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- Critical social perspectives to injury and violence prevention
- Injury surveillance studies
- Epidemiological research
- Health systems research
- Risks and resilience studies associated with violence and injuries in low- to middle-income contexts
- Best practices for injury prevention and containment, and safety and peace promotion

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Original Contributions

Socio-demographic and spatio-temporal predictors of homicidal strangulation in the City of Johannesburg, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The literature on the predictors of disaggregated homicide rates exposes a distinct void with respect to strangulation fatality. The current study examines the effects of socio-demographic and spatio-temporal variables on the risk for homicidal strangulation relative to the other leading causes of homicide in the City of Johannesburg for the period 2001-2010. The data were derived from the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System. A series of logistic regressions were performed to assess the independent associations between each of the predictor variables and fatal strangulation relative to the other leading causes of homicide. The analysis revealed that there are several unique socio-demographic and spatio-temporal factors that differentiate homicidal strangulation risk from the risk for other causes of homicide. Sex was found to be the strongest predictor of homicidal strangulation, with the risk significantly higher for females. The elderly (60+ years), were found to be at marked risk of fatal strangulation, as were children between the ages of 0-14 years. The most noteworthy predictive effects for temporality were observed for time of day and day of the week, with daytime and weekdays representing the periods of higher risk. In the current analyses, scene of death did not emerge as a significant predictor of strangulation homicide. The study supports the contention that differentiated risk profiles for the different causes of homicide are important to recognise and delineate for the purposes of strangulation homicide prevention.

Keywords: homicide; strangulation; predictors; socio-demographic; spatio-temporal; South Africa

INTRODUCTION

Homicide studies, using analytic inquiries to test hypotheses and predictive models, report that there are statistically identifiable and predictable patterns to homicide victimisation. These analyses have increasingly sought to disaggregate homicide to discern the occurrence probabilities of different homicide types. Although the value of more refined theoretical understandings of homicide through disaggregation is by now well established, the literature on the predictors of disaggregated homicide rates exposes a distinct void with respect to strangulation fatality. The literature on strangulation homicide reveals evidence on forensic and epidemiological profiles (e.g., Demirci, Dogan, Erkol, & Gunaydin, 2009; Hawley, McClane, & Strack, 2001; Maxeiner & Bockholdt, 2003; Verma, 2007; Verma & Lal, 2006), with descriptive findings

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on strangulation homicide in South Africa indicating fatal strangulation to be the fourth leading cause of homicide in the City of Johannesburg (Suffla & Seedat, 2016; Suffla, Van Niekerk, & Arendse, 2008). However, there is a near absence of national and international research on the predictive patterns that characterise homicidal strangulation at the individual and situational level. Certainly, on the African continent, there is currently no published scientific evidence on the socio-demographic and spatio-temporal predictors of fatal strangulation. In contrast, firearm homicide, the leading external cause of death, has obtained dedicated scrutiny across a range of contexts (e.g., Hemenway, Shinoda-Tagawa, & Miller, 2002; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2011).

Accordingly, this study aims to determine the effects that socio-demographic and spatio-temporal variables exert on the risk for death by strangulation relative to the other leading causes of homicide in the City of Johannesburg for the period 2001-2010. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the socio-demographic and spatio-temporal factors that differentiate homicidal strangulation from all firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicides in the City of Johannesburg for the indicated period.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND SPATIO-TEMPORAL VARIATION IN HOMICIDE RISK: THE EVIDENCE

Given the dearth of analytic studies on homicidal strangulation risk specifically, this section will focus on evidence related to homicide in the aggregate and, where available, on firearm homicide which has received the most attention in research on disaggregated homicide. One of the most stable explanations for the disproportionate distributions of fatal violence risk across time and place is demographic variation, as applicable to age, race and gender (e.g., Cohen & Land, 1987; Fox & Piquero, 2003; Ratele, Smith, Van Niekerk, & Seedat, 2011). While demographics are not the only, or strongest, predictor of homicide rates, they are widely accepted as a strong predictor of homicide rates. Spatio-temporal factors call into focus the relationships between homicide and characteristics of the physical and social environments in which homicide concentrations occur (Groff & La Vigne, 2002), as well as temporal variations associated with lethal violence, which are commonly associated with changes in human activity patterns (e.g., Ceccato, 2005).

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC RISKS

The age-homicide link appears to hold across studies, demonstrating a robust association. Research undertaken in the Global North indicates the young, and male, population to be at highest risk for lethal violence (e.g., Schwartz, 2010; Trussler, 2012). Vulnerability is elevated in the 15-29 year age group, followed by the 30-44 age category, and declines steeply with age thereafter; again, this is for males and considerably pronounced relative to the estimated risk for females in the same age groups (UNODC, 2011). When disaggregated, the established predictive patterns are strongly analogous to those for firearm homicide (e.g., Miller, Hemenway, & Azrael, 2007; Wells & Chermak, 2011). In South Africa, the highest homicide rates have been reported among males aged 15-29 years (Norman et al., 2010; Kramer & Ratele, 2012; Seedat, Van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009). The vulnerability of younger men to homicide has been ascribed to their participation in violence related activities, such as gang membership, substance abuse and possession of weapons, typically influenced by dominant performances of masculinities.

The racial homicide gap in risk is reportedly enduring and pervasive. Across contexts, black adults are at increased risk of homicide victimisation compared to other race groups; this risk is higher in urban settings and among young men than in other contexts or among other age-gender groups (e.g., Kramer & Ratele, 2012; O’Flaherty & Sethi, 2010). For example, African-American males are estimated to be approximately six times more at risk of being murdered than white American males (O’Flaherty & Sethi, 2010). In South Africa, black males between the ages 20 and 40 are seventeen times more likely to be murdered compared
to white males in the same age group (Ratele et al., 2011). In extremely unequal societies, such as South Africa, human development opportunities for the population are vastly asymmetrical so that in the absence of employment and other optimal possibilities for young black males, violence comes to represent an alternative mechanism in some men’s attempts to assert their masculinity (see Ratele et al., 2011).

Gender remains a significant and stable predictor of homicide victimisation risk. Males are at a higher risk of being murdered compared to females, at a global rate of 11.9 per 100 000 compared to 2.6 per 100 000 for females (UNODC, 2011). Males are far more likely to be murdered by strangers or acquaintances whereas women bear the greater risk of intimate partner homicide (e.g., Cao, Hou, & Huang, 2008; Swart, Seedat, & Nel, 2015). Across country contexts, the female homicide rate appears to be driven by intimate partner homicide. At a rate of 5.6 per 100 000, intimate femicide represents the leading cause of female homicide in South Africa (Abrahams, Mathews, Jewkes, Martin, & Lombard, 2012).

SITUATIONAL RISKS

Situational homicide patterns are also considered as essential to deciphering homicide risk. From a micro-spatial perspective, the crime location is considered to be an important variable both in overall homicide, as well as disaggregated homicide (UNODC, 2011). Research on the geographic distribution of homicide events reports that, in the aggregate, lethal violence is more likely to occur in public places through which people navigate in the course of their daily routines (e.g., Pizarro, 2008). In general, this same pattern is iterated for males, but is the converse for females who are reportedly more likely to be murdered in private places (e.g., UNODC, 2011). There is thus a discernibly gendered orientation to the relationship between sex and scene of homicide. Research also suggests that homicide in private spaces is more likely to involve a known perpetrator, unlike the pattern observed in fatalities in public spaces such as the street (e.g., UNODC, 2011). Cao and colleagues (2008) found that public locations reduced the probability of murder by a known person, but increased the risk of being murdered by a stranger.

Research on temporal patterns indicates that homicide events occur with higher frequency during the evening, weekends and the warmer months of the year (e.g., Pizarro, 2008; Sisti, Rocchi, Macciò, & Preti, 2012). These times are associated with recreational activities, the use of alcohol and other substances, and increased social interaction, which tend to interact to increase homicidal risk. The temporal patterns for South Africa, at least as they relate to urban homicide, are similar (e.g., Ratele, Swart, & Seedat, 2009). When disaggregated, the temporal patterns for homicide show a degree of variation across age groups, locations and type of lethal violence (e.g., Carbone-Lopez & Lauritsen, 2013). These differences are attributed to the distinct routine activities of different groups of individuals across time and space. For example, during the warmer months of the year, people tend to spend more time and longer hours outdoors, increasing the number of available victims in public places. Seasonal patterns have also been associated with weather patterns, but studies show mixed results on the correlation between weather conditions and lethal violence (Murataya & Gutiérrez, 2013).

