The Republic of South Africa, 1994). Yet a culture of violence had been firmly established and continues to result in a violent South African society, that outwardly focused on tensions of race and class. This has not yet been unwound, and people continue to focus on the oppressions of race and class that were emphasized in Apartheid, neglecting the oppression of women by men.

It is important to note that though women are often not mentioned in the historical context of South Africa, they played an important role in the nation's history. As was mentioned above, women in pre-European African cultures were in charge of households and men were institutionalized as dominant and the owners. These relationships between men and women did not change with the introduction of white colonialism, but rather exacerbated the previously established patriarchal culture (Gordon, 2001). In other words, the status of women was more heavily ingrained as subordinate to men when the introduction of European patriarchal culture moved to dominate the patriarchal African one. To illustrate, Dutch women who came to the colony were necessarily attached to the successes of Dutch men as women could not earn money within the colonial system (Thompson, 2014). African and slave women in Dutch dominated South African society also were subject to cruel and violent treatment, often

regarded as sexual objects, forced into prostitution, and white slave owners, as is common across slave owning societies, raped and sexually abused their female slaves (Thompson, 2014). Black women therefore, on top of subordinate treatment on the basis of gender, also faced subordination based upon their race.

In addition, under British rule, as the white population grew increasingly dependent upon free and then cheap black, male labor in the mines, black women were forced to overtake the burden of the household with men absent from the homes on average for six months of the year (Thompson, 2014). The trend of black men as the sole wage earners within a household and women as the caretakers was a previously established as a cultural norm in traditional South African cultures. Importantly this traditional subordination of black women by their black male counterparts was exacerbated in a white-ruled culture. The custom of *lobola* is an example of this exacerbation, as men had to horde and keep the small amount of the money they earned to buy bride wealths (Thompson, 2014). Cultural tensions were thereby enhanced within black communities. Despite the enhanced oppression black women now faced, namely race in addition now to gender and class, black and coloured women remained strong and resilient, relying on kinship relations (Thompson, 2014). This resilience is demonstrated by the fact that large numbers of women are included the first Africans, Indians, and Coloreds, who came together to protest pass laws under Apartheid. In fact, the Federation of South African Women was one of the first and most prominent group against Apartheid (Thompson, 2014). Gender and sex oppression permeates the history of South Africa alongside a general treatment of women by men as objects (Boonzaier, 2005; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). The oppression of race and class in South African society was apparent and obvious, but the oppressor of gender ultimately continued to evolve and grow alongside them.

An analysis of the historical context of South Africa is vital in understanding the current state of gender-based violence and the patriarchal oppression of gender that remains intense in the nation. As can be seen, at every major period of history, beginning in early history, the layers of intersectional oppression have been accentuated by the introduction of institutional racism by whites. In the context of gender-based violence, female oppression due to a culture in which males dominated existed before the introduction of white rule. However, the formation of race and class as axes of oppression and the establishment of African men as subordinate to white men, different forms categorical oppressions became continually more severe. African men, in an effort to continue their dominance over women, used and continue to use violence to exert their dominance.

Historical Implications on Today

Women's subordinate status in comparison to men has been an institution of South African culture since before the implementation of colonization and white supremacy. However, historical institutions of white supremacy exacerbated the inequalities between men and women within black and other marginalized groups. There are popular conceptions that gender inequalities within black South African communities were exclusively generated by the indigenous culture, while conversely some have claimed that Western institutions, including those that assert and perpetuate male dominance and patriarchal control of women, were merely copied and transplanted into black culture after African independence (Gordon, 2001). The reality is much more complicated than either of these conclusions. Though gender divisions of labor were an important fixture of the South African indigenous culture, "current role expectations are operating in a very different economic and political environment" than they were in historical indigenous cultures (Gordon, 2001, p.272). South African women continue to

have little decision-making power in relationships with men, and less authority than they did in indigenous cultures (Gordon, 2001; Rice, 2017). The white reliance of black labor in the mining industry is one example of a historically white institution that penetrated and exacerbated female oppression in African culture through. The traditional African role of the male as the owner was accentuated by the male European role of the breadwinner by the mining industry. At the same time, the traditional African role of women of domestic chores was enforced by the absence of male blacks, which increased the oppression of black women in comparison to their status within traditional South African society. This complete control of the household and the absence of men was a position previously unknown to black women and made the division of labor between genders more prominent (Thompson, 2014).

Despite progress, substantial violence that includes gender-based violence continues to exist in South Africa, functioning along racial, class, and gender oppressions, all of which stem from the nation's violent past. Due to this violent history and desire to reverse forms of oppression, the post-Apartheid government created an extremely liberal constitution that celebrates diversity and promises equality. For example, the Bill of rights promises equality of all people and outlaws discrimination based upon "race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (1994). The constitution is not the only government document that is considered liberal either; an act that promises abortion rights, a National Gender Policy Framework that exists to encourage gender equality in the government and in other business sectors, and the Child Justice Act, which addresses the rights of children and youth, are examples of the government attempting to create equality through official actions. Yet substantial oppression that function on racism, classism, and the adherence to

patriarchal norms remain, which have retained major inequalities between race, class, and gender.

