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Imagining Intersectional Anti-Rape Messaging at an Organization in Cape Town, South Africa: Visible and Invisible Subjects

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Abstract

Less than one month ago, South Africa held the first ever Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide to assess the most effective ways to approach solving the country's high rates of gender-based violence. My study aims to consider anti-rape messaging and advocacy under an intersectional framework, using one organization in Cape Town as a case study. I examine how anti-rape messaging in South Africa has failed to consider intersectional identities in their imagined conceptions of survivors and perpetrators. I explore the potential for intersectional anti-rape messaging and the role of race, class, gender, culture, and language in the distribution, audience, and reception of that messaging.

I conducted research into the history of race and rape in South Africa, and the past intersectional approaches to anti-rape work in both South Africa and the U.S. I held interviews with five employees at two different offices of a single organization that deals with gender-based violence in Cape Town. During our conversations, I delved deeper into their organization's failures to address effectively different communities in Cape Town and their personal envisioned solutions.

Although I came into this project thinking about intersectionality in terms of race, class, and gender, I found that both culture and language are important factors in considering intersectional approaches to anti-rape messaging in South Africa. Furthermore, I argue that effective intersectional anti-rape advocacy cannot occur until the divide between intersectional theory and practice is completely deconstructed.

KEY WORDS: Intersectionality, language, culture, race, class, gender, identity, sexual violence, rape, anti-rape, messaging, advocacy, positionality, Cape Town

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To my advisor Emma Arogundade, thank you for being right there with me every step of this project and this program. Thank you for helping me craft a research project of which I could be proud, and for asking me the tough questions. I also want to thank Stewart, Tabisa, Nomfobe, and every student on this program; I learned so much from each of you every day. Thank you to my roommates Ellie and Caroline for providing me with a constant stream of salt and shrimp.

Last but not least, I want to thank every woman whom I interviewed. Thank you for sharing your time, passion, and insight with a random American student, and thank you for the work you do to combat gender-based violence every day.

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Introduction

On November 1, 2018, the same day I began my research project, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (2018) began a speech at the Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide:

> We are gathered here – as South African women and men – to respond to a crisis that is tearing our society apart. It is a crisis that affects every community in our country and that touches the lives of most families in one way or another. Gender-based violence is an affront to our shared humanity.

In August, members of #TheTotalShutdown movement—a self-described 'intersectional' movement—held marches around the country demanding direct and immediate action steps from the government, one of which was the convening of this summit. Sexual violence, its causes, and its repercussions are at the forefront of political, social, and community debate in South Africa. Although newer movements like #TheTotalShutdown have been incredibly deliberate in their focus on intersectionality, they, alongside many existing organizations in South Africa, are still grappling with the potential definitions and implementations of an intersectional framework.

My research project focuses on the work of one organization that deals with gender-based violence in Cape Town, South Africa. I explore the possibility for intersectional—specifically the intersection of race, class, and gender identities—anti-rape messaging using one organization as a case study. I focus on the intersection of race, class, and gender identities when considering whom we

imagine as rapists and rape survivors, to whom anti-rape messaging is directed, and who is rendered invisible within these discourses.

The objectives of this paper are to identify some of the unproductive aspects of current anti-rape messaging and to attempt to imagine what intersectional anti-rape advocacy work would look like if it were possible. I consider language, race, class, culture, and other identities in interviews with members of one South African urban organization in order to gain a better understanding of how intersectional anti-rape messaging might be approached.

This research report consists of six main sections. The first section contains a literature review that provides the necessary background information and context to understand both my project and the reason behind it. The next two sections outline my research methods including my own positionality, investment in the project, and considerations for ethical practices. I then move to my findings and analysis, where I examine my participants' responses and interpretations of my questions during the interviews. In my fifth section, I conclude my findings with a discussion of the questions I answered without intending to ask, and the new ones I have developed moving forward. My last section considers recommendations for future study, including these questions, given more time, resources, or access.

There were several limitations to this study. Due to the limited amount of time available to me, I decided only to interview members at a single organization that deals with gender-based violence. Furthermore, because of my limited resources, I was only able to interview members who worked in offices

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near my accommodations in Cape Town. However, by conducted five compelling interviews, I was able to go more in depth on a single organization as a case study and am able to give my final report back to the organization for their own use. Hence, although scope was a limitation in my project, it also had a positive outcome when considering reciprocity and ethics. Another limitation was how my outsider status within the organization, and within a larger South African culture, affected the participants' conversations with me during interviews. Given more time, I might have built more trusting and lasting relationships within the organization or been able to conduct follow-up interviews with participants.

Literature Review

Introduction

In my literature review, I will start by exploring both the history of the term 'intersectionality' and the intersection of race and rape in South Africa. I will then discuss general statistics on rape in South Africa and how those statistics are perceived globally. My next sections look at how past government and legal attempts to address the rape crisis and the 1999 Charlize Theron ad campaign fail to address intersectional identities or the history of racialized rape in South Africa. Finally, I will discuss what effective anti-rape messaging means and look at examples of intersectional anti-rape messaging in the United States. Through this literature review, I hope to provide the reader with the information necessary to understand the background of and reason behind my project, as well as the ways similar projects are being carried out in other parts of the globe.

Understanding Intersectionality

The term *intersectionality* originated within a Black feminist theoretical framework as a way to name the intersecting oppressions faced by Black women. It is impossible to consider the oppression one faces as women and as a Black person exclusively; one must consider the way in which these oppressions reinforce and reinvent each other. As a white woman, I cannot consider my gender oppression without considering my white privilege—these two identities intersect. Thus, the gender oppression I experience is vastly different from the gender oppression a woman of color might experience. Furthermore, I must

consider my other various identities and the ways they intersect, reinforce, or co-construct my identity and experiences as a white woman.

In one of the first Black feminist gatherings, before the term intersectionality was officially coined, the Combahee River Collective (1977/2017, p. 19) stated, "We know that there is such a thing as racial-sexual oppression which is neither solely racial nor solely sexual, e.g., the history of rape of Black women by white men as a weapon of political repression." This idea of intersectionality was solidified in the writing of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), who explained how violence against women is often shaped by their other identities, such as race and class. Crenshaw (1991) necessitates the consideration of structural, political, and representational intersectionality: how the intersection of Black women's identity makes the experience of violence different from that of white women, how the experiences of women of color are marginalized in political activism, and how we've culturally constructed Black female identity.

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016) explain how intersectionality cannot be considered a finished framework; rather it continues to take many forms. Intersectionality can be a form of *critical inquiry* and *critical praxis*, meaning it can be used both in an academic setting and as a means to describe the everyday lives and realities of humans (Collins & Bilge, 2016). However, Collins and Bilge (2016) reject the scholar-activist divide within this term, arguing that scholarship and practice can and *must* mutually inform each other.

Following these three theorists, I attempt to consider intersectionality as *both* a term that encompasses a theoretical understanding of identity formation *and* a framework for approaching everyday social justice activism. For the

purpose of this project, I focus on the intersections of race, class, and gender identities of imagined survivors and perpetrators within anti-sexual violence advocacy work in Cape Town, South Africa.

The History of Racialized Narratives of Rape in South Africa

In her new book, Pumla Dineo Gqola (2015, p. 4) investigates how,

The stereotype of the Black male rapist of white women has been central to the rise of racism… constructions of 'Black peril', or what was termed '*swaartgevaar*' in colonial and apartheid South Africa, depended heavily on this idea of the sexually and otherwise violent Black man.

This stereotype was central in justifying global white supremacy as evident in systems such as American slavery or South African apartheid, deemed necessary in order to 'control' Black men and their sexual appetites. Today, the historically loaded narrative of Black male rape of white women still endures to such an extent that it must be clarified as a myth by local rape crisis centers, "MYTH: Rape mostly involves Black men raping white woman. TRUTH: Most rapes occur between people of the same race" (van der Merwe, 2018, p. 64). In fact, rape is almost always "intra-communal" and, like most other crimes, is "rarely driven by a racial agenda" (Moffett, 2006, p. 135). Most rapists in South Africa are Black simply because the majority of the population in South Africa is Black (Moffett, 2006). Under similar logic, the vast majority of rape survivors in South Africa are also Black.

While narratives of Black male hypersexuality have been used to justify a need to 'control' Black men, narratives of Black female hypersexuality have paved the way for the institutionalized rape of Black women. Black women's

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bodies are rendered sexually deviant and thereby "impossible to rape" or, to potential rapists, safe to rape without consequence (Gqola, 2015, p. 4). During apartheid, there were little to no resources available for Black female rape survivors. Given that police departments were white-dominated, Black women who were raped by white men were often in danger of further violence if they chose to report the crime (Gqola, 2015). Furthermore, many Black women were hesitant to report Black men to the police for fear of being complicit in the apartheid system, and even if they did report the rape, the successful conviction rate for rape was almost negligible (Gqola, 2015). Furthermore, of the rapes tried and convicted during apartheid in South Africa, a white man had never been hanged for rape; the majority of rapists who received the death penalty were Black men convicted of raping white women (Armstrong, 1994).