Explanations for the identified socio-demographic and spatio-temporal risks of homicide victimisation frequently draw from routine activities theory. Routine activities theory, posited as one of the most systematically formulated models of ecological variation in individual-level victimisation risk, argues that homicide is a function of opportunities for victimisation. Cohen and Felson (1979) explain that for a crime to occur there must be convergence in time and space of a motivated offender, suitable target, and lack of a capable guardian. These features are used as proxies and broad indicators of interaction between social actors, living arrangements and normative lifestyle regimes. Routine activities theory has been recognised for offering systematic explanations of criminality patterns that may otherwise have presented as contradictory and disjointed (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2000).
METHOD

The study adopted a cross-sectional observational design, using data for the City of Johannesburg.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The City of Johannesburg is the capital of the province of Gauteng, and one of eight metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. Violence is reported to be the leading cause of non-natural death in Gauteng, with an overall rate of 34.3 deaths per 100,000 population (MRC-UNISA Safety & Peace Promotion Research Unit, 2013). The greatest proportion of the South African urban population resides in the City of Johannesburg (Statistics South Africa, 2012). While regarded to be the economic hub of the country, the City of Johannesburg continues to be beset by problems related to urban poverty and under-development, Historical social, geographical and economic inequities, together with current social and economic challenges have manifested in high levels of crime and violence (City of Johannesburg, 2011).

DATA

All cases with valid data for the four leading mechanisms of homicide in the City of Johannesburg (firearm, sharp object, blunt object and strangulation homicides) for the decade spanning 2001-2010 were derived from the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System (NIMSS). The NIMSS is a mortuary surveillance system that collects and disseminates information on deaths due to non-natural causes. At the time of the study, the indicated time span was the only period for which a decade-long record of homicide cases was available. The dataset included the homicide mechanism; age, race and sex of each homicide victim; time, day and month of the victim’s death; scene of homicidal injury; and blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of the victim.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable for the analyses was homicidal strangulation, measured on a dichotomous scale where the two categories of the dependent variable were considered in terms of the following discrete outcomes: 1) strangulation homicide and firearm homicide; 2) strangulation homicide and sharp object homicide; and 3) strangulation homicide and blunt object homicide. As indicated in Table 1, homicidal strangulation accounted for the smallest proportion of all deaths (2.2%, n = 218), consistent with its epidemiological profile as the rarest of homicidal events in urban South Africa (Suffla & Seedat, 2016). Of the remaining 97.8% (n = 9702), fatalities were caused predominantly by firearm discharge (60.5%, n = 6005), followed by sharp object injuries (25%, n = 2478) and blunt object injuries (12.3%, n = 1219). The strangulation dataset excluded 116 cases with missing data, representing 34.73% of the total number strangulation cases with valid data (n = 334). For the same reason, the combined dataset for the four leading causes of homicide represented 48.17% (n = 9920) of the total number of cases (n = 20 595).

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of the leading causes of homicide in the City of Johannesburg, 2001-2010 (N = 9920)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Valid Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strangulation</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Homicides</td>
<td>9702</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearm</td>
<td>6005</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp Objects</td>
<td>2478</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blunt Objects</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The predictors selected for analyses included two primary groups of categorical variables: socio-demographic correlates and spatio-temporal correlates. These independent variables are captured in the NIMSS and, as reported, also bear an empirical relationship with homicide risk. The socio-demographic category comprised three independent variables: 1) age group: 0-14, 15-29, 30-44, 45-59 and 60+ years of age, with the latter coded as the reference category; 2) race\(^2\): Indian, coloured, white and black, with the latter coded as the reference group; and 3) sex, with males coded as the reference category. Four spatio-temporal variables were included in the analyses: 1) time of day: day (05h00-18h59) and night (19h00-04h49), with night coded as the reference category; 2) day of the week: weekdays and weekend (commencing on Friday at 16h00), with the latter serving as the reference group; 3) month of fatal injury by seasonality, with spring coded as the reference category in this four-category variable; and 4) scene of death: private and public places, with the latter representing the reference group. Missing cases were excluded from the analyses\(^3\).

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of all the variables included in the analyses, aggregated for the four leading causes of homicide. The majority of victims were aged between 15 and 29 (41.6%, n = 4128) and 30 to 44 (40.7%, n = 4040). Blacks (87.4%, n = 8670) and males (86.5%, n = 8580) were markedly over-represented in the socio-demographic profile of victims. A slightly higher proportion of homicides were committed at night (55.2%, n = 5475). Weekend (50.5%, n = 5012) and weekday (49.5%, n = 4908) fatalities were almost equal. Fatalities were almost equally distributed across the season of the year. Private places were identified as the scene of injury for a marginally higher number of deaths (54.5%, n = 5411).

Table 2. Socio-demographic and spatio-temporal characteristics of homicide victims, City of Johannesburg, 2001-2010 (N = 9920)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demographic Variables</th>
<th>Frequency (N)</th>
<th>Valid Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>4128</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>4040</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>1198</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>8670</td>
<td>87.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1340</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8580</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) The authors subscribe to the view that race is not biologically determined, but is socially and politically constructed through social institutions and practices. In South Africa, the terms Indian, black, coloured (referring to mixed heritage) and white refer to various population groups, and are an artefact of the apartheid era. Their use is contentious and does not imply acceptance of the racist assumptions on which these labels are founded. The terms are used to reflect the differential manner in which the earlier South African policies of racial segregation, or apartheid, had impacted on the lives of various groups of South Africans, and still do.

\(^3\) BAC was eliminated from the analyses due to the small number of cases for which this data was available (40.9%).
LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSES

A series of logistic regressions were performed to assess the independent associations between each of the socio-demographic and spatio-temporal predictor variables and the risk for strangulation, relative to other homicide mechanisms (see King & Zeng, 2001 for discussion on logistic regression in rare events data). The logistic models thus allow for descriptions of the variables that distinguish homicidal strangulation from the other leading causes of homicide in the City of Johannesburg. Preliminary analyses were undertaken to ensure that the assumptions of logistic regression were not violated. The analyses focused on a series of comparisons between two discrete outcome categories, strangulation relative to 1) firearm homicide, 2) sharp object homicide and 3) blunt object homicide respectively, with each of the indicated three homicide types serving as the reference category. Two logistic regression analyses were conducted for each of the comparisons, each one examining a different model. The first model examined socio-demographic factors only, and the second model added spatio-temporal variables to the analyses. Model coefficients, exponentiated so that they could be interpreted as adjusted odds ratios (ORs), and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were used to assess the magnitude and significance of adjusted multivariate associations. A p-value of below 0.05 was considered significant. Statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22).

RESULTS

Six logistic regression models were estimated to predict homicidal strangulation in the City of Johannesburg for the period 2001-2010, using socio-demographic and spatio-temporal variables as predictors. The results are discussed in relation to the model that examined only the socio-demographic variables associated with homicide mechanism (Model 1), and the model that assessed both socio-demographic and spatio-temporal factors (Model 2).

MODEL 1: ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Results from the series of regression models that examined strangulation homicide, where the reference category was firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide respectively, indicated that the overall models were statistically significant at the p < 0.05 level (chi square = 631.354, p = .000 with df = 24).
Overall, the socio-demographic variables were strongly associated with homicidal strangulation. The effects for age indicated the risk for strangulation to be elevated among the elderly (60+ years), with the likelihood of being strangled highest in this age category in relation to each of the other causes of homicide (see Tables 3, 4 and 5). Also, of statistical significance, when compared to the elderly, children (0-14 years) were more than two times likely to die from strangulation relative to sharp object homicide (OR = 2.164, p < 0.05). It is worth noting that although overall age was significantly associated with homicidal strangulation, the decomposed results indicated that there was no significant effect for the 0-14 year age group when compared to the 60+ year age group relative to firearm and blunt object homicide, and the 15-29 year age group in relation to blunt object homicide.