One example of the inequalities that stem from South Africa's past are the substantially high poverty rates that occur largely along race lines. Though South Africa is considered an upper middle income country by World Bank standards, in 2015, 55.5 % of the total population remained in poverty (Statistics, South Africa, 2017). This rate implies the mass amount of inequality that continues to plague the country. For example, the South African Gini Index, which measures inequality, of 0.68 represents an extremely high level of inequality (Statistics, South Africa, 2017). Along lines of race, the Gini Index for black South Africans is much higher than the other historical racial classifications of white, colored, and Indian (Statistics, South Africa, 2017). In fact, the poverty rate of black Africans of both genders in 2015 was 64.2%, while that of whites was only one percent (Statistics, South Africa, 2017). Those particularly impacted by poverty are specifically young black women: nearly four percent more women experience poverty than men in South Africa, most of whom are black (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

Second, despite the fact that poverty decreased in the mid-2000s, the number of women-headed households experiencing poverty in the country increased at the same time, if only slightly (Posel & Rogan, 2009; Posel & Rogan, 2012). This occurred while the number of women living without men increased, suggesting that economically, women are more likely to be poor than men (Rogan, 2016). Income, though an important function of the axis of poverty and class as an oppressor, is not the only indicator to consider in the realm of poverty. Women in South Africa are also much more likely to be multidimensionally poor, a term that encompasses poor health, lower education levels and living standards, disempowerment, social exclusion, low income, and unemployment (Alkire, 2007). When these factors are included in calculations of poverty, South African

women tend to be significantly more disadvantaged than men, with 57% of women experiencing multidimensional poverty in the nation as compared to 46% of men (Rogan, 2016). Women tend to experience worse economic outcomes and higher rates of poverty in post-Apartheid South Africa than men, further showcasing the need to observe how gender acts as an axis of oppression in the nation.

The dimension of health also demonstrates the reality in which black women, more than any other population in South Africa, experience a major disadvantage. In the 2011 Census Report it was found that health rates remain substantially inequitable. For example, the African infant mortality rate is nearly 40 per 100,000 live births, and white rates only 8.3 (Statistics, South Africa, 2015). In addition, 21% of women having reported experiencing some form of gender-based violence, an indicator of various poor health, in their lifetimes (Statistics, South Africa, 2016). Perhaps most shocking however in regards to the status of women's health in the nation is the high rate of HIV/AIDS among South African women, especially in comparison to men. In 2016, the rate of women 15-49 with HIV was 23.8 while the rate for men of the same age was 14.2 (UNAIDS, 2016). This tendency for women to experience negative health outcomes in South Africa, in conjunction with higher rates of poverty and violence, demonstrates how women are structurally disadvantaged in the nation, and that oppression of multiple identities continues to function in a substantial way.

Whether because of or in relation to female oppression, women have experienced the brunt of the various forms of oppression that function in South Africa, due to their lower status in comparison to men. This is especially true when gender oppression is intersected by those of race and poverty. Women specifically experience gender-based violence in its multiple forms and poor reproductive health, mainly in reference to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However despite the established and factual evidence supporting the fact that women remain subordinate to men in South Africa (eg

Boonzaier, 2005; Dosekun, 2013; Dworkin, Colvin, Hatcher, & Peacock, 2012; Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim & Mdlongwa, 2017; Jewkes, & Abrahams, 2002; Jewkes et al, 2002; Kalichman et al., 2005; Shefer et al., 2008), gender-based violence analyses are too often considered in terms of race and class (Meyer et al, 2016). Attention must be given to how gender oppression functions in the nation, as without this, the stagnation of gender-based violence will continue to be slow. First however, the ways in which gender oppression due to the South African patriarchal culture is minimized in relation to other intersectional oppressors, such as those championed during Apartheid, must be understood.

Connecting Feminist Theory to the South African Context

Axes of female oppression have been historically influenced by events and patterns that have contributed to the current cultural relationships between race, class, and gender. For example, women remain in charge of household tasks and the conception that women must be deferential to men remains strong, especially within marriages and other domestic relationships (Rogan, 2016; Shefer et al., 2008). In this way the intersectional link of all forms of violence, but especially gender-based, that functions along patriarchal, Western ideals, is crucial to understanding the reality of gender-based violence in South Africa. Both the dominant Western and African cultures of South Africa promote and contribute to the sustainment of a patriarchal society. With the imposition and creation of inequality along racial and class lines by the introduction of white supremacy, the subordination of gender remained and strengthened (Gordon, 2001; Thompson, 2014). In other words, white Europeans in South Africa created hierarchy within a culture in which oppression of gender and class was already prominent, which in turn heightened the subordination of women. The introduction of more axes of oppression, such as race and mercantile capitalist classes, intensified

injustice and domination. This history has created a culture concerned with race and class distinctions rather than the subordination of women. So though black South African women live in situations of high likelihood of gender-based violence, race and class issues underlie the South African intersectional female experience, in spite of feminist theory and research that promotes an international lens that incorporates every level of oppression an individual experiences.