The racialized history of rape narratives in South Africa cannot be ignored in conversations today on how to approach anti-rape advocacy work and messaging. These narratives continue to render white men and Black women invisible as rapists or rape survivors. It is necessary to address the historical stereotype of Black male hypersexuality and the potential backlash to naming rape a problem in Black communities. It is even more imperative to ensure that anti-rape advocacy work and messaging is for and aimed at women of all racial and socio-economic statuses. An understanding of the history of the intersection of racism and rape must inform the approach to anti-rape campaigns in Cape Town, South Africa.

South Africa as 'Rape Capital' of the World

In South Africa, approximately 55,000 rapes of women and girls are reported to the police each year, which is estimated to be nine times less than the number of actual rapes that occur (Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009). Still, the number of reported rapes averages to around 222 rapes per 100,000 South African women each year, a rate three times higher than that of the United States (Vetten, 2011). In a study done in 2009, 27.6% of South African men who were randomly selected admitted to having raped, and 9 to 14% of men admitted to having participated in gang rape (Seedat et al., 2009). Furthermore, rapes in South Africa are often accompanied by other acts of violence; weapons are used in 41% of rapes, and 1% of rapes end in murder (Seedat et al., 2009).

However, although rape statistics in South Africa are widely acknowledged to be high, their accuracy and whether they are overall increasing or decreasing is intensely contested. There exists little information on the rates of reported rape pre-1994, as rapes reported in government-designated "homelands" during apartheid were not included in national figures (Vetten, 2011). However, Lisa Vetten (2011) asserts that available numbers indicate that reported rape statistics have increased 132% from 1955 to 1990. Furthermore, Vetten (2011) argues that rape statistics continue to increase in the years after apartheid: while 44,751 rapes were reported in 1994, 52,617 rapes were reported during the same twelve-month period in 2006 (Vetten, 2011). In contrast, Mohamed Seedat et al. (2009) contends that rape statistics have remained largely stagnant and have even

decreased 6% in the decade after 1996. Another scholar questions whether the perceived increase in rape statistics is due to more direct reporting in the news as opposed to an actual increase in the number of rapes (Gqola, 2015). What is more, because sexual violence is one of the most underreported crimes, an increase or decrease in rape statistics might say more about the number of women coming forward rather than the actual number of rapes occurring in South Africa.

Despite the debate within South Africa on the accuracy of reporting and rape statistics, the country's rape statistic has been highly politicized. In international media, South Africa has been deemed the 'rape capital of the world,' a term that surfaced with no evidence in a 1995 Human Rights Watch report (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Over two decades later, the unfounded claim continues to be reprinted in headlines and restated in casual conversations worldwide. Reporting of rape can never yield 'accurate' results. There are too many variables and no reliable way to calculate statistics of underreporting. Furthermore, although it is problematic to attempt to establish any 'accurate' rape statistic, it is even more problematic to compare that statistic to those of other countries (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Rape statistics are often contingent on each country's definition of rape, police relations and community trust, prevalence of reporting, infrastructure, and a number of other factors (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Furthermore, scholars Rachel Jewkes and Naeema Abrahams (2002, p. 1240) argue that even if South Africa has the highest number of reported rapes, there likely exists "other countries with very high levels of rape but less accessible police or less well-gathered statistics." Many, including past presidents of South Africa, have argued that the focus on high rape statistics in

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South Africa is simply "a symptom of racism" (Vetten, 2011, p. 172), deeming

all Black men hypersexual rapists. Africa Watch, a website responsible for

debunking myths about Africa and countries in Africa, published an article on the

myth that South Africa is the 'rape capital of the world.' The author stated that in

most countries, better data is needed to tackle the very real crisis of rape, but until

then there can be no meaningful comparisons between countries (Wilkinson,

2014). The focus should not be on debating whether South Africa has the highest

rates of rape. However, it is important to acknowledge the high rates of rape, as

well as the racialized history of rape narratives in South Africa, when assessing

how to approach anti-rape messaging in the country.

Past Government Attempts to Address the 'Rape Crisis'

When considering recent government attempts to address sexual violence,

it is important to acknowledge the state of South Africa's police and criminal

justice department after the official end of apartheid. In the years after 1994,

South Africa had to try to reshape a police department and justice system that

was created to uphold the apartheid oppression of Black communities into

services that could be trusted by those same communities (Vetten, 2011). It is

therefore unsurprising that the South African government has struggled to enact

effective or efficient criminal justice reform. In 2004, although South Africa

spent 3.1% of its GDP on the criminal justice system as opposed to the 1% spent

by most other countries, South Africa still only had 234 police officers per

100,000 citizens, compared to the international average of 380 police officers per

100,000 citizens (Vetten, 2011). Due to the high rates of crime, there are only 7,

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as opposed to 158, police officers and .14, as opposed to 2.6, prosecutors per murder each year in South Africa, in comparison to international standards (Vetten, 2011). Furthermore, before 1994, the only services available to rape survivors were provided by district surgeons with no special training (Seedat et al., 2009). The only legislation against sexual assault fell under the Prevention of Family Violence Act (Vetten, 2011). The intense need for overall criminal justice reform and lack of infrastructure to address sexual violence before apartheid provides necessary context for examining government anti-rape efforts over the past two decades.

Attempts by the South African government to address the 'rape crisis' have been motivated by a desire to decrease reported rape statistics, in order to negate stereotypes about crime and patriarchy in South Africa. Most anti-sexual violence government intervention has focused "on improving the management of the small proportion of rape cases which are reported to the police, with the assumption that increasing the risk of apprehension of perpetrators and the application of stiff sentences will be effective deterrence" (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002, p. 1242). In 2007, the government passed the Sexual Offenses Act, the first piece of substantial legislation to deal directly with sexual assault post-1994 (Vetten, 2011). The act gave every rape survivor the right to post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV infection and ensured that a delay in a sexual assault report would not limit the cases ability to be prosecuted (Vetten, 2011). Yet concentrating on making resources more accessible and effective to sexual assault survivors who do report rape ignores the history of Black women's relationship with and Black communities' distrust of the police (Gqola, 2015).

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In another instance in 2004, the South African government set a goal "of reducing serious and violent crimes like rape by 7-10 % annually," thereby introducing "a perverse incentive into the system" (Vetten, 2011, p. 172) to underreport rape even further. Moreover, before the 2010 World Cup, there was international pressure to decrease rape statistics—again a perverse focus (Vetten, 2011). Lisa Vetten (2011, p. 187) contends that "current official approaches to reducing sexual violence in South Africa can only continue to silence rape survivors and thus undermine more positive policy responses."

Charlize Theron and Failed-Intersectional Ad Campaigns

Alongside government attempts to address the rape crisis, there have been a number of high profile anti-rape campaigns, the most prevalent being the 1999 advertisements featuring South African actress Charlize Theron. At the start of the first advertisement, Theron asks, "Hey, all you South African men, here's a question for you: have you ever raped a woman?" (Moffett, 2006, p. 132). In a second advertisement, Theron states, "If you consider that more women are raped in South Africa than any other country in the world…It's not that easy to say what the *men* in South Africa are like because there seems to be so few of them out there" (*Real Men Don't*, 1999). The only 'successful' aspect of these advertisements was that they shifted the conversation from rape survivors to directly addressing rapists or potential rapists (Moffett, 2006). Otherwise, these advertisements provide a perfect example of the absence of an intersectional approach to anti-rape messaging in South Africa. These advertisements not only deem all South African men, the majority of whom are Black, rapists or complicit

in rape culture but also position a wealthy, white woman as the spokesperson for rape survival in South Africa, even though the majority of rape survivors are Black women.

Although the example of the Theron advertisements demonstrates how anti-rape messaging can be more harmful than helpful due to the absence of intersectionality, some argue that a focus on intersectional approaches actually inhibits the accomplishment of effective anti-rape advocacy work. Helen Moffett (2006, p. 139) argues that South Africa's focus on negating the legacy of apartheid, in this case de-racializing narratives of Black hypersexuality, inhibits "open scrutiny of gender issues" such as sexual violence. However, I would hypothesize that that what is truly inhibiting this "open scrutiny" are racist anti-rape messages like those of the Theron advertisements. Without an intersectional approach to anti-rape messaging, all anti-rape advocacy work can be written off as perpetuating racist stereotypes, distracting from the main issue at hand—a culture of patriarchy and oppression of women (the majority of whom are women of color).