The odds of strangulation for Indians, coloureds and whites, when compared to blacks, varied in relation to firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide. Indians were approximately five times (OR = 5.278, p < 0.05) and three times (OR = 3.199, p < 0.05) more likely to be strangled relative to sharp and blunt object homicide respectively. The risk of strangulation for coloureds, in comparison to blacks, was about two-and-a-half times more relative to firearm homicide (OR = 2.548, p < 0.05) and blunt object homicide (OR = 2.382, p < 0.05). Whites were about three times more at risk for fatal strangulation (OR = 3.192, p < 0.05) as opposed to blunt object homicide, and two-and-a-half times more at risk (OR = 2.613, p < 0.05) in relation to sharp object homicide. The decomposed results indicated that compared to blacks, there was no significant difference in the odds of Indians and whites being strangled as opposed to being victims of firearm homicide, and being coloured was not a significant predictor of fatal strangulation relative to sharp object homicide. That is, Indians and whites were not significantly more at risk than blacks for strangulation compared to firearm homicides, and coloureds were not significantly more vulnerable to strangulation than blacks when compared to the risk of death from sharp object injury.

The risk of strangulation homicide increased significantly when the homicide victim was female as opposed to being male, in relation to firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide. At almost a ten-fold likelihood (OR = 9.501, p < 0.05), the risk of female homicidal strangulation was most pronounced relative to firearm homicide, and least indicated in relation to blunt object homicide (OR = 6.669, p < 0.05).

MODEL 2: ANALYSIS OF SPATIO-TEMPORAL VARIABLES

The full models for firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide tested as statistically significant (chi square = 983.963, p = .000 with df = 42). Model 2 fit the data better for each of the regressions. Scene of death was not a significant predictor of strangulation. All the other independent variables were significant in determining risk for homicidal strangulation at the p < 0.05 level.

The effects of age and race assumed a similar association with the dependent variable as observed in Model 1 (see Tables 3, 4 and 5). Specifically, the risk of strangulation homicide was significantly higher for females than males across all three comparison homicide categories. The decomposed results indicated the risk for strangulation to be significantly higher during the day than at night relative to firearm homicide, at almost three times the likelihood (OR = 2.657, p < 0.05), and in relation to sharp object homicide, at two-and-a-half times the likelihood (OR = 2.280, p < 0.05), but not significant for blunt object homicide. Although overall day of death was significantly associated with homicidal strangulation, the decomposed effects indicated that weekdays, compared to weekends, was a significant predictor of strangulation in relation to sharp object (OR = 2.121, p < 0.05) and blunt object homicide (OR = 1.382, p < 0.05), but not statistically significant in relation to firearm homicide. When compared to spring, the risk of strangulation during the other seasons was almost double when examined in relation to firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide respectively.
Table 3. Logistic regression analysis for strangulation homicide versus firearm homicide, City of Johannesburg, 2001-2010

| Independent Variable | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                      | Exp(B)  | 95% CI for Exp(B) | LL | UL | Exp(B) | 95% CI for Exp(B) | LL | UL |
| Socio-demographic Variables | | | | | | | | |
| Age                  | | | | | | | | |
| 0-14 yrs.            | 1.775   | .937     | 3.365   | 1.869   | .977     | 3.572   |
| 15-29 yrs.           | .177*   | .106     | .296    | .202*   | .120     | .340    |
| 30-44 yrs.           | .153*   | .092     | .254    | .171*   | .102     | .286    |
| 45-59 yrs.           | .176*   | .099     | .314    | .190*   | .106     | .340    |
| 60+ yrs.             | .279    | .176     | .431    | .265    | .157     | .411    |
| Race                 | | | | | | | | |
| Indian               | 2.095   | .989     | 4.438   | 1.999   | .950     | 4.205   |
| Coloured             | 2.548*  | 1.429    | 4.544   | 2.563*  | 1.430    | 4.594   |
| White                | 1.289   | .823     | 2.018   | 1.227   | .781     | 1.929   |
| Black                | .289    | .176     | .481    | .265    | .157     | .411    |
| Sex                  | | | | | | | | |
| Male                 | .329    | .198     | .540    | .289    | .176     | .481    |
| Spatio-temporal Variables | | | | | | | | |
| Time of Day          | | | | | | | | |
| Day                  | ...     | ...      | 2.657*  | 1.935   | 3.650    |
| Night                | ...     | ...      | .     | .      | .      |
| Day of Week          | | | | | | | | |
| Weekday              | ...     | ...      | 1.128   | .832    | 1.529    |
| Weekend              | ...     | ...      | .     | .      | .      |
| Season of Year       | | | | | | | | |
| Summer               | ...     | ...      | 2.249*  | 1.433   | 3.528    |
| Autumn               | ...     | ...      | 2.144*  | 1.368   | 3.359    |
| Winter               | ...     | ...      | 1.697*  | 1.079   | 2.669    |
| Spring               | ...     | ...      | .     | .      | .      |
| Scene of Injury      | | | | | | | | |
| Private              | ...     | ...      | 1.081   | .794    | 1.472    |
| Public               | ...     | ...      | .     | .      | .      |

Likelihood Ratio Tests: Model Chi-Square = 631.354 p = .000  Model Chi-Square = 983.963 p = .000
Pseudo R-Square: Nagelkerke = 0.071  Nagelkerke = 0.109
N = 9920

Note. *p < .05; Exp(B) = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. The reference category for the dependent variable is Firearm Homicide.
Table 4. Logistic regression analysis for strangulation homicide versus sharp object homicide, City of Johannesburg, 2001-2010

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Exp(B)</td>
<td>95% CI for Exp(B)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.305*</td>
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</table>

Likelihood Ratio Tests: Model Chi-Square = 631.354 p = .000  Model Chi-Square = 983.963 p = .000
Pseudo R-Square: Nagelkerke = 0.071  Nagelkerke = 0.109
N = 9920

Note. *p < .05; Exp(B) = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.
The reference category for the dependent variable is Sharp Object Homicide.
Table 5. Logistic regression analysis for strangulation homicide versus blunt object homicide, City of Johannesburg, 2001-2010

<table>
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<td>Exp(B)</td>
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<td>.911</td>
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<td>45-59 yrs.</td>
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<td>.701</td>
<td>.398*</td>
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Likelihood Ratio Tests: Model Chi-Square = 631.354 p = .000 Model Chi-Square = 983.963 p = .000
Pseudo R-Square: Nagelkerke = 0.071 Nagelkerke = 0.109
N = 9920

Note. *p < .05; Exp(B) = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.
The reference category for the dependent variable is Blunt Object Homicide.
DISCUSSION

This study investigated the socio-demographic and spatio-temporal factors predictive of homicidal strangulation in the City of Johannesburg. The logistic regression results indicate that both socio-demographic and spatio-temporal predictors distinguish lethal strangulation from other homicides in the City of Johannesburg, thereby supporting the argument that different forms of homicide have different risk patterns.

Sex was found to be the most influential predictor of homicidal strangulation in the City of Johannesburg, with a staggering sixfold to nearly tenfold likelihood of more female than male deaths from strangulation relative to each of the other leading causes of homicide in South Africa. The finding that females are disproportionately at risk for fatal strangulation compared to males in the City of Johannesburg confirms the risk profile implied in existing South African and other descriptive research on homicidal strangulation (Rodge, Hougen, & Poulsen, 2001; Suffla & Seedat, 2016), but diverges from epidemiological observations that describe a marked male preponderance in strangulation fatality (e.g., Maxeiner & Bockholdt, 2003; Verma & Lal, 2006). When compared to homicide in the aggregate, these findings present in stark contrast to the dominant risk pattern established in national and international homicide research, which indicates the concentration of risk to be among males (e.g., Seedat et al., 2009; UNODC, 2011).

A possible explanation for the particularly gendered nature of the sex risk profile is that strangulation perpetration, usually by men, targets individuals who are perceived to be physically vulnerable. However, females are also likely to be perceived as a suitable target for reasons that relate to the articulation of gender roles and power relations in society. The perpetration of violence, in particular by males against females, is frequently the result of gendered power inequities that function to exploit distinctions between males and females, be they physical, psychological, sexual, economic or social (e.g., Seedat et al., 2009). In contrast, men’s violence against other males is theorised to be largely a function of antagonistic acts of hegemonic masculinity against subordinate forms of masculinity (Ratele, 2010).