The desire to sustain domination and oppression within personal relationships of women by their male partners is an important connection of feminist theory and South African history, a trend that hooks discussed at length in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. With the rise of feminist culture worldwide and the integration and support from the South African government of women into the workforce, men have been left insecure of their masculinity in terms of their dominance and as breadwinners (Dworkin et al., 2012; Moffet, 2006). Not only does this encourage women to remain complicit in their traditional roles as household keepers, but it also encourages women to feel insecure of their role in the workforce due to intersectional experiences of a dominantly male patriarchy (hooks, 2014). This pattern is observed in South Africa today (Jaga, et al., 2017; Moffet, 2006). In addition, sexual oppression and violence that acts upon heterosexual norms of relationships, also examined by hooks, is observed in South Africa. This pattern of heterosexual relationship norms observed in South Africa further accentuates notions of rape culture and the perpetuation of violence against women as a means to assert male dominance (hooks, 2014; Jewkes, & Morrell, 2010). Understanding these factors of violence in which males wish to establish and maintain their dominance in a shifting culture demonstrate the various levels upon which women are victims of violence; it is not simply a woman's status of class or race that make women vulnerable, but a combination of factors that perpetuate and encourage different forms of violence and discrimination of women within South African culture.

It is clear that women in South Africa are impacted by a patriarchal culture which oppresses them on a variety of levels. Race and class play a large role in the prevalence of gender-based violence in South African culture, though so does gender discrimination and oppression, as gender-based violence necessarily depends upon male domination and female subordination. In addressing the potential causes of the continuation of such violence, bell hooks argues that it is the compliance of women within the institution of male supremacy that allows the violence to continue (hooks, 2014). According to hooks, it is other forms of oppression and domination within culture in addition to the patriarchal norms that both women and men accept as a reality, that allows women to continue to be compliant with the violence that themselves and their children must endure (2014). In South Africa, forms of oppression are historically glaring in the everyday lives of citizens of all races and ethnicities, and the culture of domination has been instilled as normal and matter of fact. Feelings that women should be obedient and even subservient to men, though this has changed over time, are still very relevant within South African culture, for both white and black women (Rice, 2017; Shefer et al, 2008). The contribution of all these levels of oppression to gender-based violence must be considered to decrease the rates of such violence in South Africa.

FRAMEWORK AND EVIDENCE

The fact that the oppression of gender functions along multiple levels leads to the conclusion that the utilization of intersectionality and feminist theories are useful tools to unravel and analyze gender violence. Within the South African context, intersectionality is especially important because the historical oppressions of race and class are extremely prominent and substantial. This being said, the patriarchal domination of women is not often discussed in South African culture in reference to the sources of gender-based violence, despite the acknowledgment of gender oppression a function of

gender violence the related literature (Meyer et al., 2016; Moffet, 2016). Instead, a

pattern emerges in which the oppressions developed from the South African historical

experience of race and class are blamed for the high prevalence of gender violence

(Moffet, 2006). There are many examples of this despite the fact that gender violence is

a function of and could be solved more completely with an intersectional lens that takes

accounts for all of the various levels of oppression, of race, class *and* gender. The

discourse of rape culture in South Africa, as well as the disconnect between government

actions and culture consciousness, are primary examples of the neglect of patriarchal

gender oppression in reference to gender-based violence. This trend can be traced back

to institutions and a culture in which race and class tensions were at the forefront of

every institution for nearly three centuries.

Discussions of Rape Culture

Rape is a prominent and serious subset of violence against women. For this

reason, rape stands to be an important and worthwhile discussion in the domain of

gender violence within South Africa, as 71 of 100,000 women reported the crime of rape

in 2016-2017 (Wilkinson, 2017). It is likely that actual rape incidence is higher, as

worldwide rape tends to be underreported (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). The continued

prominence of rape and the issue of underreporting demonstrate the significance of rape

culture's functioning in South Africa. In addition, rape and all forms of gender-based

violence are used as tools for men to exert dominance over women in public and in

private, and South African patriarchal norms allow such violence against women to be

excused and accepted (Dworkin et al., 2012; Moffet, 2006). And yet, though gender

violence and rape are necessary built upon the oppression of women under men and

function within the culture of rape, patterns have evolved that the people blame rape on

race and class more so than gender. This can be observed in historical formations of

whom is blamed for rape, as well as in the accusation that Jacob Zuma raped a woman, in which he was acquitted in the subsequent trial.

During the time of Dutch and British colonialism and rule, rape laws that were created and the interpretation of these laws by the powerful, white, male rulers of the country, functioned to protect and promote colonial sentiments of white, male supremacy. In many colonial societies, South Africa included, the formation of the black man as a perpetrator of rape was used to maintain the colonial lifestyle and as a form of control of the black man by the white (Scully, 1995). In order to establish these desires, rape laws and their interpretations in court functioned along the culture and customs of Dutch Roman Law, in which rape was defined as "the forcible ravishing and the forcible carrying off of a woman or maid against her will" (Van Der Linden,1897, as cited in Scully, 1995 pp. 343). With the integration of British control in the mid nineteenth century, Dutch Roman Law, and so this particular definition of rape, was maintained, as it also supported the ideals of a British colonial lifestyle (Scully, 1995). However, respecting the British colonial lifestyle in Cape Colony also meant ensuring that the white population remained pure, and consequently the additional interpretation of rape as "an illegal act of reproduction" was added (Scully, 1995, p. 343). Furthermore, under the ideals of Dutch Roman law, the severity of the punishment a perpetrator of rape was based on a women's status and class: women who were married and only those unmarried of a yet unmarriageable age, arbitrarily defined by the powerful white men who ruled, dictated the most severe punishments (Scully, 1995). Both these qualifications protected a narrow classification of women and failed to protect poor white and black women who were far less likely to be married than their rich white counterparts of the same age (Scully, 1995). In other words, poor white women and especially poor black women of all ages were not worthy of dictating a full punishment of their perpetrator solely because they were not married. These laws and definitions of

rape protected white lifestyle and ideals and white male patriarchy, as black women, who were regarded as sexual objects by white men were not worthy of protection.