What Is Effective Anti-Rape Messaging

Carol Withey (2010) outlines the two main issues surrounding sexual assault: attempts to reduce instances of rape and low conviction rates in rape cases. She argues that both issues stem directly from the phenomenon of rape acceptance myth (RMA), which perpetuate the prevalence of rapes as well as de-credit rape survivors who press charges (Withey, 2010). Paul Schewe (2002) conducted a literature review focused on guidelines for developing rape

prevention and risk reduction interventions, targeting the destruction of RMA. Anti-rape messaging often occurs through pamphlets, online, or in rape prevention workshops in schools or other group spaces. Schewe (2002) discusses the potential strategies of anti-rape messaging that have been most popular in the past, especially in the United States: survivor empathy intervention, negative consequences for perpetrators, avoidance of high risk situations, bystander training, or self-defense. A common tactic used in anti-rape prevention programs is often rape awareness or myth-debunking teaching. For example, having participants take a true or false quiz on common perceptions of rape and discussing the answers as a group afterwards in an attempt to eliminate rape myths (Schewe, 2002).

However, Carol Withey (2010) argues that anti-rape campaigns and advocacy work has focused too heavily on undermining RMA and attempting to change social culture surrounding rape and gender-based violence; in fact, "most rape myths are misstatements of fact and *law*" (Withey, 2010, p. 808). Relying on the idea of deterrence theory, Withey (2010) contends that anti-rape messaging should begin to focus on the illegality of rape and the legal consequences a rapist might face. Her research in the United States suggested that there are wide gaps in legal knowledge surrounding rape, and although simply understanding the legal consequences of rape might not change *moral* or social attitudes, it could prove effective in decreasing the overall numbers of sexual assault (Withey, 2010). Her argument for rape law education, rather than discrediting RMA through social tactics, is one not as commonly examined by anti-rape activists worldwide.

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Approaches to Intersectional Anti-Rape Advocacy in the U.S.

Withey (2010) and Schewe (2002) focus heavily on what effective anti-rape messaging looks like from a color- or race-blind perspective, but my research question focuses on what effective anti-rape messaging looks like from an intersectional perspective. Although in South Africa there is little literature on intersectional anti-rape messaging, in the U.S. there exists a similar struggle among scholars and activists to acknowledge the racialized history of rape and the context of different racial communities when designing anti-rape messaging.

Ellen Scott (1993) compares the strategy of two of the first rape crisis centers in the U.S., one in D.C. and one in Santa Cruz, to argue that not enough attention has been paid to local context when considering the tactics of social change movements. Both of the rape crisis centers were founded by groups of lower to middle-class white women, yet both the centers acknowledged the historical linkage between rape and racism (Scott, 1993). Scott (1993, p. 348) writes, "Allegations of rape of white women by Black men have been, and continue to be, a terrorist tactic… The centers also contented that… presently the rape of Black women by white and Black men is virtually ignored by the law." Both centers focused on community education initiatives, but the Santa Cruz center also adopted a strategy of direct confrontation of rapists and publishing public description of rapists (Scott, 1993). Scott (1993, p. 352) argues that the direct confrontation strategy only worked in Santa Cruz because "the town was largely white" so the women at the center "did not have to face the implications or historical significance of white women publicly confronting or publishing descriptions of men of color accused of rape." However, in D.C., the white

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women running the center found it difficult to establish credibility within the Black community given the racist myths of Black male hypersexuality and the historical distrust of whiteness (Scott, 1993). The members stated in an interview with Scott (1993, p. 353) that they wanted the center ultimately to be "led and run by Black women." Although the terminology of 'intersectionality' was not used in this example, the rape crisis centers were taking the intersections of race, class, and gender into account when developing their anti-rape messaging.

In rape crisis centers and anti-rape organization in African-American communities, Black feminists often take widely different approaches to white women in their work. In analyzing the birth of the anti-rape movement in Los Angeles, Nancy Matthews (1989) discusses how it arose in a context of Black women's distrust of white feminism. Because the problems faced by Black women were so vastly different from those of white women, many Black feminists felt they should have separate organizations (Matthews, 1989). In Los Angeles, Black women's organizations were given grants to "design programs that met the basic guidelines *and* the specific needs of their communities" (Matthews, 1989, p. 527). For example, one organization created support groups for the "intertwined problems of incest and alcoholism" (Matthews, 1989, p. 527) while another had to monitor what colors participants wore to meetings to avoid gang-related confrontations. In addition, although the rape crisis organizations serviced survivors of rape and gender-based violence, "basic survival was often the presenting problem of the women served" (Matthews, 1989, p. 527) resulting in a more holistic method taken to counseling. Furthermore, many Black women's organizations, such as rape crisis centers, have concerns of working

within the legal system to prosecute rapists (White, 1999). Aaronette White (1999, p. 86) explains how as Black women, they must "extend [their] Black feminist frame" to acknowledge "the non-rehabilitative environment of U.S. prison systems and how [their] sufferings as Black women and men are interconnected." Thus, the approach taken to anti-rape advocacy by Black feminists in the U.S. demonstrates the intersectional approach all anti-rape organizations should begin to consider.

Black feminists have also applied an intersectional framework to the content and dissemination of anti-rape messaging. Matthews (1989) explains how the actual anti-rape messaging might vary based on the racial communities it targets. For example, in an anti-rape advertisement targeting the Latinx immigrant community, a young girl's sexual assault by her uncle is framed as a destruction of family values (Matthews, 1989). White (1999, p. 89) discusses the consideration of statement length, vocabulary, and the cutting out extraneous issues to make her advertisements "more accessible to a Black working-class audience." Moreover, both White (1999) and Matthews (1989) debate the terminology and use of the word 'feminist' in anti-rape activist circles and messaging. Although the term "feminist" has evolved to be more widely adopted by Black women in recent years, it was historically associated with the white feminist movement and seen as inaccessible to Black women (White, 1999). In anti-rape activist circles dominated by white women, Black women had a lack of understanding of what 'feminism' was but were simultaneously expected to support it wholeheartedly (Matthews, 1989). Lastly, the channels used to distribute information might vary along racial or cultural lines; there exists a

plethora of ethnographies on the extensive informal social networks that exist within Black communities, which Black feminists have capitalized on to propagate anti-rape messaging and resources (Matthews, 1989).

The intersection of race and rape in the U.S. cannot be equated with that of South Africa; however, the two countries have similar histories of narratives of Black male rape of white women and Black women's "unrapability." Hence, considering the ways in which anti-rape organizations in the U.S. have implemented intersectional frameworks to their advocacy and messaging provides important insight into potential approaches within the South African context.

Conclusion

Because my research question relies on an understanding of multiple histories and terms, as well as the fact that those terms have recently been and still are being developed, my literature review encompasses a wide range of topics and discussions. Through considering the local context and history, as well as global approaches to intersectionality and anti-rape messaging, I have attempted to frame the reason behind my conducting of this project and provide the background knowledge I had when entering the interview-based research phase.

Methodology

I will begin my methodology by explaining my own positionality and investment in this research question, as these two facts contributed heavily to the specific methods I chose when carrying out this project. I will then move to discussing and defending the methods I chose throughout each step of this project, referencing the sources I used to help me decide. Although I incorporate ethical reflexivity in every aspect of my methodology, I will follow with a section specifically focused on my ethical reflexive practices and additional ethical concerns.

My Positionality and Investment

I am white American upper class educated woman who came to South Africa hoping to the study the history of racialized sexual violence and its intersection with current advocacy work. After taking a class on Black feminist theory last spring, I began to learn the ways in which my white womanhood has been constructed directly in opposition to Black womanhood. I am only defined as a woman because Black women are constructed as the 'anti-woman.' Thus, I began to be cognizant of all of the ways in which my reclamation or pride in my womanhood, my feminism, were inherently exclusive. I am passionate about learning new ways to approach feminist advocacy and justice from an intersectional lens, being both mindful of my positionality and the history of white femininity as a tool to exclude other definitions of womanhood.

However, I am still a white American coming into Cape Town, South Africa, asking South African organizers how they might imagine ways to

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improve their advocacy work and messaging. When in fact, most of current anti-rape advocacy work and messaging in South Africa is for *me* or people who belong to similar intersections of identities. Because I focused my research question on how anti-sexual violence advocacy work might look more intersectional, at the convergence of race, class, and gender identities, I was aware there might have been an initial distrust in my investment in this project because of my own race, class, and gender identity. Furthermore, my positionality informed my research question in that I assumed there was a similar lack of substantive intersectional anti-rape messaging in South Africa as in the United States.

Lastly, as an American woman who was warned multiple times to 'not get raped' coming into South Africa, my focus on anti-sexual violence advocacy work could have come across as an American attempting to 'solve' a crisis in South Africa. I did not conduct this research project to try to 'fix' the very important work these organizers are already doing. Instead, I was trying to learn more from their expertise and experience on how anti-sexual violence work might be intersectional in the South African context, because I believe it could translate to imagining intersectional anti-sexual violence work in the United States. As I move into discussing the methodology I chose, these considerations were on the forefront of my mind.