It is not inconceivable that the movement of females into the public domain due to urbanisation, labour force participation, and increased mobility and freedom of movement also increases their risk of victimisation. South Africa’s urbanised economy has witnessed the most rapid growth in the City of Johannesburg. Within this context, there has been a notable increase in female mobility for livelihood purposes (Todes, Kok, Wentzel, Van Zyl, & Cross, 2010). Cohen and Felson (1979) conceptualise this as risk that is linked to opportunity structures for legitimate activities. However, the micro-geography of homicidal strangulation is not restricted to public spaces. An equally legitimate hypothesis is that a substantial proportion of homicidal risk is associated with intimates, where females represent the large majority of victims and violence is perpetrated within the home (UNODC, 2011). Here, the victims and offenders are in closer spatial proximity, with violence concentrated in a private place that is devoid of protection due to the lack of capable guardianship, and strangulation representing a proximal act of violence.

The dichotomising of space as public and private has not been without critique. This has stemmed largely from critical feminist scholarship on space and violence, which has argued that the public-private division over-simplifies and rigidifies representations of space (e.g., Pain, 2000; Rasool Bassadien & Hochfeld, 2005). Still, in homicide analyses as the kind undertaken in this study, understanding spatial variations in risk offers a valuable opportunity for developing context-specific interventions. The contributions of feminist work serve as a reminder that these need to be informed by a critical understanding of socio-spatial practices and arrangements as they relate to fatal interpersonal violence.

The result indicating elevated risk for strangulation homicide among the elderly lends empirical support to the descriptive results reported elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Suffla et al., 2008; Suffla & Seedat, 2016).
Here too, the age risk profile presents as especially distinct in comparison to the victimisation risk for overall, firearm, sharp object and blunt object homicide, which demonstrates vulnerability in the younger age groups. In the main, research findings report that the elderly experience low rates of victimisation and high levels of fear of violent crime in comparison to other age groups, and that elderly women experience the most fear about safety on the streets (Kennedy & Silverman, 1990; Policastro, 2013). This evidence highlights the self-protective propensity of the elderly to avoid high risk public spaces, especially at night. However, in the case of strangulation homicide in the City of Johannesburg, the risk representation that emerges is one that in fact highlights the risk attributes of a potentially protective factor, where older individuals are victimised in their homes either by those who occupy the same space or by strangers. Under these circumstances, compromised or absent guardianship and the potential privacy of the scene of victimisation, together with their physical vulnerability may contribute to the identification of the elderly as suitable targets. These results suggest that the theoretical concept of exposure is an important and complex one in homicide risk prediction.

Although the effects are not as consistent across the regression models as evident for the elderly group, children between the ages of 0-14 in the City of Johannesburg also face greater risk for homicidal strangulation. The young are suitable targets since they are physically vulnerable and unable to thwart attack. Children, especially in the younger age groups, spend more time in their homes and interact primarily with immediate family members. They are therefore likely to be protected from strangers and criminality, but the same does not apply in the case of threat from family members. In this situation, there is convergence of a perpetrator with motive, a vulnerable victim, and absent or weak guardianship. A recent study on child homicide patterns in South Africa indicated that overall, among children under the age of 18 years, most victims were killed by someone known but unrelated to them, followed by mothers, who perpetrated almost half of all the girl homicides (Mathews, Abrahams, Jewkes, Martin, & Lombard, 2012). Almost a quarter of the girl victims in this study were strangled (Mathews et al., 2012). The results of the current study, albeit drawn from homicide cases in the City of Johannesburg specifically, therefore echo the growing concern in South Africa about children’s vulnerability to homicide.

In relation to blacks, the risk for strangulation death in the City of Johannesburg is shown to be higher in all the other race groups if considered across all the predictive models. In this instance, the research results are more meaningfully understood in inversion that: blacks in the City are less likely to be strangled to death than explained by particular fatal strangulation risk attributes borne by Indians, coloureds and whites. Nonetheless, further scrutiny is clearly warranted for a more distilled understanding of the race risk profile for strangulation homicide in the City of Johannesburg. As it presents, though, this result controverts previous claims that race is a more powerful risk factor than gender; in strangulation homicide in this metropolis, the pattern is evidently converse.

Temporality effects indicated daytime and weekdays to represent the periods of higher risk for fatal strangulation. The results of the current study contradict previous South African and international research that reports overall risk to be concentrated at night and during weekends (e.g., Pizarro, 2008; Ratele et al., 2009), accentuating the distinctive temporal risks for strangulation homicide in the City of Johannesburg. These results also appear to diverge from the traditional emphasis on night and weekend as indicators of peak risk that is driven by the combination of recreational pursuits, the use of substances, and increased social interaction. It is hypothesised that places characterised by low time and day occupancy rates, and therefore limited capable guardianship, are the most likely to be considered as targets by motivated offenders. These are the periods when individuals are home-bound during the day, and when most others are at work or at school, thereby possibly increasing vulnerability to strangulation attack in the City. While seasonality was a statistically significant predictor in the current study, the variation in effects between seasons and across the models did not exhibit a remarkable pattern other than that the risk of strangulation is higher for all the seasons examined in relation to the reference category, that is, spring. Seasonal patterns
in violence have been reported to account for a relatively small fraction of the variance in crime rates and risk (Carbone-Lopez & Lauritsen, 2013), if any at all (Björkstén, Kripke, & Bjerregaard, 2009).

The non-significant effects for scene of death were entirely unexpected given the results reported in other studies, which suggest the association of homicidal strangulation risk with private places (e.g., UNODC, 2011). The altogether non-significant effect of scene of death as an explanatory variable warrants cautious interpretation. This variable was signified by a large number of missing values and a high proportion of cases where scene of death was classified as unknown, resulting in 37.3% of missing cases. It is arguable that had the data been more robust, the effect of scene of strangulation death in the multivariate analysis would have emerged as significant. Accordingly, crime location cannot be discounted as a predictor of fatal strangulation in the City of Johannesburg until further empirical analysis is undertaken.

Several methodological limitations of the current study need to be considered. Firstly, missing data represented a challenge; a large number of missing values resulted in the exclusion of a considerable number of cases in the analysis. This was most pronounced for BAC (65%), which was not included in the analyses, and scene of death (37.3%). Furthermore, the study drew on a single sample for all the models to minimise uncertainty about whether the observed predictive effects were a function of changes in sample characteristics or a valid representation of lethal strangulation risk. A limitation hereof is the diminished sample size. Although this analysis drew from the NIMSS, currently the most reliable and comprehensive source of homicide data for the City of Johannesburg, it does not include perpetrator data, which is likely to offer important information on such factors as the victim-offender relationship and offence motivation. Furthermore, the results cannot be generalised beyond the City of Johannesburg to a larger population of citizens. The data were cross-sectional and therefore examining the stability of the predictor variables over time was not possible. Finally, the current analyses only included individual-level measures, and therefore did not account for the interaction of demographic and situational risk factors with socio-structural ones. Despite these important caveats, the current study offers valuable information on the demographic and situational risk of homicidal strangulation in urban South Africa.

CONCLUSION

The current study offers an initial assessment of the socio-demographic and spatio-temporal predictors of homicidal strangulation in an urban South African context. The analysis reveals that there are several unique socio-demographic and spatio-temporal factors that differentiate fatal strangulation risk from the risk for other causes of homicide in the City of Johannesburg. The predictive effects exerted by these factors are particularly stable for sex, age, and time and day of fatal strangulation.

It is important to emphasise that although multivariate analysis implies causation, it is employed in this study primarily for the purposes of establishing probabilities, thereby offering initial evidence of fatal strangulation risk in the City of Johannesburg. The study also supports the contention that homicide is not a homogeneous crime but exhibits differentiated socio-demographic and situational risk profiles for the different causes of homicide, which are important to recognise and delineate for the purposes of homicidal strangulation prevention.

Thus, the current study reinforces the imperative to study homicidal criminality within a disaggregated analytic frame, and thereby to extend knowledge on fatal strangulation, which in its current form derives almost exclusively from descriptive research. The study also suggests that prevention programmes that are gender-and age-sensitive are essential for decreasing strangulation risk and homicide in the City of Johannesburg.

Screening for the physical and psychological manifestations of strangulation within health, social and legal contexts represents an important strategy for the recognition, management and prevention of fatal
strangulation risk in females. In this respect, the study highlights the need for relevant professionals to adequately identify fatal strangulation risk so that they can intervene appropriately in situations that reveal evidence of non-fatal strangulation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors acknowledge the National Injury Mortality Surveillance System project team and the participating forensic pathology facilities for their joint efforts in the registration and management of the data from which this study draws.