These laws promoted the formation of rape culture in South Africa and the tendency for victims to often be identified as rich white women and perpetrators as poor, black men. Because rape laws and their interpretations served to protect primarily rich, white woman, all women's respectability and credibility under the law was defined on characteristics of race, culture and class, leading to a pattern in which rich white women were considered victims (Scully, 1995). In addition, black, often poor men, or at least men who the court considered to be black, were convicted of rape crimes at much higher rates than men, demonstrating the cultural identification of black men as perpetrators of rape (Scully, 1995). To complicate this issue, the majority of cases brought to court involved African or Coloured men and women of working-class economic and occupational backgrounds (Scully, 1995). This means that majority of women who reported rape or gender violence did not identify with the narrow classification of woman that the colony protected. Consequently, many perpetrators of violence against women were not convicted at the level of blame that the same crime may have authorized if the victim was a white woman. The historical failure to convict and punish rape if women were neither rich nor white, and the over conviction of black men, assigned blame and innocence based on the identification of race and class. This created a rape culture that now functions upon race and class as identifiers and the continuation of male authorization over the which female bodies were worthy to protect.

As a result, discussions of rape today follow these historical patterns, both at a publicized, political level and within the civilian population. At the political level, the most notable, recognizable, and publically followed example of these patterns occurring contemporarily is the rape trial of Jacob Zuma. This case showcases the reality in which black women continue to be unworthy of the status of victim. In 2006, the then Vice

President, Jacob Zuma, was not convicted of rape when a woman, referred to as 'Khwezi,' accused him of raping her the previous year. Khwezi and Zuma presented incredibly different stories: Zuma said the sex had been consensual and Khwezi affirmed her story that she had not consented to sex, which therefore defined the sexual exchange as rape under South African law. Zuma, a black man, was later was elected president and through that he became the leader of the African National Congress. With this position, he earned respect and recognition by many within the Zulu culture. This trial demonstrates that black men have, at least in a public arena, overcome the role of blame of rape, but because Khwezi was not believed, they continue to assume the role of dominance against black women. In addition, the public support that Zuma received showcases the cultural acceptance of violence against women in the nation.

The controversial and publicized trial that followed the accusation reveals the ways in which the nation conceptualizes gender. Though people supported both Zuma and for Khwezi, the loudest support came for Zuma, defending his innocence and supporting his character, while disparaging those of Khwezi. While Khwezi left the country after Zuma was acquitted, Zuma gained a great deal of political support, showcased in his election to president in 2009. In this rape trial between two blacks, both of high economic standing, the identifiers of race and class were shared. TIn this way, the only level of domination and subordination that remained, as the classifications of race and class were moot, was between man and woman, in which the South African men dominate. Through this, historical formations of rape reformed, as Khwezi did not identify with whiteness and therefore did not identify with those categories that were historically protected in rape law. Khwezi was shamed for the trial and Zuma was acquitted, which exhibits the misogynistic nature of rape culture in South Africa and its tendency to blame a woman, especially one who is black, for her rape. Though Zuma has now resigned as President, the scandals and charges against him were not due to

his history of violence against women, but rather due to the economic issue of unethical corruption charges. In other words, it was not his actions of oppression of women but rather his misuse of taxpayer dollars that deemed him to be unfit to lead South Africa, which illustrates the popular tradeoff made to champion the oppressional components of race and class over that of the violent against women.

Furthermore the understanding that Zuma was assuming the traditional role of a "Zulu man" was central to his defense trial and his acquittal the crime (Hassim, 2009; Reddy & Potgieter, 2006; Suttner, 2009; Waetjen & Maré 2009). Zulu men as strong warriors, as polygamists (it is notable that Zuma was married to another woman at the time of the trial), and perhaps most importantly, the duty of a Zulu man to please a woman if he finds her to be 'aroused,' are among the main ethnic traits that were emphasized (Hasim, 2009; Suttner, 2009). Zuma's character as a Zulu man was emphasized by Zuma's choice to utilise his constitutional right to deliver all of his testimony in his Zulu mother tongue (Hassim, 2009). The effectiveness of Zuma and his lawyers of this emphasis on South African patriarchal gender norms in acquitting and encouraging his public support, can be seen through interviews with women and men during and after the trial, the news media, and the Zulu paraphernalia that Zuma supporters sported (Hassim, 2009; Reddy & Potgieter, 2006; Suttner, 2009; Waetjen & Maré 2009). Zuma and his lawyers portrayed him as a man functioning correctly within his patriarchal culture, supporting the statement that a "generic Zulu male [is] one who is obligated to obey the demands of culture and its prescribed patriarchal morality" (Waetjen & Maré, 2009, p. 75).