Design and Methods

I began my project thinking I would conduct interviews with a number of anti-sexual violence activists working both independently and at varying

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organizations in order to gain different perspectives on how intersectional

frameworks have been and might be implemented. However, I ultimately chose

to conduct interviews only with staff members at one organization that deals with

gender-based violence in Cape Town. By focusing my research on one

organization, I avoided the attempt to claim a comprehensive or overarching

knowledge of what this advocacy looks like in Cape Town. Furthermore, I was

able to address the ethical question of reciprocity because I will give an edited

copy of my findings back to those I interviewed at this organization. The staff

expressed interest in thinking about questions of intersectionality; by focusing my

project only on their organization, I am hoping it will be useful to them even if

only through sparking conversations.

My primary research method was semi-structured to structured

interviews. I decided to use the method of interviews because it best fit my goals

of gaining multiple individual perspectives within one organization and

establishing groundwork for my project to be mutually beneficial. I met with each

participant for thirty to sixty minutes, enough to time to become comfortable and

learn a substantive amount, without detracting too much time from her day. To

recruit participants, I first reached out to the head of the organization to make

sure she was interested in the project, and then reached out to individual staff

members over email and phone. Although I was originally planning on not

sticking closely to my interview questions (See Appendix), in the moment the

questions flowed fairly naturally. As Kvale (1996) suggests, my questions were

short and dynamic, devoid of academic language besides the term

intersectionality, which I let my participants define for themselves. I attempted to

keep in mind the answers I might subconsciously be looking for when I wrote my interview questions in order to remain self-reflexive and to avoid leading questions (Kapoor, 2004).

At first, I considered explaining my own understanding of intersectionality and anti-rape messaging before beginning the interview portion of my conversations. However, I ultimately decided that to impose my own academic definitions onto these interviews would be unethical and honestly somewhat neo-colonial. Thus, each individual I interviewed had varying definitions of the terms anti-rape, messaging, and intersectionality, and the answers I received did not necessarily answer my intended question. Kvale (1996, p. 124) writes, "In the interview, knowledge is created inter the points of view of the interviewer and interviewee." The results of my interviews were the knowledge created inter the shared and different understandings of terms and language.

Finally, although I asked my participants a question relating to their own identity, I did not explicitly ask them about their race or class background. In the moment, I felt it would give the wrong impression about the purpose of my interview, and as a white woman, I wanted to avoid that assumption. Four of the women I interviewed self-identified their race without prompting while the one did not. Although I acknowledge the somewhat ethically unsound implications of my assigning a race to this woman, given the area of Cape Town she was from, the way she presented, and her being isiXhosa speaking, I perceived her to be Black. Hence, of the five women I interviewed, two were white, two were Coloured, and one was Black.

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For my literature review, I drew on sources from a diverse range of authors to establish the background necessary for understanding the context in which I entered and reasoning behind my interviews. When sifting through my data, I could either analyze to answer my initial question or code from concepts (Lichtman, 2013). Because of the nature of my interviews being based on individual understandings of concepts, I decided to look for repeated themes when going back over my interview recording to answer questions I perhaps did not even intend to ask. Lastly, I decided to combine my findings and analysis section into one. Because I organized my findings by themes I discerned in my interviews, it made more sense to analyze those themes within each section as well.

Ethical Reflexivity and Additional Ethical Concerns

I've previously outlined my positionality in relation to the context in which I am entering. Because of my whiteness and Americanness, there is a certain level of power when I am interviewing South African women about their anti-sexual violence work. However, I was interviewing white, Coloured, and Black women at different levels within the organization, so the relationships of power were not always the same during each interview. Furthermore, because I interviewed trained professionals all significantly older than myself, the power my whiteness and education brought me was less dominating. However, I still had to be cognizant of the way my positionality might influence how my participants interacted with me on levels of power and trust.

Asking questions regarding sexual violence, even anti-sexual violence organizing, can be triggering. However, I only interviewed people regarding their work involving anti-sexual violence, as opposed to their experiences. I negotiated informed consent by giving participants a full explanation of my project and what I planned to do with the project post-completion before the interviews. I also made clear that they would remain completely anonymous, were free to stop the interview at any time, could choose to not answer a specific question, and could decide whether they wished to be audio recorded or quoted in my final write up. I then asked them to give written consent before I began the interview and began audio recording.

To ensure the anonymity and privacy of my participants, I did not include their names in any of my notes or documents, instead referring to them by

pseudonyms (a.k.a. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). I also obscured any details about their experiences that would allow someone reading my ISP to discern the identities of my participants. Furthermore, I decided not to name or provide details about the organization I focused on within Cape Town to ensure further anonymity of employees. Again, my participants were aware of how I planned to protect their privacy and where their words might end up (i.e. online) before I conducted my interviews.

I did not attempt to 'represent' my participants to any full extent. I also did not attempt to represent the work that they do in my ISP. There is no way that through a series of interviews I would have been able fully to understand the nature of their work or experiences. I attempted simply to represent the ideas they presented on the potential intersectionality within anti-sexual violence campaigning and messaging. My representation may perpetuate problematic dominant representations because it will be another piece of academic literature by a Westerner focused on sexual violence in South Africa. However, anyone reading my ISP, given a deeper look into my specific research question, will hopefully not interpret my ISP in this singular way.

I would definitely do this research project in the U.S. as I think many of the same themes and issues exist within anti-sexual violence advocacy work. Although the histories of South Africa and the U.S. are extremely different, both countries render Black men hypersexual and Black women 'unrapable.' There is a need in both for an increasingly intersectional approach to anti-rape advocacy work.

Throughout this section, I have shared ethical concerns I have regarding my own research question, objectives, and project. Alongside each concern I have also shared my attempts to mitigate these problematic dynamics. There is no such thing as a truly ethical research project, much less a truly ethical interaction; however, by always having these ethical questions at the forefront of my mind throughout this project, I hoped to conduct my research in the most self-reflexive and ethical way possible.

Research Findings and Analysis

Introduction

My research question considered the potential for intersectional anti-rape messaging within a single organization that deals with gender-based violence in Cape Town, South Africa. The question relied on a set of existing but nascent terminology such as intersectionality, identity, anti-rape, and messaging. These words and phrases are understood differently across varying community, language, and individual borders, and their meanings are permeable and continually evolving. Ultimately, by choosing to let my participants come to their own understandings and definitions of these ideas based on their own experience, I answered and developed new questions different to the ones I originally posed. I was able to learn a lot from how my participants *interpreted* each question, not simply the answers they provided. Thus, I will compare and contrast both answers to questions and interpretations of questions throughout the following sections.

I will start by discussing the different understandings of 'anti-rape messaging,' along three categories: distribution channels, audience, and language. I will explore the conceived successes, failures, and potential for improvement. I will then move to unpacking different understandings of the term 'intersectionality' and its meaning in the everyday lives of those working and accessing the resources at the organization. In the following section, I will examine future imaginings of an 'intersectional anti-rape campaign' alongside the current #TheTotalShutdown movement. Afterwards, I will discuss the roles

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personal identity and intersectionality within one's positionality play in each of my participant's approach to their work. I will end by analyzing one participant's understanding of "support" as an example of the discord between intersectional theory and practice. I argue that to imagine an intersectional anti-rape message one must bridge the divide between academic and experiential understandings of intersectionality and come to understand the layered role of language and culture in the communities they attempt to target.

The demographics of my participants were as follows: Participants 1 and 2 were both white women working at an office of the organization in a predominantly white community. I perceived Participant 3 to be a Black woman, and she worked at the same office as Participants 1 and 2. Participants 4 and 5 were Coloured women working within a predominantly Coloured community.

Distribution Channels

When I asked my participants how their organization spread anti-rape messaging, I received a variety of responses. Participant 2 stated initially, "I think the most the important way is how each of us as individual members of the organization, whether we're trustees or managers of staff, or volunteers, *embody* the work that we do. So the way we live our lives" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). From there, she spoke about embodying anti-rape ideals in different spaces: during counseling sessions, in community workshops, and on social media. Through embodying feminist ideas in rape counseling services and allowing the survivor agency, she promotes anti-rape messaging through recovery. In community workshops, Participant 2 explained how the organization

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surfaces rape myths and sparks discussion but does not "tell you what to think" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). In her words, they are "not militant in [their] messaging" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). Participant 1 responded by outlining a number of platforms including community workshops and trainings, social media, and consciousizing stakeholders. She spoke about her own work getting letters to the editor published in local newspapers in order to raise awareness on different issues surrounding sexual violence and to help create a culture of consent. She explained how the organization's advocacy campaigns and lobbying might also spark conversations "at a dinner party" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018) that they had no control over yet was still spreading their messaging.