FUNDING

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Communicating About Sexual Violence on Campus:
A University Case Study

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ABSTRACT

South African universities are in the midst of highly visible struggles around decolonisation. Over the past two years, these struggles have foregrounded racialised, classed, gendered and other forms of exclusion. These are being challenged both by black academic staff as well as by black students. Most visibly and deeply connected, have been the challenges to the ways in which universities, as particular types of institutions, have dealt with sexual violence and harassment of its womxn1 students. In this context we ask how the University of Cape Town, as one particular case study formally communicates about sexual violence on its campus. In an archival analysis of the university’s public communications on sexual violence during 2015 and 2016, we ask what kinds of messages it conveys about violence, victims and perpetrators. We are interested in the ways in which the university positions itself in relation to the issue of sexual violence. The paper finds that the university’s institutional discourse on sexual violence produces and reproduces some of the same discourses on sexual violence in both the public and media more broadly.

Keywords: sexual violence, rape, institutional responses, discourse analysis, rape discourse

INTRODUCTION

Womxn1 in South African institutions of higher learning (IHL) are not exempt from the pervasive levels of violence that affect South African womxn more broadly. Between 2011 and 2014, 247 cases of sexual violence2, partner violence, and rape were reported at 15 universities across South Africa (SA) (Serrao, 2014). Minister of Higher Education and Training, Naledi Pandor, reported to parliament that in 2017 there were 47 cases of rape and sexual assault on students reported on campuses across South Africa (Nkosi, 2018).

It can be argued that sexual violence is sanctioned and embedded within institutional cultures, due to its prevalence and the fact that it has also been reported at IHL globally (e.g. Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani, & Jacobs, 2009; Gardner, 2009; Canli & Kaya, 2016). In this paper, we explore how the university communicates about sexual violence in relation to violence perpetrated against university students. Students are a majority group in IHL but also those who hold very little power. Recent student protests have starkly called into question the ‘student experience’ at these institutions, warranting an exploration of how they might be affected by sexual violence.

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Students protesting across the country, between 2015 and 2016, have centred the issue of institutional responses to sexual violence, by claiming that ‘rape culture’ has been allowed to develop on campuses (Rahlanga, 2016). At the time of the student protests, most institutions had or have since adopted systems for the reporting, as well as ratifying various policies on such violations. However, institutional responses to these violations have often been found to be unsatisfactory (Corke, 2015; Toerien, 2016). Exercising its constitutional mandate, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE, 2017) responded to these protests by calling on IHL to make presentations on how they were addressing gender discourses through their policies and practices. The commission also observed that sexual violence against womxn, as well as patriarchal practices narrow the opportunities that are available to womxn (CGE, 2017). This sentiment was earlier articulated in Ngwane (2014) whose research showed that sexual harassment, violence and sexist discrimination affects womxn’s productivity and narrows their opportunities for advancement, whether they are staff or students.

Researchers and students across the country have raised concern with regard to three areas of sexual violence prevention policy and practice. Firstly, they argued that patriarchal cultures within IHL encourage the perpetration of sexual assault and violence (Clowes et al., 2009; Collins, Loots, Meyiwa, & Mistrey, 2009). This involves the idea that the masculinist and sexist cultures of institutions perpetuate ideas around womxn’s subordination alongside ideas that sanction violence against them (de Klerk, Klazinga, & McNeill, 2007). These include an emphasis on the sexualisation of womxn and the positioning of womxn as potential sexual conquests; ideas that are especially prevalent in men’s university residences (see Clowes et al., 2009). Secondly, it is claimed that IHL is unresponsive to the plight of womxn students. Students especially have argued that the systems that are set up to deal with the issue of sexual violence on campuses put the burden of addressing sexual violence almost exclusively on womxn survivors themselves. Thirdly, policies that are adopted take a narrow view on sexual violence to address contemporary manifestations of sexual violence and harassment such as online harassment and revenge pornography (DeKeseredy, 2014; see especially Hall & Hearn, 2018). Overall, researchers and activists have pointed out that university interventions and responses to sexual violence give the impression that they are more concerned with preserving their brands and reputations than they are about reversing the institutional cultures that allow ‘rape culture’ to fester (Collins et al., 2009).

**SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING**

In the 1990s, through the development of policies, some gains were made in the transformation of institutional cultures in higher education, especially in relation to issues of sexual harassment. Some scholars however, have posited that the commitment to reforming these institutions has been muted (Bennett, 2009). We know that campuses do not exist in a vacuum, nor are they immune to the larger social issues that are experienced in the contexts wherein they exist (DeKeseredy, 2014). Higher education institutional environments mirror the reality of society at large, including the ‘rape culture’ that permeates society; while at the same time holding the potential to address societal problems (CGE, 2017).

Studies highlight the context of campus life as a form of symbolic and sometimes material violence on those considered to be ‘out of place’ (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018). It has also been argued that violence against the marginalised (i.e. black, womxn, queer, poor students) is structurally embedded within the system (Clowes et al., 2009; Hames, 2009). In a Special Issue of the journal AGENDA, Clowes and their colleagues (2009) found that within the student populace at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), students expressed troubling essentialist views of gender regarding the nature of men.

Discourses of essentialism, which normalise the sexual predator tendencies of male students, were found to further legitimise the widespread sexually coercive practices on campus (ibid.). Mokgatle and Menoe (2014) later reported that 28% of women undergraduate students in their study at the University of Limpopo had experienced sexual coercion; that all women students are at risk of verbal coercion, attempted rape, and rape - irrespective of age and years of study.
Recent research with black queer students at the University of Cape Town also illustrates the extent to which institutions - where white, middle/upper class, heterosexual, cisgender men are considered to be the invisible norm - are experienced as alienating to those who do not fit the supposed norm (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018). The material realities of poor womxn students ensure that wider systemic and structural inequalities predispose them to predatory sexual relationships characterized by coercion and violence (Clowes et al., 2009). Coalitions formed by students and university staff, such as the UKZN Gender Based Violence Lobby Group, have proposed that institutional culture should be addressed in responding to the sexual violence experienced by womxn (Collins, et al., 2009). Furthermore, they have contended that an exclusive focus on physical security is not effective in curtailing intimate partner violence, with its many complex social underpinnings. (ibid).

The contestations and challenges to the ways in which institutional cultures enable sexism and violence against womxn has led to the initiation of systems and policies that aim at addressing the problem of sexual violence on IHL environments (see Corke, 2015). It is argued that these responses are motivated by a range of intentions, from avoiding future public relations scandals to ending gender-based violence (GBV) (Collins et al., 2009), and potentially avoiding litigation.

In this paper we argue that greater attention be accorded, not only to the policies and practices but also to the ways in which the university formally communicates about an issue such as sexual violence. There is a need to interrogate the manner in which institutions engage hegemonic cultures that give rise to elevated levels of normalised sexual violence against womxn. We take the University of Cape Town as an example to argue that a progressive feminist response and articulation of the issues are important in thinking about how one communicates about violence against womxn.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN: A CASE STUDY

In submissions made to the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) in 2017, UCT Vice-Chancellor at the time Dr Max Price indicated that the effectiveness of UCT’s sexual harassment policy is evidenced by counselling and support services that are available to students 24 hours a day (CGE, 2017). Having noted presentations made by Dr Price regarding the patriarchal cultures endemic within the university residences, the commission enquired about the ways the university was working to change the institutional culture. The vice chancellor’s response was that he “didn’t know how patriarchal culture is addressed, and it’s not done” (CGE, 2017, p. 20).

The institution’s rape policy, promulgated in 2008, aimed to assist victims of rape (UCT, 2008) through supportive (crisis counselling, emergency medical services, para-legal advice, and other relevant services) as well as protective measures (no-contact orders, change of university residence, change of academic classes and academic relief, medical or health leave). The 2015 review of the Discrimination and Harassment Office (DISCHO) at UCT was the first assessment of the application of UCT’s policy and its responses to sexual violence. The review highlighted the need for a transformational approach to sexual violence that considers the wider inequalities that students face (DISCHO, 2016).