Zuma's behavior to promote his culture and pride in his Zulu ethnicity intentionally recentered the trial and the subsequent public debate into a cultural and ethnic dispute instead of one involving the oppression of women through the use of violence, which functioned to excuse and redeem his behavior of oppressing Khwezi, a

woman, through rape. In addition, Zuma banked on the wounds and pain caused by ethnic, racial, and cultural divisions of Africans during colonialism, white rule, and Apartheid, to encourage sympathy for his right to be traditionally African instead of as a rapist, significantly improving both his public appearance and the trial results (Waetjen & Maré, 2009). Zuma's reliance upon these traditional culture norms to retain his innocence under the law originate in the historical Zulu cultural ideal, exacerbated by white dominance, that women should be controlled and subservient to men (Dosekun, 2013). His purposeful juxtaposition between the Eurocentric and colonial formation of his race as a perpetrator of rape between his role as a traditional Zulu (and therefore a traditional South African man) and his pride of this identification, refocused the trial away from his behavior of the oppression of women. This was due to his ability and success in asserting his right to be traditionally African after a history in which African culture was systematically oppressed and his identification as a black man would have assigned him blame (Waetjen & Maré, 2009). In this way, the entire trial directly contradicts the constitutional promise of gender equality and emphasizes the traditional and cultural acceptance of gender-based violence and the rape culture that permits it. It is also a powerful and significant example of the neglect of the subordination of women in terms of gender-based violence within this patriarchal culture.

Although the issue of rape is known to the general public as a tremendous issue in the country, most have distorted ideas about the reality of the identities of the perpetrators and their victims. This occurs in the pattern that rape is viewed primarily as a crime and othered (Dosekun, 2013;Jewkes et Abrahams, 2002; Wood & Jewkes 1998; Wood & Jewkes 2001). The archetype of rape as othered refers to the tendency for the assumption that perpetrators of rape are strangers to the victim (Dosekun, 2013). In addition, perpetrators are identified primarily as black strangers, most likely who live in poverty or reside in Townships, the historical and current slums of South Africa

(Dosekun, 2013). In addition, white woman are frequently identified over black women as the victims of rape (Dosekun, 2013). These assumptions of identification rely upon the historical, identity-based formations of blame that stem from the era of white rule. In interviews with both black and white women, rape was not significantly mentioned within a context of oppressive gender power dynamics, and when gender was mentioned, it was only ever done in passing (Dosekun, 2013). However, rape and rape culture is necessarily a form of the oppression of women by men, as it involves the forceful exploitation of women, and is allowed to continue based upon the norm of patriarchal domination by men. In addition, men use rape as a power tool to ensure that women remain subservient to men (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Moffet, 2006). This sexual oppression of women is often rooted in the feeling that men must exert control over the women in their lives as they begin to exert more empowerment and control over their own lives (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Moffet, 2006). Poor black men feel that they are losing dominance over women in the South African culture, and this dominance over women is often the only form of control or power they feel. Thus, they resort to violence to maintain dominance over women (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; Moffet, 2006). In this way, poor black men's experience of subordination based upon their race and class compels them to ignore their domination female counterparts, contributing to a culture in which the oppression of gender is neglected or overshadowed. In the South African context, the pattern of rape within the context of race and class hides the reality that gender power issues are a major, if not the central, concern contributing to the prevalence of rape.

Inconsistencies between Government Actions and Public Consciousness of

Gender

South Africa boasts a very liberal constitution that provides equality for all, no matter their gender. This includes an explicit statement of nondiscrimination against gender and a mandate for The Commision of Gender Equality to exist as one of the "state institutions [that] strengthen[s] constitutional democracy in the Republic" (The Republic of South Africa, 1996). Rape defined as sexual acts that are non-consensual, domestic violence as a broad category of abuses, and access and the right of healthcare, including sexual and reproductive, are pillars within South African law (The Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, the public consciousness and understanding of gender rights does not correspond with the level of liberality of the South African government. Broadly, ideas of personhood and freedom that contradict the liberal rights given to South African citizens by the constitution are culturally ingrained and incredibly important in the everyday lives for the common South African (Rice, 2017). This mismatch between the Constitution and personhood are in part created by the tendency for traditional South African cultures to revolve around community and kinship relations, which results in the greater importance for people within communities that function within these traditions, to follow the community rather than adhere to new, more modern ideals (Rice, 2017). This especially functions in power relations between the young and the old and those between men and women (Rice, 2017). In terms of the oppression of women, inconsistencies between what the Constitution and other government documents dictate and the reality of public consciousness can be seen in reference to the reality of abortion in the nation, the acceptance of forms of domestic violence, and how women define and discuss rape. All of these examples represent an aversion to the axis of gender oppression, as women and men tend to view gender-based violence through the oppression of race and class over those of female subordination.

The reality of abortion access and attainment in South Africa heavily contradicts the liberal nature of the the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996,

demonstrating that women and the public tend to neglect the female empowerment granted to them by the government and therefore the aversion to discussing gender oppression in South Africa. Abortion access, as it allows women to have control of and choice over their own bodies, promotes female empowerment and saves lives in what otherwise results in a major health risk (McReynolds-Pérez, 2017). In addition, positive sexual and reproductive health status is negatively correlated with incidences of domestic violence (Jewkes et Morrell, 2010; Kishor & Johnson, 2006). The lack of female empowerment due to self or institutionally limited reproductive choices, functions within societies where women are oppressed, as it limits choices for women. Recalling hooks' definition of oppression that lack of choices constitutes oppression, not allowing women to choose an abortion thereby functions as oppression (hooks, 1984).