Participants 3 and 4 also brought up social media and both praised and criticized the growing role it has played in their communication strategy. Participant 3 argued that digital messaging could not reach every person within the areas they are servicing; hence, they also have print media, pamphlets, and booklets that people can look at in the comfort of their homes at a pace with which they are comfortable. She also asserted the need for a table or stall that they could set up at different community events, "something we can just put up anywhere you know and people can just *access* that information" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018). Participant 4, who works within a predominantly Coloured community, voiced a similar sentiment, "we are coming from different communities…not all of our people access social media platforms so there's like this need for this more visible kind of participation" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). Her answer focused more heavily on

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human-to-human interaction and messaging, rather than social media or

government lobbying. For example, by recruiting counselors from the community

they service, they can spread their messaging via word of mouth. She explained,

> In this office, our reputation is very important. Our news travels word by
> mouth. Somebody's going to tell you something about another place by
> telling you that, not by going onto Google or some other place or
> something like that…people they're going to trust the organization
> because of the people's reputation in the office. (Personal communication,
> November 19, 2018)

Participant 5 mentioned social media, workshops, information stalls, and day-to-

day informal interactions with people in her community, like "at the shop

opposite the road" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). She spoke

about being privileged to live and work in the same community, because she can

effect further impact. She explained, "I don't have to go far to speak to people

from my community because I can speak to my mother or my grandmother"

(Personal communication, November 21, 2018).

Although all the employees worked for the same overall organization,

they had different conceptions of how their messaging is distributed. Participants

1 and 2 focused on 'embodiment,' workshops, counseling, advocacy, and social

media, and how these channels might spark conversation at a dinner party.

Although Participants 3, 4, and 5 brought up social media and counseling as well,

they stressed print media and word of mouth. Neither answer is 'correct,' but I

was intrigued by my perception that participants were primarily in tune to their

own community's needs. I did not find it surprising that the office located in the

white suburb focused it's messaging on social media and government or donor

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lobbying. As a white upper-class woman, I know that these are the platforms through which I am used to receiving information. I turn to social media and the web to gain access to information I can "trust." I perceived that Participant 4 recognized a gap in the organization's messaging moving towards social media because she understood the culture of the Coloured community as placing more confidence in verbal and print communication.

Most participants stressed the importance of the additional layers of messaging that occur after and outside their initial workshops, pamphlets, or posts in individual and community dialogue. Yet class and race are encoded in the examples they gave: "at a dinner party" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018) versus "at the shop opposite the road" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). These examples further illuminate my perception that the participants were thinking largely within their own community contexts and language when answering my questions.

Audience

Furthermore, when I asked participants at whom their organization's messaging was aimed, there were a wide range of not only answers but also interpretations of the question. Participant 2 explained how the organization cements the broader public into roughly nine different audiences and crafts each message to a particular audience: government policy makers, government donors, other donors both local and international, government service providers, community members, rape survivors and those affected by rape, the media itself, their social media following, and their internal audience. Not all of their

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messaging is the same, some promote a culture of consent, some simply give details about the services they offer, and others target government policy. Participant 1 responded that although their messaging is perceived to be aimed at men, it really targets both men and women; she interpreted the concept of messaging on a more specific level. Participant 3 stated the messaging was aimed at both survivors and stakeholders. When I pushed further on this, asking whether they aim different messages at different communities, she responded, "No. We don't. We have the same messaging with different genders, classes" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018). She argued that aiming different messages at different communities would imply they "believe a certain class is more prone to being raped than another class" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018), which is false.

However, Participant 4 was critical of the organization's ability to reach their intended audiences:

> I think we work really hard to try to address everybody, but I think sometimes it's just a thing of language. Which becomes a disadvantage to people who don't have that language, who don't operate in that world… For me, it doesn't speak to everybody; it *wants* to speak to everybody, but I'm not sure we are doing that. I am not sure we have found a common language. (Personal communication, November 19, 2018)

She brought up the word "perambulator" as an example; someone in her community would know what a "pram" is, but they would not understand *reading* the word "perambulator." She argued that the posts on the website cannot be aimed at diverse audiences, because everyone in those audiences cannot grasp the language. She acknowledged that perhaps the messaging on the website is framed

in fairly academic terms in order "to attract funders or donors" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018), yet it still remains inaccessible to a large portion of the communities they are attempting to serve. Participant 5, who works within the same community as Participant 4, did not criticize the messaging but explained how it needed to be geared towards specific audiences. She explained how she would deliver a very different message talking to the cashier at the shop across the road as opposed to funders at a conference on gender-based violence. Within the community, her message would be focused on the services they can provide its members and debunking local myths on rape. Speaking to donors, her message would focus on actionable and measurable goals the organization can achieve to create clear progress in combating gender-based violence.

Because I left many of my questions up to interpretation, I received a wide variety of answers to them. However, the way that my participants chose to interpret each question also provides me with information. Participants 1-3, all of whom work at an office located in a predominantly white-suburb, interpreted "whom is your messaging aimed at" along practical categories, gender identity, or institutions. None mentioned considering which communities they might target, either along racial, socio-economic, or even geographical lines. Yet one of the two participants who did not work at the main branch, instead within a Coloured community, immediately responded that their organization fails to reach everyone they think they aim their messaging at. She even acknowledged the fact that the website might be aimed at donors, something Participant 2 verbally confirmed, when it should be aimed at the people who are accessing their services. Although Participant 5 was not as critical at Participant 4 toward

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the organization's messaging, she did recognize the difference between funder and community audiences, which in my opinion, encodes the question of class into her answer. I would argue that because the main branch's audience is predominantly educated and English speaking, participants from that office were thinking within this sub category when segmenting their audience; whereas Participant 4 and 5 were able to recognize the immediate needs of their own community as an audience.

The Culture of Language

In the previous section, I mentioned Participant 4's explanation of how language plays into whether their organization's messaging can reach their intended audience. In fact, when I pressed my participants more on the accessibility of their messaging, they all mentioned or alluded to the critical necessity of examining culture, language, race, class, and the intersection of these factors. Participant 2 described the process of translating some of their organization's English-written pamphlets into Xhosa. She realized almost immediately that the translation was "not only about language, it's also about culture and about class" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). They could not take English text directed at an English-speaking audience and attempt to translate it word for word to Xhosa. They needed to create a Xhosa version that would speak to their culture and the class struggle they might face. They assembled a group of Xhosa women within the organization to translate the booklet in a culturally relative way. However, Participant 2 was still ultimately disappointed with the result because of the presentation of the text. Despite the

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culturally relative language, the text had not been broken up into smaller blocks, and would still be intimidating to many readers.

Similarly, when asked if their organization's messaging could be improved, Participant 4 actually mentioned this attempt to provide print resources in English, Xhosa, and Afrikaans. She explained that while the organization tries to go "the extra mile" it is still "the language of describing the violence" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018) that is inaccessible. She stated, "we make it sound so academic, whereas it's such a real thing to people, it's such a close to the heart thing for the people" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). If she had the power, she would take all of their online materials and both convert them to "community language" and create hard copies so people could read it "on their level" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). Here, Participant 4 acknowledges that the organization needs to be cognizant of the way that people read materials both on a cultural level in terms of how the language is interpreted, as well as on a physical level in terms of the way the information is accessed. Both Participants 2 and 4 consider how language goes deeper than direct translation, intersecting with culture and class.

Participants 4 and 5, both from Coloured communities, went deeper into the idea of the culture of language in their answers. Participant 5 described talking about sexual violence with her own mother and grandmother, her great aunt having been a survivor. She explained,

> Her sister was a survivor of sexual violence but obviously they wouldn't use that terminology, they would say things like [Arabic phrase] meaning 'he grabbed her' or whatever. So that's the kind of terminology in their

own language that kind of doesn't sound to like *rape*, you know. Because the term rape would sound too like 'oh my god' like *sexual violence*, like that's a no-go. People won't use that terminology. (Personal communication, November 21, 2018)

She described how there still exists a taboo around rape in Coloured communities in Cape Town, so terminology like "sexual violence" not only seems academically intimidating but also scares people away from productive conversations or seeking help. Participant 4 voiced a similar sentiment when talking about their own organization's messaging, "For me, working with clients, seeing clients, seeing the communities, I know they're not going to visit the website, because the language on there is too serious! [Chuckles] So the message, it can go over people's heads" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). Participant 5 also shared the example of using the term 'sex worker' in lieu of 'prostitute' due to the latter's negative connotations within her community. Despite her attempts to de-stigmatize the term, there is no easy fix since people still "either use derogatory terms and they make it as a joke, or they are too scared of the correct terminology because the word sex is in there" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). In thinking about sexual violence or rape awareness programs, Participant 5 also argued "we need to relook how we introduce that topic to that Muslim community" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). She even explained how in bringing up her work to her own family, her older aunts will immediately cut her off, "No, no, no, no one is raped here! No one is raped here" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). Because of the stigma surrounding and differing understandings of certain

terms in different communities, Participants 4 and 5 recognized how language must be an important consideration when developing anti-rape messaging.