In April 2016, UCT established the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) tasked with informing the university community about the state of and response to sexual violence on campus through the dissemination of quarterly reports (SART, 2016). This collaborative collective focussed on providing compassionate care to survivors but also aimed to move beyond a reactionary response to focus on violence prevention. The reports that SART have produced since its inception detail the number and nature of sexual offenses reported to DISCHO. While DISCHO reports that from 1 January -14 July 2017 there had been fewer complaints of sexual harassment, it is unclear whether these statistics indicate reductions in sexual harassment incidents or whether complainants are not reporting (SART, 2017). Within this period, DISCHO received reports and provided assistance to 16 complainants of sexual assault and rape and seven complainants of sexual harassment. Of the reported sexual offenses, ten occurred on campus many of which took place in student residences; these match the same period in
It is worth noting that despite the efforts of the SART as well as DISCHO, students still face challenges when accessing the services offered to survivors of sexual violence by the institution (see UCT Survivors, 2017).

Policies can advocate for a change in norms and culture and institute practices towards the values to which an institution aspires. Tentative support for this position is given by DeLong and her colleagues (2018) who found that comprehensive campus sexual assault policies may be linked with somewhat lower campus, sexual assault prevalence. However, by themselves, policies have limited utility as means to change embedded institutional cultures. This is more so with policies considered ‘politically symbolic’ (see Jansen, 2001). Our position is that we should resist falling into the trap of thinking of policy formulation as having little to do with praxis. We should rather interrogate the implementation of those policies and simultaneously centre the reasons why they are necessary for particular institutions.

It has been argued that any earnest agenda for inclusivity in higher education necessarily entails “the duty of using ‘the powers conferred by academic freedom’ to substantively decolonise, deracialise, demasculanise and degender our inherited ‘intellectual spaces’” (Badat, 2010, p. 18). Viewed from this vantage point, a critique of institutional responses to the material conditions of its constituencies does not negate institutional attempts at redress, nor does it seek to present an essentialist view of an institution. Such critique must be seen as part of the national imperative – as outlined in the South African Constitution as well as the Higher Education Act of 1997 - to transform IHL.

There is a growing consensus among scholars that GBV can be tackled effectively if measures are taken to change the underlying social norms and overall institutional cultures (Collins et al., 2009; Walsh, 2015). Interrogating and understanding how an issue such as sexual violence is represented and made collective sense of are important for challenging embedded norms and cultures. In this context, we provide an analysis of UCT’s public communications of sexual violence. We ask what kinds of messages it conveys about violence, victims and perpetrators and we are interested in the ways in which the university positions itself in relation to the issue of sexual violence.

The language deployed by institutions to communicate with their constituents about incidents of sexual violence experienced by womxn within these communities informs us how both perpetrators and victims of sexual violence are perceived, it also tells us whose responsibility sexual violence is deemed to be (see de Klerk et al., 2007). We understand public communication as an important resource for capturing the ways in which an issue such as sexual violence can be made meaningful in our collective consciousness (see Boonzaier, 2017). Media representations have been shown to be important for drawing upon and shaping public discourse, especially in relation to topics such as gender-based violence (e.g. Boonzaier, 2017; O’Hara, 2012; van Niekerk, 2018). Media representations are additionally important, not only for collective sense-making but also for their potential to shape policy and legal opinion. As such, the ways in which they challenge or reinforce existing stereotypes should be an important focus of interrogation.

**METHOD**

**DATA COLLECTION: ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

An analysis of the 2015/2016 public communications (n = 15 emails) from UCT was conducted. Such an analysis is useful because the communications were formulated without the researchers’ presence or involvement as mitigating factors (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis requires the selection of data, as opposed to the collection of data, making it cost effective and time efficient. The communications were accessed on UCT’s online database. The only communications that were accessible at the time the research was conducted were those from June 2015 to May 2016, thus this period was analysed. This time period is also significant because it was the time during which issues of sexual violence came to the fore most visibly at the university through student protests.
The two communication databases on which the present research is based were “Campus Announcements” (n = 8 emails) which are emailed to every student and staff member at the university to inform them about important day-to-day occurrences, and secondly the “From the VC/DVC’s Desk” (n = 5 emails from the Vice Chancellor, n = 2 emails from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor) which are sent to all students and staff on campus, and serve as communications directly from UCT management around relevant macro issues on campus. In many ways these emails represent the relationship the average student has with UCT management.

The communications in the archive were read for relevance to issues of sexual violence, including a scan for words and phrases such as “sexual violence”, “rape”, “sexual harassment”, “#PatriarchyMustFall”, and “DISCHO”. The communications that contained those phrases were then included for further analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this paper, we understand language as important for revealing something about how meanings are produced and shared on a collective level (Sullivan, 2010). We employed Foucauldian/critical discourse analysis (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2007) to amplify the connections between language and power. We understand the role of discourse in producing particular versions of the world – in this instance, particular ideas about victims, perpetrators and sexual violence. These particular scripts have powerful effects in relation to the ways in which they re-inscribe and reproduce ideas about dominance and subordination and for the ways in which they reinforce hegemonic ideologies around violence and gender. In addition, we undertake a feminist decolonial reading (Lugones, 2011; Kessi & Boonzaier, 2018) to foreground the ways in which the coloniality of race and gender are intersected and entangled with other social identities and oppressions.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: DISCOURSES OF RAPE

Three major discourses of rape were identified in the communications analysed for this paper. In the first, namely, Rape as exceptional, rape was constructed as an anomaly while its systematic nature was ignored. In the second discourse, the lens is very clearly and explicitly turned toward womxn and their victimization, resulting in a reproduction of problematic discourses around rape. We call this, Discourses of ‘victim’ responsibility. Finally, in the discourse we call, Silencing patriarchy there is a reproduction of the idea that rape has little to do with patriarchy and gendered power. It is, at the same time positioned as inevitable.

RAPE AS ‘EXCEPTIONAL’

The language used in communication about sexual violence on campus insinuates that rape is a rare and shocking occurrence. For example:

The University of Cape Town is devastated to confirm that yet another female UCT student was brutally attacked, assaulted and raped off campus on Tuesday evening, 8 March 2016. We were informed of this matter only late last night. Although we cannot be certain, all indications are that the attack has similarities to three previous recent attacks that occurred near Rhodes Memorial and that the assailant might be the same person involved in these other cases. (Kruger, 2016a)

There are many ways in which the communication here obscures the frequency of sexual violence. For example, the emotion (i.e. devastation) expressed in the above extract is compatible with the idea that rape is an anomaly, despite it being a common occurrence in South Africa. Furthermore, it connects the incidents described above to a single perpetrator. Finally, although Rhodes Memorial is virtually a part
of the university campus (it is often used by students and staff as an ‘overflow’ parking area), all the communications reiterate the point that the attacks occurred off campus – which appears to evade some responsibility. It can also be argued that the issue of sexual violence is ‘othered’ in the communication, as well as the perpetrator being ‘othered’; creating a situation in which the university is able to position itself as being under attack from an ‘outside other’.

South African studies show that there is a high prevalence of men who admit to having raped and having done so multiple times (Jewkes et al., 2006). It can thus be argued that rapists form part of the broad culture of rape, prevalent in South Africa today. The outrage at the injustice of the rapes in the communications seems incompatible with a country where South African police services recorded 41,583 rapes in 2018/19 (Africa Check, 2019). Furthermore, international research suggests university campuses are places where sexual violence occurs more often than in the general public (Banyard et al., 2009; Cantalupo, 2010). Nonetheless, UCT constructs itself as safe from rape, as illustrated below:

Rape is unacceptable and criminal no matter where it happens or whom it harms. But it is particularly shocking that it has occurred in what should be a place of safety: a student’s room at a UCT residence. (Klopper, 2016)

Rape that occurs on campus is constructed as particularly outrage-inducing; even though 32 cases of rape and sexual assault were reported in 2016 - most of which were reported to have occurred in campus residences (SART, 2016). In the first instance, this expression of outrage and ‘shock’ is consistent with media reports on rape and sexual violence more broadly and has been argued to mask how common sexual violence is (Judge, 2013). In the second instance, perpetrators are not ‘addressed’ in the communication of the rapes at Rhodes Memorial nor, in the above case, about a rape that occurred in a student’s room. By not being explicit about the fact that the perpetrator may be a student, while being explicit about the fact that the survivors are students, the university constructed itself as an institution under attack by an outside individual and a problem located outside of it, perpetuating the ‘stranger-danger’ notion common in rape discourses. As such, the only link the university makes between itself and rape is that the survivors are students. The communication does not entertain the idea that perpetrators could possibly also be students themselves.