However, the South African Choice in Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996 liberally allows a woman to have control and choice over her body. The right to have an abortion under any circumstance for up to twelve weeks and until the twentieth week if "she is of the personal opinion that her economic or social situation is sufficient reason for the termination of pregnancy," is given to female South Africans, affording a great level of empowerment of choice for women over the control of their bodies (The Republic of South Africa, 1996). In fact, the Guttmacher Institute, a reproductive and sexual health research organization, cites it as "one of the most liberal abortion laws in the world" (Althaus, 2000). Abortion is also known to save the lives of women, and since the introduction of the bill into law, maternal death due to abortion decreased significantly from 1996 and 1998, perhaps even as high as 90% (Jewkes & Rees, 2008). However, major barriers in access to safe and legal abortion continue to exist, a significant signifier that women to disregard empowerment granted by the government and accept their domination in culture. One of the most important barriers in accessing abortion is "conscientious objection," the common trend of healthcare providers to refuse providing

abortions due to personal opinions (Amnesty International, 2017). The other two barriers cited by the report are access inequalities for marginalized populations and lack of information about where or how to access a safe and legal abortion (Amnesty International, 2017). Though the government has assured in name a right to abortion, people continue not to discuss or disseminate knowledge of access and resources to the general public. Conscientious objection and lack of information of reproductive health services are the most important indicators of a contestation between law and public consciousness in the context of abortion and sexual and reproductive health, as they represent an aversion to a discussion of gender rights and roles and the neglect of the opportunity for women and the public to claim female empowerment.

The definitions and protections of domestic violence in the government as compared to the definitions that exist in society and that permeate public consciousness, also do not match. Violence that occurs between men and women in domestic situations as well as within interpersonal relationships, entitled domestic and interpersonal violence, are substantial and important forms of gender-based violence, as they represent relationships of power based on gender oppression that occur in private and public spaces (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, contains a broad definition of domestic violence that encompasses a variety of domestic situations, including within marriage, situations where two people lived in the same household for any amount of time, and any sort of family relation (The Republic of South Africa, 2008). This allows for a large scope of cases to be regarding in terms of domestic violence and therefore more victims are able to bring their perpetrator to court. In addition, the act is also comprises of extensive definitions of the acts of violence, incorporating economic and verbal violence, in addition to physical (The Republic of South Africa, 2008). To protect the people that report domestic or intimate partner violence, who are generally women, and to punish the perpetrators, who are generally

men, the Domestic Violence Act commands: the duty of police to assist and inform

victims of rights; the ability of peace officers to arrest without warrant; protection orders,

also known as a restriction order or domestic violence interdicts; and the ability of the

police to seize of arms and dangerous weapons of perpetrators (The Republic of South

Africa, 2008). The broad definitions of domestic violence, the promised protection for

those who experience abuse, and the affirmation of the government to the seriousness

of domestic violence in the country, signify that the ruling body is concerned with, or

perhaps recognizes the need for real change and progress in domestic violence as one

aspect of gender violence. Nonetheless, the general population does not seem to act

upon the rights and status of women promised by the government, but rather adheres to

cultural and social norms that allow the continuation of violence against intimate female

partners to continue.

Conversations that function along the same lines as those surrounding the Zuma

trial also appear when discussing rape culture at the private, civilian level. Though the

law is clear on what constitutes rape, people's actions and personal definitions vary

considerably compared to the law (Jewkes et Abrahams, 2002). South African law

defines sexual violation as "any person who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act

of sexual penetration with a complainant," as well as other sexual acts that do not

involve penetration, such as "direct or indirect contact" of various body parts, the act of

masturbation in front of another party "*without consent* [emphasis added], is guilty of the

offence of rape" (The Republic of South Africa, 2007, p.8). Though rape and sexual

violence under South African law can be and often is a form of domestic and

interpersonal, and therefore gender-based violence, at the community level, men and

women consider rape a violent or criminal act instead of as a form of oppression against

women (Jewkes et Abrahams, 2002; The Republic of South Africa 1996; Wood &

Jewkes 1998; Wood & Jewkes 2001). This cultural understanding of rape, historically

and socially constructed, blames women and pressures those in relationships not to report, instills fears that nothing will be done to support them if they do report, as well as fears of retaliation on themselves or their children, all of which are which are cited as major reasons for underreporting (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). In addition, it has been found that men in South Africa often do not understand that having sex with a woman against her will is considered rape (Moffet, 2006). Rape and sexual violence, as categories of gender-based violence, are forms of oppression and subordination of women by men are permissed and so continue to operate within the patriarchal culture of South Africa.

Furthermore, the inclination to blame Apartheid for sexual violence and rape is very prevalent within South African conversations about the causes of gender-based violence (Moffet, 2006). This trend is centered around "the attack on masculinity conveyed by the degradation and humiliation" that black men, who in their traditional culture were dominant, experienced (Moffet, 2006, p. 134). Moffet concludes that three major issues occur when sexual violence is blamed on the lingering effects of Apartheid: the creation of excuses for the culture of sexual violence; the failure to address masculine pride as a reason for gender violence; and the further victimization of those who were most discriminated against during apartheid (2006). As Apartheid was inherently classist and racist, the blaming various forms of gender-based violence on a history of Apartheid situates the condemnation of sexual violence on race and class instead of the oppression of women that rely on patriarchal cultural norms and rules. These issues apply to the inconsistencies of public consciousness of gender and the government in regards not just to rape as Moffet discusses, but also to abortion and domestic violence, as they too ignore gender as a major axis of oppression that contributes to violence. Through this, the diminished social status of women in South Africa is justified, the behaviours that negatively impact women are made excusable due

to the wounds of a violent past, and the culture of excuses around gender-based violence does not allow for a discussion of the contribution of male domination over women that is inherent to the various forms of violence against women (Moffet, 2006). Without reference to the patriarchal tendencies within South Africa culture, progress cannot be effectively made in addressing gender violence, no matter how many laws and acts the government enacts.