In South Africa, there are eleven official languages spoken; even this represents a small portion of the native languages of its residents. In Cape Town, the three most popular languages spoken are Afrikaans, Xhosa, and English. In recent years, there has been a wider stress on the importance of young students learning in their own language. Organizations in Cape Town, like the one at which I interviewed, are beginning to recognize the need to provide resources in all three main languages, to meet the audiences they are servicing at where they are. However, I argue that within this organization as an example, the language of culture has been overlooked. In order to meet their audience where they are, more must be done than simply providing resources in three languages. As Participant 2 stated, language is also about culture and class. When considering culture and class, the terminology, sentence structure, and 'seriousness' of the language must be examined. The stories and narratives used to present information must be taken into account. Although this organization has tried to consider 'language' in questions of accessibility, they only have one website that attempts to target both international donors and working class residents of Cape Town. Furthermore, during these interviews the inability of someone to market campaigns successfully to communities of which they are not a part became clear to me. Thus, I argue that the *same* resources and messaging cannot exist across an organization that targets to such widely different audiences. Moreover, people within the communities that are being targeted must be the ones developing the messaging for that community; they must have an understanding of not only the

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native language but also the cultural language used to describe sexual violence,

gender, or feminist ideals.

What is Intersectionality?

My original research question stemmed from the Black feminist

understanding of 'intersectionality.' I decided to use the terminology in my

project despite its academic grounding because I reject the activist-intellectual

split, and the head of the organization at which I interviewed expressed interest in

my asking questions about intersectionality in their work. Still, the employees I

interviewed had varying levels of understanding of the term in both its history

and its interplay everyday life. When asked her understanding of

intersectionality, Participant 1 responded, "Isn't that where one's gender and race

collide, I mean intersect, they all come together to make you this person that you

are" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). Participant 2 had a deeper

understanding of the history of the term and gave a personal example:

> My understanding of the word intersectionality is that it's something that
> was born out of feminist thinking, which is that there are different levels
> of vulnerability that we experience as women. So, I can comfortably as a
> white South African say I would never walk alone in the dark at night, but
> a Black women coming from a poor community couldn't say that because
> that's how she gets home at night after work. So she's inevitably
> vulnerable in that situation through no choice of her own, and that there
> are so many different ways that people can be made vulnerable through
> no choice of their own. (Personal communication, November 14, 2018)

Furthermore, Participant 2 went further into how intersectionality plays into her

work as a white woman at an anti-gender-based violence organization. She

explained that to her, intersectional thinking included being aware of her

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positioning within the framework of privilege and how that affects her day-to-day work. This self-awareness includes recognition that she "can't be a champion for Black women" but instead must "make sure that there are Black women in this organization who are championing Black women" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). In her answer, it became clear to me that Participant 2 had most likely thought most about the *term* intersectionality and how she could approach her work through an intersectional framework. Participant 3, whose native language was Xhosa, struggled to put her thought into English terms (further demonstrating the issue of language brought up at other points in the interviews):

> Intersectionality for me would be… I'm really thinking of an English way of putting this, but um basically, intersectionality, I think it's being inclusive, including, and not putting people into boxes—I just don't know how to put it… For me I would say it is about not putting people into boxes and dividing them according to whatever categories that we might have but actually seeing all the different categories as a whole. That is the best way I can put it. (Personal communication, November 14, 2018)

While Participant 1 and 2 both had answers focusing on the intersection of race and class, it seemed to me Participant 3 was thinking more in terms of inclusion. Still, Participant 3 recognized intersectionality as seeing the identities of people not within distinct categories, but "as a whole," a key idea to the theory of intersectionality. During my interview with Participant 5, I had explained my understanding of the term intersectionality in response to a question before I had the chance to ask her understanding. When asked, she responded she had the same understanding as what I had explained earlier, continuing, "People's race, gender, maybe their ethnicity, their religion, their culture" (Personal

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communication, November 21, 2018); she included religion and culture as important identities to consider within the context of intersectionality.

Participant 4 did not seem to have a previous understanding of the term intersectionality, so I clarified my understanding within the context of my project. I gave a brief explanation on how I thought about intersectionality in terms of considering the intersection of race, class, and gender identities when imagining survivors of sexual assault. For example, as a white woman my experiences and needs might be different from those of a Black woman. After giving my brief explanation, Participant 4 shared multiple stories sparked by my explanation of the term. She immediately shared how she recruits counselors from diverse backgrounds so they can learn from each other throughout the training program:

> If I'm a white girl and I want to work in this office, I need to know that you understand the context of Coloured people. So being in training being surrounded by Coloured women from Coloured communities so hearing their stories learning from them, at the end when that is done I am able to trust you to know that you can sit with Coloured girls. (Personal communication, November 19, 2018)

In this example, Participant 4 touches on the idea that white women and Coloured women come from different cultural, racial, and class contexts; their experiences and approaches to addressing sexual assault might vary dramatically. Thus, I interpreted her answer as an example of how a white counselor must have an intersectional approach to counseling women of colour, touching on the *experience* of intersectionality within an activist and not simply academic framework. Participant 4 later stated, "We are all intersectional about the crimes that come through our door…whether its poverty or it's the context of their world

that influences their recovery" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). Here, I inferred that she was again recognizing the implementation of an intersectional framework when considering how class ("poverty") and culture/race ("context of their world") influence the experiences of and support needed by survivors who utilize their counseling resources.

For my research question, I had thought I would focus on race, class, and gender identities when considering intersectionality. Participants 1 and 2 did both touch on how these three identities might come together to form an intersectional identity. However, both Participants 4 and 5 brought up questions focused on the intersections of not only race, class, and gender but also culture. I found it interesting that the identities Participant 5 thought of when considering intersectional identities were race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and culture; to me, her inclusion of religion and culture within the categories of identity was indicative of her thinking within the context of her own Coloured community. Participant 4 did not directly mention the idea of culture, but indirectly referenced its interplay with race and class. Her first anecdote of a white woman's ability or inability to counsel a Coloured survivor touched on the necessity of recognizing cultural differences within racial identity. Her second example of considering the crimes that "come through [their] door" as influenced by "poverty" or "the context of their world" recognized the intersection of class and culture when approaching providing support to survivors. Hence, both of her examples highlight the mutually constitutive nature of race and class with culture. The fact that the two participants working within a Coloured community highlighted the importance of culture within intersectional identities demonstrates how my

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research question's focus on race, class, and gender stemmed from my distinctly white and U.S. positionality. In fact, culture as an identity must be included in the definition of intersectionality within a South African context. While culture can be linked to race and class, it cannot be reduced to either.

Furthermore, when asked their understandings of "intersectionality," Participants 2 and 4 brought up personal examples of the *practice* of intersectionality. Participant 2 explained how her own understanding of intersectionality and her positionality influences her approach to leading the organization. Participant 4 explained how intersectionality informs her counselor training strategy. In my literature review, I discussed the work of U.S. Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins (2016) and her rejection of intersectionality as both a finished framework and a solely academic or activist framework. Over 25 years earlier, Collins (1990, p. 34) wrote about Black feminist thought in a similar way, "Black feminism occurs through an ongoing dialogue whereby actions and thought inform one another." Moreover, Collins (1990) actually brings up the differences in Black U.S. and African feminism. She describes her colleague Obioma Nnaemeka's definition of African feminism, "The majority of African women are not hung up on 'articulating their feminism'; they just do it" (Collins, 1990, p. 35). Although this "interconnectedness of experiences and ideas" (Collins, 1990, p. 35) exists within the U.S. context, it is inherent to African feminism. Through my interviews, I came to understand how this "interconnectedness of experiences and ideas" is also inherent to African or South African intersectionality. This conclusion is most apparent in Participant 4's answer; although she did not have a technical understanding of the term

before my explanation, she immediately had multiple examples of implementing an intersectional framework in her day-to-day work.

Imagining an Intersectional Campaign

After asking participants their understanding of the term intersectionality, I asked them whether they believed an intersectional anti-rape campaign were possible in South Africa, and if so, how it would look. Participant 3, the least fluent of my participants in English, responded, "I think it is" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018). When I followed up with how it might look, she stated, "I don't know how to answer that" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018). Participant 1's initial response to both questions was, "God knows. I have absolutely no idea what it would like. I suppose debunking all those myths about who it that gets raped and who it is that is a perpetrator" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). She later added that it might be some sort of ad campaign focused on "build[ing] a culture of empowering relationships" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018), or perhaps the real campaign would be asking the questions I had just asked her in a series of community dialogues. Participant 4 responded that she "would just take it back to a grassroots level" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018).