Given South Africa’s high rates of rape, one might assume that these are not the first rapes to occur in the vicinity of (or at) the university (Dunkle et al., 2004; Jewkes et al., 2006; Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002) and that many students who have been through the institution may themselves be rape survivors, whether on campus or outside of it. International studies on sexual assault on campuses will support this assumption (Anderson, Beattie, & Spencer, 2001; Banyard et al., 2009; Hartmann, 2015; Streng & Kamimura, 2015). Thus, we must question why these rapes (i.e. those at Rhodes Memorial) in particular were given such attention.

Almost all the rapes occurred such that the rapist was described as a violent stranger who abducted women as they were going about their usual daily activities, as described below:

The student was running along the bicycle path in the area near the bridge of Princess Anne Drive in Newlands when a man attacked her, threatened her with a knife, assaulted her severely and forced her into the bushes and towards the Rhodes Memorial area. The man held her captive for some hours and raped her. The man later forced her to walk to a garage where she was able to break free from the attacker and was assisted by staff to phone the South African Police Services for help. She was admitted to hospital. UCT is assisting the student in a variety of ways and will continue to do so. (Kruger, 2016a)

There are common beliefs about what constitutes rape which function to make certain accounts of rape legitimate, while delegitimising others (Hartmann, 2015). Rape which is violent and involves a stranger perpetrator, and where the woman is not acting provocatively constitutes the most believable form of rape (Hartmann, 2015). The stranger-rape narrative is a clearly articulated and widespread one that
occurs in popular discourses around sexual violence. Those discourses that buy into this narrow definition of rape are replicated in research (Anderson et al., 2001; Shefer, Strebel, & Foster, 2000). Thus it could be argued that since these rapes followed this script, they are legitimised in the eyes of the institution and thus more worthy of attention (Hartmann, 2015). Despite this popular narrative, most rapists are known to their victims (Gqola, 2015; Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

Studies in the US have shown that university campuses are places conducive to rape, and places where rape often occurs, frequently perpetrated by students (Banyard et al., 2009). The manufactured idea that the rapes were exceptional encourages the notion of a single (stranger) perpetrator – outside of the university. The university then focuses its efforts on removing this individual perpetrator and advising students to attempt to avoid this individual rather than facing the much broader and potentially systemic problem of sexual violence on its campuses and in society.

**DISCOURSES OF ‘VICTIM’ RESPONSIBILITY**

In its communications about rape, we find that the university directs the problem of sexual violence at womxn by focusing on their victimization rather than on the perpetration of rape. Throughout this analysis, we see that all the incidents are strung together by having womxn victims, for example:

The University of Cape Town is devastated to confirm that yet another female UCT student was brutally attacked, assaulted and raped off campus on Tuesday evening, 8 March 2016. (Kruger, 2016a)

From the communication, we know very little about the victim, other than the fact that she is ‘female’. In this way, being ‘female’ is seen as relevant and useful information in a communication about sexual violence, thus linking sexual violence with the notion of female victimhood.

UCT will make contact with the survivor of yesterday’s attack, as we have done in previous related cases involving other students, to offer medical and counselling support. (Hatton, 2016)

In the above, we see an emphasis on post hoc care for the survivor and no attempt to address the perpetrator. We are of course, not suggesting that the provision of support for survivors of sexual violence is not important and should not be the first response to the incident. However, for perpetrators to be held accountable, some shift in the discourse from victimhood to perpetration must occur.

We advise again of the establishment of the sexual assault response team [SART], a unit that aims to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus (Kruger, 2016b)

Again, there is silence on the issue of perpetration, alongside the emphasis on survivor care. No information is provided on the penalties for perpetration of sexual violence or what constitutes sexual violence. This asymmetry contributes to the “female fear factory” (Gqola, 2015 p.78). This means that it makes potential victims of sexual violence aware of their vulnerability by recognizing the pervasiveness of rape but not acting to discourage its perpetration. By not addressing or acknowledging perpetrators of sexual violence on campus, the university separated the problem of rape from the agency behind its perpetration. This separation is congruent with international research on responses to sexual violence (Anderson & Doherty, 2007). Thus, there is no engagement with those patriarchal systems, which sanction the perpetration of rape.

In no way was the perpetrator addressed, threatened, or encouraged to stop their perpetration in these communications. In this way the perpetrator was left out of the communications about rape. This omission may be due to the assumption that the perpetrator is/was not a student. Those who were most implicated in the communications were those survivors of sexual violence and those potential victims.
of sexual violence whom the university posits as womxn: “With such attacks in the area around our campus we feel deeply stressed for the safety of female students in particular” (Kruger, 2016a). “Whilst this is one incident, we know our society is one where rape, assault and murder of people (and particularly woman and children) is a common practice” (Price, 2015). While the second statement acknowledges sexual violence as a broader problem, unlike the communications which paint these incidents as exceptional, there was still no engagement with the role that men play in these situations while womxn were firmly situated as victims. This lack of engagement with the perpetrators of sexual violence is not unique to this institution (see for example CGE, 2017; Collins et al., 2009; Rahlanga, 2016).

What we see in other media discourse (as well as in academic discourse on gendered violence) is that the focus on womxn’s victimisation – not only absolves perpetrators of responsibility – but also contributes to a notion that womxn live lives of inevitable risk (Boonzaier, 2018). Womxn are constructed as inevitable victims, at risk, and vulnerable. The effects of this discursive positioning are problematic, not only because it takes a binaristic approach to victimhood (Shefer, 2016) but also because it opens up a space in which it becomes possible, almost necessary, to focus on womxn’s behaviour – as seen below.

We firmly hold the view that every student and staff member should be able to move without restriction and go where they please. Society should be that safe. Yet, in the light of the fact that these assaults are happening, and the violence of the assault seems to be increasing, we again ask all students and staff (and women in particular) to avoid walking or running alone at all cost. It is important to avoid areas where you may be isolated or vulnerable to attack. Please think about your daily route and make arrangements beforehand so that you are walking or running in groups, particularly in the late afternoon, early evening or after dark. (Kruger, 2016a)

By telling womxn to avoid certain areas at certain times the university contributes toward the policing of womxn’s behaviour and also toward placing the burden on womxn to avoid rape rather than stopping people from raping (de Klerk et al., 2007; Gqola, 2015). Discourses of womxn as victims who need to take defensive precautions are attested in other studies on the ways womxn speak about rape (Shefer et al., 2000). The discourse that womxn who walk alone, at night are making themselves vulnerable to rape is replicated in how rapists justify their attack (Gavey, 2005). Therefore, if another student was raped in these areas, the suggestion that she was responsible for her own victimisation would follow, as she had not heeded the warnings (Anderson et al., 2001). Furthermore, when the university recommends that womxn avoid certain public spaces it renders these spaces as not for womxn, and what was once a public space now becomes a space where, if womxn ‘trespassed’, they may be raped (Anderson & Doherty, 2007). In this way, the university’s response to sexual violence is in alignment with the sexist underpinnings of GBV and thus upholds the very culture that allows rape to occur in the first place.

Gqola (2015) talks about rape as a powerful language used to keep womxn, ourselves and each other, in check. A language that is complicit in producing what she calls the female fear factory; don’t go to his room; don’t stop at the robots; make sure you go with a friend; stay away from the Rhodes Memorial area; “avoid walking or running alone; avoid areas where you may be isolated or vulnerable to attack; please think about your daily route and make arrangements beforehand so that you are walking or running in groups …”. These last warnings were received in the first author’s email inbox and via SMS around the time of the rapes at Rhodes Memorial. The female fear factory is the manufacture of female fear pervasive in our public culture. Gqola (2015) sees it as a way in which we are blackmailed into keeping ourselves in check – a way to be reminded that our bodies are not ours.

In response to the criticism, the university received after the rape incidents around its campuses the university set up a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART).
SART comprises a multidisciplinary team of professionals who will work collaboratively to respond to those members of the campus community affected by sexual violence. SART’s aim is to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus and will be headed up by the faculty of health sciences Associate Professor Sinegugu Duma. (Petersen, 2016)

The above communication, alongside the many numbers given to call if one was in distress emphasises the university’s attempt to be supportive of survivors and students in need. This rapid development, as well as the availability of information regarding who to contact must be commended, as it made reporting easier and more accessible, which research indicates, is often lacking in university policy (Streng & Kamimura, 2015).