Certainly, though the government has enacted liberal laws and acts to protect, empower, and raise the status of women in comparison to men, the rates of the various forms of gender-based violence have not depreciated. This is primarily due to patriarchal dominance that remains strongly embedded in the culture of South Africa as well as the tendency to primarily blame gender violence as generated by Apartheid (namely race and class) for the high rates of gender violence instead of the oppression of women. An intersectional approach to the public discussion of these issues would be beneficial to the state of gender oppression and through that would improve rates of gender-based violence in South Africa. The government's action through laws and policies to encourage gender empowerment should evoke pride of and praise for South Africa from the feminist community. And yet, the opinions and ideas about the role and status of women from the grassroots level is not in accordance to the actions of the government, as government documents that promote gender equality do not align within the community and culture of South Africa, as evidenced by the severity of various forms of gender-based violence that continue to function in a substantial way.

MOSAIC: AN ORGANIZATION CONFRONTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Despite the need for gender-based violence's to incorporate a more intense focus on how patriarchal culture influences gender relations that also include race and class, there are many people and organizations currently attempting to reverse the

trends of gender violence and the other results of female oppression throughout the country. One of these organizations is Mosaic, located in Cape Town, Western Cape, one of the three capitals of the nation, and the area of the historical, colonial Cape Colony. Cape Town, a populous city in South Africa that has experienced a significant portion of the turbulent and violent history of the nation, has extremely high rates of gender-based violence. Though rates of reported violence vary, one report indicated that over 40% of women in specifically Cape Town have experienced sexual violence (Kalichman et al., 2005). The high rate of substance abuse by males, which has been found to increase the likelihood of interpersonal and sexual violence of women, has also in extremely high STI/HIV rates for Capetonian women (Kalichman et al., 2005; Jewkes et al., 2010). Kalichman et al. also note that the unequal power dynamics of male-female heterosexual relationships in Cape Town continue to be severe, a major reason that such gender-based violence continues (2005). Clearly, Cape Town is a city in South Africa that is a perfect example of the South African experience of gender oppression that perpetuates and supports gender-based violence.

During the summer of 2017, I was worked as an intern at this organization in their main office in a Cape Town suburb. This opportunity allowed me to examine cultural gender dynamics and issues within the community and witness the processes and interventions that are making a positive impact on reducing gender-based violence, specifically in Cape Town. This opportunity also allowed me to observe the challenges that the organization faces in achieving their mission of eradicating domestic violence. I was able to observe many of the issues that contribute to the high rates of gender-based violence in the nation, and more deeply understand the roots of this violence due to my experience working at Mosaic and living in the city of Cape Town.

Mosaic's main purpose is to educate and act against domestic violence. Their mission statement is to "prevent and reduce abuse and violence against women by

providing services that seek to empower women to claim their rights, access healing and various opportunities to actively participate fully in society" (Mosaic, 2017). Not only does the organization work to address both the immediate needs of victims, it also works to attack the roots of the patriarchal culture of South Africa, as well as race and class oppressions, that contribute to gender-based violence. Mosaic confronts these issues through supporting and leading activities and events that challenge the patriarchal norms that oppress women in South Africa. In addition, the men and women who work at Mosaic are generally native to South Africa, and so understand the cultural patriarchal norms that work to perpetuate gender-based violence that are specific to the country and its past. This allows them to address the pattern of gender oppression at a higher level of understanding and to confront to the local culture in very direct and pointed ways. Importantly, it does not shy away from gender as an axis of oppression, but emphasizes it as a contributor to gender-based violence alongside those of race and class.

Though Mosaic's goal is specifically to eradicate specifically domestic violence against women, they offer various services that address other results of gender-based violence. To accomplish this goal, Mosaic provides court support services and has established many satellite offices, primarily located in conjunction with court houses throughout the greater Cape Town area, to help women through the legal process in reporting their assault. These services are those that directly help women who have experienced violence. Included are sexual health services, which help women who have experienced violence or who are at risk. HIV testing and providing testing in Townships for those who cannot reach the main location, sexual assault care, especially through their 24 hotline and Thuthuzela Care Centers (TCCs), are more services that are very important to Mosaic's confrontation of the negative health outcomes that women face due to gender-based violence (Mosaic, 2017). Counseling for men and women, group sessions in which both genders discuss gender oppression together, and the support of

programs such as Stepping Stones, are all ways in which Mosaic confront the embeddedness of the oppression of women that contributes to gender-based violence. Stepping Stones is a sexual education class for adolescents that has many positive outcomes for those who have participated, (Jewkes et al., 2006; Jewkes, Wood, & Duvvury, 2010). In addition, Mosaic has many strong partnerships with other non-governmental organizations across the city that work together to develop Cape Town into a safer and more equitable city. For example, the organization The City of Cape Town, of which Mosaic looks closely, has various drug and alcohol addiction treatment programs and centers. Mosaic works with these addicts specifically, as addiction is a risk factor for violence offering them counseling, as a large indicator of domestic violence is drug and alcohol addition and use (Kalichman, 2005).