Participant 5 had a more in depth answer, stating first that it would require unlimited funding. Next, she explained, "It really goes back to the basics. So, what is a rainbow nation? A rainbow nation is not only about the color of your skin, it is about people's cultural, lifestyle choices" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). Through this understanding, she argued that an

intersectional anti-rape campaign would need to consider aspects such as religion, sexuality, race, gender identity, and their overlaps; it would need a wide variety of people who represent all different intersections of South African identity. Furthermore, she acknowledged that a truly intersectional campaign would have to take into account that different communities might want that campaign to look differently: it could not be standardized across South Africa or even Cape Town. She explained that "some communities would prefer to have platforms outside in the road, some communities would prefer marches, or that together. Some communities would prefer a fundraiser and invite people or corporates" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). Again, encoded in these examples are cultural and class differences. She mentioned the need to account for their audience's "culture," "the context that they're living," and "the environment that they're living." For example, some communities in rural villages might have huts, so there are no rooms where you can close doors like in Cape Town homes. Thus, the culture surrounding where sexual violence takes place or what constitutes private or public spaces might look different. Through this example, Participant 5 explained that in an imagined intersectional campaign, "you don't want something to be farfetched and then have people say like 'oh, well, that probably only happens in Cape Town,' whereas it is actually happening but in a different way" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018). She argued that an intersectional anti-rape campaign would need to be designed to address specific communities using distinct methods "so that people can relate to it" (Personal communication, November 21, 2018) within their own context.

When I asked Participant 2 how she would imagine an intersectional anti-rape campaign, she stated,

> Well I don't even have to because #TheTotalShutdown are doing it right now. If you had asked me a year ago I would have said, 'Oh God I have no idea,' but now I know exactly what it looks like and it looks like that. (Personal communication, November 14, 2018)

#TheTotalShutdown is a movement that was born out of a series of marches all across South Africa on August 1, 2018 ("#TheTotalShutdown," 2018). A memorandum was then handed over to the government, addressed to President Cyril Ramaphosa, that outlined a series of 24 demands over a 12-month period, including a National Gender Summit with the president, which took place on November 1, 2018 ("#TheTotalShutdown," 2018). The movement self-describes itself as intersectional, inclusive of all transgender and gender nonconforming womxn across race and class lines ("#TheTotalShutdown," 2018). Participant 2 described the movement as "really bold," unashamedly aggressive, unapologetic, high energy," "focused, intelligent, strategic," "[with] mass participation," and participation from "older and younger activists" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). She acknowledged that her own organization did not have the resources or mission it takes to have a campaign that resembles this one.

Participant 1 also referenced #TheTotalShutdown in another one of her answers, stating, "They're an incredible group of women and I don't feel part of that. And sometimes I feel a bit sad about that but in other ways, this is just great. This is how things change and grow" (Personal communication, November 14, 2018). When I pressed her about not feeling a part of the movement, she

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elaborated on how her organization served a different role than that of

#TheTotalShutdown. She further explained,

> I think what I admire about #TheTotalShutdown is that they haven't come
> to us and said we must do something, this is a group of people that has
> decided that they're going to do something. And that is where the power
> lies. And we can support them. I think that's the most we can do…
> (Personal communication, November 14, 2018)

Participant 1 touched on the idea that "the power lies" with the people not relying

on existing institutions or organizations, such at the one at which she works, in

order to effect change. I inferred that both Participants 1 and 2 were imagining an

intersectional campaign, #TheTotalShutdown, as unable to be born out of

existing institutions. However, even this 'ideal' intersectional movement has

come under fire from groups such as The Gauteng Community Health Care

Forum for exclusion (Moosa, 2018). The Forum protested the National Gender

Summit, arguing it was "not pro-working class women… it remains a process of

middle class women that use working class women as token for their own

interests" (Moosa, 2018). Furthermore, others argued that #TheTotalShutdown

was not inclusive of rural women and should not claim to represent "all South

African women" (Moosa, 2018).

When I asked my participants to imagine a truly intersectional anti-rape

campaign in South Africa, I was expecting a wide variety of answers since the

question beforehand had yielded a diverse set of definitions and understandings

of intersectionality. Many of my participants were initially stumped at the

question, demonstrating the lack of dialogue and understanding of these terms

within the context of Cape Town anti-gender-based violence organizing.

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Participant 1 spoke of empowering relationships while Participant 5 resurfaced the idea of culturally relative and sensitive messaging. She stressed the fact that a truly intersectional campaign would be a series of campaigns founded in each individual community; a mass intersectional campaign could not exist across South Africa since South Africa has such a wide variety of cultures and contexts. Participant 4 stressed the need for grassroots organizing; similar to Participant 5, I believe she recognized the need for community based organizing that would address the needs and cultures of their own audiences, thereby addressing intersectional identities. Participants 1 and 2 praised #TheTotalShutdown as a phenomenal example of an intersectional movement, while both recognizing the fact they were not, and could not, be a part of that movement. As white women working within an organization established by white women, they recognized the need for grassroots organizing by non-white women. Thus, although the answers I received to this question varied dramatically, there was a common recognition in that an imagined intersectional campaign would need to stem from the community that it served.

Influence of Personal Identity

The last structured question I asked each of my participants was whether they believed their own identity affected their approach to their work. Within the intersectional framework I adopted for this project, I have been attempting to consider the *implementation* of intersectionality: for example, considering one's own intersectional positionality when approaching social justice work. I received varying answers with differing interpretations of what aspects of their identity

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were important factors to their approach to activism. Again, I found that the

interpretations of my question and the meaning of "identity" were just as if not

more interesting than the content of the answers I received. Participant 2, a white

woman, responded that her identity absolutely affected her approach to her work.

Furthermore, she stated, "The greatest gifts I've brought to [this organization]

have been my personality, and that my identity is a *disadvantage* to the

organization; the organization needs a young Black feminist to lead" (Personal

communication, November 14, 2018). Here, Participant 2 touched on an idea she

had brought up earlier—as a white woman she could never be a champion for

Black women. Thus, despite how hard she tries, for their organization to truly be

intersectional and reach intersectional audiences, they would need a Black

woman to lead. Participant 1, the other white woman I interviewed, answered in

terms of her approach to counseling:

> Definitely. I'm white, matured-aged, and I have a university degree. I'm
> often told I come from a Westernized point of view. So, I have to be quite
> questioning in my approach, as well, and quite reflexive and think very
> carefully and clearly. One always has to keep in mind that sense of who
> we are and try to understand how it might be affecting another or how it
> might assert power in some kind of relationship. (Personal
> communication, November 14, 2018)

In her answer, she touches on race, age, and education as key aspects of her

identity that affect "power" dynamics within her relationships. She also

acknowledged the idea of having "a Westernized point of view" and needing to

remain culturally "reflexive" in her work as not to alienate her clients.

In Participant 4's response, she outlined her conservative and religious

background in how she initially approached working at an organization that was

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accepting of LGBTI+ people. She did not mention race, class, gender, or education, only this cultural and religious difference. Participant 3 explained how she was more passionate about the issues she worked against due to her positionality as a woman. She explained, "I grew up in a certain community where I saw the vulnerability women have. I think it has made me more aware of women's needs" (Personal communication, November 15, 2018). Although her answer seemed to focus on her gender identity, I thought she encoded ideas of race, class, or culture into her description of "growing up in a *certain community*" in tune to the vulnerability of women in that specific community. Participant 5 was more explicit in describing the way her racial, cultural, language, and geographic identity informed her day-to-day work. She expressed a sense of privilege for being able to work and to live within the same community. She explained,

> My identity as a Coloured woman makes me understand why I speak the way I do… Language also plays a huge part of also like the social class within the Coloured community… [My identity also] helps me to understand if things will work in our community or if not, and it helps me understand how to implement it. (Personal communication, November 21, 2018)

Participant 5 touches on three main points; her identity as a Coloured woman helps her understand the language of her community, whether certain interventions will work within her community context, and if so, how to implement these programs or tactics. For her, encompassed within the label of 'Coloured' identity are race, class, language, and culture, all of which inform the approach she takes to anti-rape messaging and workshops within her community.

The two white women I interviewed explicitly acknowledged how their racial identity informs their positions of power and prevents them from ever being truly intersectional advocates. Participant 3 and 4 did not explicitly mention their race; instead, they encoded ideas of culture and community into their answers. Participant 3 spoke of the specific vulnerability of women she experienced growing up in a township and Participant 4 spoke of her religious cultural background upon entering the organization. Participant 5 explained how her racial identity could not be de-linked from her language, cultural identity, or community background. I found it interesting that Participants 1 and 2 both explicitly mentioned only race, class, or education in their identity while Participants 3, 4, and 5 all brought up ideas of culture and community. Again, these answers demonstrate how my own positionality as a white woman has made me consider intersectionality largely in terms of race, class, gender, and the power structures these inform with little consideration given to cultural contexts of specific communities. The various interpretations of what aspects of identity were noteworthy further illustrates the inability to untangle race and class from culture or community context and the necessity of considering the latter two within intersectional identities.

Disconnect Between Theory and Practice

At the end of my interview with Participant 4, when I asked her if she had anything else she wanted to add, she began to explain the disconnect between the theory (written up by white people) and the practice (within her Coloured community) of counseling. She outlined how even within her own organization,

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"we have these different concepts about what support is and means in our

different contexts" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). She clarified,

> Because a lot of what we know today about people and stuff like that has
> always been written up by white people…so a lot of stuff that has been
> passed on over the years like understandings of what white people
> understand about what they've gathered the information from when they
> observed this specific other group and stuff like that, and how we support.
> (Personal communication, November 19, 2018)

She touched on the idea that the academia behind what "counseling" or "support"

means stems from white psychologists, scientists, and theorists. There exists a

plethora of theories and studies on what are the most effective methods and

tactics in counseling, yet Participant 4 mentioned a key point: most of these

studies and theories developed out of white academia and culture.

Participant 4 described "resilience from people in communities" having a

serious "impact on the type of support that they require" (Personal

communication, November 19, 2018). Sometimes, one counseling session is

enough for a survivor to continue their healing process. However, Participant 4

explained how "[their] organization doesn't always think about it in that way"

(Personal communication, November 19, 2018), because there are not sufficient

theories or academic research to back it up. She gave the example of a number of

incest cases she has dealt with over the years. Because she hadn't received

'official' training on how to deal with this specific type of case, she wasn't sure if

she would be allowed to see the client. She expressed what I interpreted as

frustration, "I was very challenged with this question of why can't we see this

group of people… is it because it's not written up? Is it because nobody has

thought it can be done?" (Personal communication, November 19, 2018). I deciphered this "nobody" as "white people." Because white scholars have not produced extensive literature and methods of training counselors to deal with incest cases in South Africa, perhaps no support should be provided.

Participant 4 went on to deliver a clear message on the discord between theory and practice across racial lines in her advocacy work:

> My understanding of what a lot of theory is and says and *da-da-da-da* comes from white people… And I'm thinking to myself, but I understand this group more. And I'm thinking to myself, but this is why you think I'm the one that must provide the support… Our theory comes from so far away. What do we know about it started so far away. There was this understanding that flowed for so long, for so many years, for so many decades, and it has just—it's still there. So, the support is maybe not the same as the actual but the way to understand the decades of theory… So sometimes I don't think we open ourselves up for the thing that is here in front of us because we are holding on to decades and decades of understandings and theories and knowledge and stuff like that. We refuse to see that actually, you know, maybe one session with help that person just so [*snaps*]. Because it doesn't 'make sense.' (Personal communication, November 19, 2018)

Although Participant 4's native language was not English, I felt as though I understood very clearly the point she was making. From my position, she seemed to be arguing that the even a discipline such as "counseling" itself cannot be de-linked from race or culture. Her organization recognized that as a Coloured woman, she is better equipped to service the Coloured community than a white woman might be, yet she is still expected to use tools of support developed by white people in her day-to-day work with survivors. Patricia Hill Collins (2016) argues that we must destroy the activist-academic split within the theory and practice of intersectionality. Participant 4 furthered this idea. Although her

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organization considered the *practice* of intersectionality in placing counselors within certain communities who might understand the race, class, language, or cultural context, they still failed to acknowledge how the *theory* behind all of their work (even the meaning of "support") stemmed from a long line of white scholars. Participant 4—the only participant with no prior understanding of the terminology of intersectionality—articulated the idea as many Black feminists and intersectional thinkers before her: the innate and overdue need to recognize theory and practice as one and the same.

Conclusion

Although the idea of intersecting oppressions had existed for many years,

U.S. Black feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) is often credited with coining the

term "intersectionality." In one of her earliest articles on intersectionality, she

writes,

> The violence that many women experience is often shaped by other
> dimensions of their identities, such as race and class… Although racism
> and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in
> feminist and antiracist practice. (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242)

For Crenshaw (1991), the term "intersectionality" developed as a specific method

for understanding the oppression Black women face in the U.S. as contingent

upon their race, class, and gender identities. She argued that race and gender

oppression are intersecting, so to be an effective feminist or antiracist, one must

have an intersecting approach to feminist and antiracist activism (Crenshaw,

1991). Thus, entering this project, my research question focused on how to

imagine intersectional anti-rape messaging using a single organization in Cape

Town, South Africa as a case study—thinking specifically about the intersection

of race, class, and gender identities. My objectives were to identify specific ways

this organization's anti-rape messaging fails to be intersectional and to consider

new potential strategies and approaches.

Ultimately, I found that my initial definition of intersectionality,

stemming from U.S. Black feminists, was flawed. Present in all of my interviews

was an intense focus on both culture and language as intersecting identities.

Although culture and language can be linked to race and class, they cannot be

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reduced to race and class. In the South African context, culture and language must be treated as distinct categories within intersectionality. In fact, I found that almost every time I asked my participants to contemplate intersectionality within the failures and potential solutions of their organization's anti-rape messaging, the idea of culture and language surfaced more explicitly than race or class.

I came to realize that an anti-gender-based violence organization in Cape Town must first consider the culture and cultural language of its audience when approaching the distribution, content, and presentation of its anti-rape messaging. Moreover, many of my participants expressed the necessity for anti-rape messaging to derive from community members themselves. I found that although the organization did tend to hire staff from within the communities each office serviced, there was not enough freedom given to the individuals on *how* they would then service their individual community. Hence, I perceived a glaring disconnect between the offices and staff serving different communities. This divide within a single organization further illustrates Crenshaw's argument that "ignoring difference *within* groups contributes to tension *among* groups" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). If I perceived a divide within staff members of a single organization in Cape Town, then I might safely assume there exists severe divides within anti-rape activism in South African as a whole.

Furthermore, I found that not only should every aspect of messaging stem from the community but the methods of counseling and support also need to be community specific. In the United States, effective intersectional approaches to anti-rape work are both context specific and make use of local knowledge and

networks (Scott, 1993). As Participant 4 outlined in the previous section, their organization needs to begin to consider intersectional, community-specific approaches in both the theoretical background and the physical aspects of their work. Her argument echoes the practice of U.S. feminists Collins and Bilge (2016, p. 33), "Our sense of intersectionality aims to sustain a focus on the synergy linking ideas and actions, on the interrelatedness of inquiry and praxis."

In conclusion, I found that an intersectional framework in the South African context must also rely on culture and language identity, not solely race, class, and gender. Furthermore, surface level implementations of intersectional practice are not enough—the theory, purpose, and power behind practice must also be, in a sense, decolonized. Throughout this entire project, I myself attempted to maintain a focus on "the synergy linking ideas and actions" (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 33). Although my project is founded in research and theory, my ultimate goal is to provide an actionable report back to the organization at which I interviewed. In order to remain true to intersectionality as critical inquiry and praxis, my project must do both.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are many future potential studies on the topics of intersectionality, anti-rape messaging, and feminist advocacy work in Cape Town, South Africa. One recommendation would be to conduct a similar set of interviews at another organization that deal with gender-based violence in Cape Town or South Africa, or, rather, to conduct focus groups within different communities in Cape Town. In addition, the research questions could focus more heavily on terminology: for example, interviews or focus groups conducted solely on what individual meanings of intersectionality, rape, feminism, and messaging. There is also the potential to research not just the organizations spreading the anti-rape messaging, but those within the communities at whom the messaging is aimed in order to determine how it is being received. However, before conducting a research project like this one, the researcher would have carefully to consider the ethics involved with asking people questions on sexual violence, even just in regard to anti-sexual violence messaging.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. How did you get into working / volunteering at [this organization]?
2. What is your role?
3. In your opinion, how does [your organization] spread anti-rape messaging?
4. Are you involved in this? How? Whom do you think anti-rape messaging is aimed at?
5. Who is imagined as a rape survivor in South Africa?
6. Who is imagined as a rapist?
7. Do these narratives affect your approach to anti-rape messaging? If not, why not? If yes, how?
8. Do you think your anti-rape messaging can be improved? If so, how? Where would you start?
9. What is your understanding of the word intersectionality?
10. Is current anti-rape messaging in South Africa intersectional? Why or why not?
11. Do you think an intersectional anti-rape campaign is possible? What would it look like?
12. Do you think your identity affects your approach to anti-gender-based violence activism? If not, why not? If yes, how?
13. Is there anything else you want to add?
14. What is a question(s) you wish I asked you?
15. Do you have any questions for me?