Over the 25 years that Mosaic has been established, they have made a substantial impact on the population they have served and have helped many men and women through the various services they provide and support. Evidence for this can be seen in the 2016-2017 Annual Report that cites the accomplishments from March 2016-February 2017. They include in their report a rise in reporting, yet admit that this does not necessarily mean that there are more domestic violence cases, but rather that more people are coming forward to report the incidence, exhibiting that reporting is becoming more accepted and encouraged (Mosaic, 2017). More than 2,000 people were reached through their sexual violence programs, and more than 3,000 through their domestic violence programs, though a potential or known overlap between these two groups it is not mentioned (Mosaic, 2017). In addition, Mosaic has tested almost 1,500 victims of sexual assault for HIV (Mosaic, 2017). The organization also assists and provides abortions, or in the terminology of Mosaic and South African law, termination of pregnancy (TOP), having assisted almost 400 women (Mosaic, 2017). Also provided in

Mosaic services are pregnancy tests, cervical screenings, and contraception of which

Mosaic has reached a significant number of women (Mosaic, 2017).

        Mosaic's goals and commitments to South African women are astounding. The

organization's focal points and tenets confront issues that have been discussed as

examples of the neglect of the axis of gender oppression in South African culture and

the need to include it within an intersectional lens. However, despite the good that the

organization does for its community, Mosaic has major struggles in addressing gender-

based violence in South Africa. One of these issues is lack of funding. The issue of

women's empowerment, especially through the diminishment of gender-based violence

and the support of reproductive and sexual health, of which Mosaic focuses heavily on,

is unfortunately contested, despite its various known positive health and community

consequences. Due to this, funding is contentious and sometimes hard to come by.

Currently, the Global Gag Rule is in effect, which prohibits United States funding, which

was mentioned to me as a significant portion of their funding. Another significant issue is

disorganization in staffing and organizational support. Shortly before the start of my time

at Mosaic, the head director suddenly left the organization, leaving vacancies in the

essential function of managing the organization. This influenced the organization's ability

to continue to run efficiently, and compounded by the lack of funding, drastically

interrupted the ability for Mosaic to function at full capacity, as other staff members had

to fill in the holes, placing extreme pressure on those who had to fill them. The vacancy

in the organization is associated with the established trend of burn out in non-

governmental organizations (Cardozo et al., 2012). Chronic stress, leading to long-term

impacts of anxiety and depression have been established, which can take away from the

organization, and it is clear that Mosaic is not exempt to this pattern (Cardozo et al.,

2012).

Mosaic faces many challenges and yet manages to do a substantial amount of positive work to combat and change the reality of gender-based violence in South Africa by addressing the various axes of oppression that their serviced populations face. However the context in which South African culture exists makes enacting sustainable change difficult, in part because the cultural norms that surround gender prohibit discussion of the domination of men by women. But Mosaic, in holding space for discussions to occur that focus on the gender axis of intersectionality, namely in their counseling programs especially for men and between men and women, challenges the cultural barriers it faces. More support for the programs that Mosaic conducts and other organizations that are similar to Mosaic in the country are needed if change is to be made effectively in regards to gender violence.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen, the culture of oppression and domination of women that perpetuates and contributes to high rates of gender-based violence in South Africa has been exacerbated by the painful and disjointed past of the nation. This in turn contributes to a pattern in which South African culture and people place gender-based violence, an issue that is necessarily due to gender oppression into the contexts of race and class, as demonstrated by the fact that many argue that the gender-based violence in South Africa is part of the legacy of Apartheid, a racist and classist institution (Dosekun, 2013). It is not solely the emphasized axes of race and class oppression that has created a system of extreme violence against women in the nation, but rather the intersection of various levels of oppression that encompasses the oppression of women. This is not to say that the high prevalence of gender-based violence is not related to and is not aggravated by a historical past that has emphasized race and class oppression, but rather that the neglect of the reality of patriarchal domination over women has not

allowed an intersectional approach to gender-based violence to be achieved. Gender-based violence necessarily functions off of different forms of oppression, that include race, class, *and gender oppression*, as feminist theory and the tenets of intersectionality promote. All of these issues intertwine in South Africa to create the scope and seriousness of gender-based violence.

Extensive research has been done on the topic of gender oppression to analyze the roots of gender violence, and evidence that gender oppression is a major function of the violence in South Africa has been established (eg, Boonzaier, 2005; Dosekun, 2013; Dworkin et al., 2012; Jaga, et al., 2017; Jewkes, & Abrahams, 2002; Jewkes et al, 2002; Kalichman et al., 2005; Shefer et al., 2008). This, in order to solve the magnitude of the various forms of gender-based violence in South Africa, an intersectional approach that includes power dynamics between men and women and confronts the oppression and subordination of women through the domination of men, in addition to race, class, and poverty, must be utilized. If gender violence and patriarchal culture are ignored for what they are, namely promoting the subordination of women through the domination of men, then it will be impossible for the intensity of gender-based violence in the nation to diminish. What is necessary is the encouragement of the integration of gender oppression, in addition to those of poverty and race, into the cultural discussions and possible solutions to the prevalence of gender-based violence in South Africa. The culture of patriarchal dominance that intersects across all lines of race and class need to be addressed and challenged if gender-based violence is to be comprehensively addressed in South Africa.

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