Empirical studies argue that in order to prevent rape, community, collective cultures need to be addressed so that bystanders act with resistance to rape and sexism (Banyard et al., 2009). While the prevention of sexual violence as well as addressing the culture that promotes sexual violence were less prevalent in the communications about the SART, they were not altogether absent.

This is one of the reasons why UCT has established the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART): a multidisciplinary team of professionals who will work together to address the culture of rape, sexual assault and gender discrimination that is so prevalent in South African society. In particular, they will identify and address ways that these types of criminal behaviour affect UCT and how we as a campus community can help prevent them. SART will also seek to provide survivor-centred, compassionate and comprehensive services on campus. (Klopper, 2016)

The above quotation was one of few instances where the SART receives mention in relation to the systemic issues around rape and the prevention of rape. This constitutes recognition of the need to address rape as a complex phenomenon, separate from other crime. This recognition was mostly lacking in other communications as highlighted earlier. Findings in international research on university policy differs from this, in that policies usually focus more on prevention, to the detriment of post-attack support for survivors (Joseph, 2015; Streng & Kamimura, 2015). Contrary to recommendations made by GBV researchers to focus on perpetrators and not survivors (see Naidoo, 2007; van Niekerk et al., 2015), perpetrators were not mentioned and in this way were not held accountable for the violent acts described in UCT’s communications. This has contributed to a further burden of responsibility placed upon survivors and potential victims of sexual violence.

SILENCING PATRIARCHY

As illustrated earlier, by not addressing the issue of perpetration in its communication the university ignores the agency behind the perpetration of rape. This theme is followed through as rape is also described as something that just ‘happens’.

… it is deeply concerning that a UCT student was alleged to have been raped or sexually assaulted in Avenue Hall early Monday morning. It reminds us that even in a space where there is heightened sensitivity and understanding about these matters, the scourge of violence and abuse happens. (Price, 2015)

The discourse of distancing of the occurrence of rape from the perpetration of rape and the active agency involved therein has been identified in other media coverage of rape incidents (Hirsch, 1994). Such an acceptance of rape is often a consequence of a belief system that says men cannot control their sex drive, and thus cannot be stopped, or else that men can, and will always, do as they please (Anderson & Doherty, 2007; Weiss, 2009). We must acknowledge that the communications could have addressed perpetrators directly and presented the disciplinary powers at the disposal of the institution. However, by remaining silent the university may be seen to have fostered a safe space for perpetrators.
There is no doubt that we must work even harder to change the environment and culture on campus so that survivors feel less afraid and more supported and enabled to tell their stories, to seek action against perpetrators and to reach out for help and support from staff and fellow students. (Price, 2016)

While it is important that survivors feel safe on campus, it is perhaps just as important that perpetrators of sexual violence feel unsafe on campus. In this quotation, the culture on campus is seen to be related to how survivors feel rather than related to how the perpetration of sexual violence is supported by this culture. These communications reached a wide audience, yet no links to information on what constitutes sexual violence are provided. Given that research has shown that rape is more likely to perpetrated by individuals who endorse rape myths (Banyard et al., 2009), this is an opportunity missed. Missing this opportunity contradicts the university’s explicit desire to educate the community, as shown below:

We must expose such offensive and criminal behaviour, express our intolerance of it, educate our youth at university about its evils, and ensure our environment supports the survivors and others affected by such trauma. (Price, 2015)

As such, the university fails to provide the education it mentions and, through the way it obscures the agency behind the perpetration of sexual violence, it does not expose the offensive behaviour. The university does not specify what frames its assertions of condemnation of GBV, whether that be a feminist stance, based on human rights, or some other position. While the university is supportive of survivors, its apolitical stance means that perpetrators are equally supported.

The emotive language in the above quote intends to persuade the audience of the university’s seriousness and sincerity. Rape now moves from something that ‘just happens’ as earlier mentioned, to being ‘offensive’, ‘criminal’, and ‘evil’. At a discursive level, the research and media reportage on violence in SA positions black men as those who are inherently violent – as the primary perpetrators of GBV in particular (Boonzaier, 2017, 2018) – with descriptions of men sometimes harking back to colonial tropes on Africa and of black men. Furthermore, within this expression of outrage, we may read the failure to address sexual violence perpetrators at this university as indicative of a wider societal trend – imagining a nameless, faceless and dangerous intruder (see Langa, Kirsten, Bowman, Eagle, & Kiguwa, 2018). We do not contend that Dr Price was making a claim about an imagined black rapist, however, we are cognisant of the importance of the contexts in which such silences on perpetration are coded in public imaginations, especially considering how race and crime are intersected to form social representations of crime in society (ibid.).

Additionally, the construction of rape as evil and offensive is consistent with the earlier construction of rape as ‘exceptional’. While it is difficult to argue that rape is not offensive or evil, this language masks the ‘everydayness’ of sexual violence against womxn. It produces what Judge (2013) calls a ‘shock and awe’ response, “an incredulity which acts to conceal just how very normal and every day, violence is” (para. 10).

An analysis of the university’s communications on sexual violence illustrates that it provides an apolitical stance on rape to describe it as something that just happens, something related to how survivors feel on campus and something ‘exceptional’, evil and criminal. In this way, the communications construct rape as everything except the patriarchal domination that it is. The construction of rape as exceptional, the simultaneous silence of the role of perpetrators in these acts, and the overt and almost singular attention to womxn as victims/survivors produces a context in which rape is depoliticised and stripped away from the deeply gendered and unequal power relations that produce it.
CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has illustrated that despite their differing motives university communications around sexual violence do not depart significantly from the ways in which the popular media report on sexual violence (see Boonzaier, 2017; Boonzaier, 2018). The ways in which rape is communicated involve attention to victims and victimisation, the silencing of the issue of perpetration, the construction of rape as exceptional and “othered” which all produce a context in which rape can be seen as apolitical and not a manifestation and assertion of patriarchal domination.

Depicting rapists as subhuman ‘monsters’ or evil, is also misleading and serves to distract from the important societal factors which have led South Africa to have such high levels of rape. On the one hand, De Vos (2013) argues that one of the dangers of such expressions of outrage is that we distance ourselves from the problem, thereby neglecting to question those beliefs and practices in our own environments which form a part of South Africa’s ‘rape culture’. On the other hand, we must note that the way in which the rapist is positioned as ‘other’ must be read within a context of South Africa’s history of colonisation and apartheid. Research has illustrated that the othering of violence to black men and black communities is frequently at work in academic, media and lay discourse (Boonzaier, 2017; Boonzaier, 2018; van Niekerk, 2018). In this regard, it bears noting what the effects of the UCT as a historically white institution – positioning both rape perpetrators, and rapists as ‘other’ might be.

Further research into how institutions, such as the police, the court, and schools, construct themselves in relation to sexual violence, may contribute significantly to our understanding of the ways South African society both confronts and ignores sexual violence. Empirical research into the impact of communications on student’s perceptions of sexual violence at university would also be useful in formulating new communications.

Current research suggests that perpetration of rape is significantly related to the endorsement of rape mythology (Hartmann, 2015). It is thus suggested that institutions start communicating in an informed way about sexual violence to their communities. Students should have a clear idea of what it means to perpetrate sexual violence and what the consequences are of such behaviour. Perpetrators of sexual violence should be directly engaged and held accountable in public communication on rape. Thus, it is suggested that future communications should take an approach to sexual violence that acknowledges its intentionality, its effects, taking a feminist approach that clearly articulates sexual violence as an issue that involves gender and power.

NOTES

1. This is an alternative spelling for ‘woman’ or ‘women’ forwarded by black radical feminist movements to promote inclusivity among cis- and transgender ‘women’. Our use of this term here aims at gaining independence from phallocentric linguistic norms (cf. Ndelu, Dlakavu, & Boswell, 2017; Abustan & Rud, 2016). We have preserved the spelling convention of ‘women’ where we cite publications that used that term either as the biological marker ‘female’ or where its use is in direct quotations.

2. In this paper, we use the World Health Organization (2011) definition of sexual violence. This states that it is: “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (p.2). In using this definition, we incorporate what is considered sexual assault (an unlawful and intentional act of sexual contact with another person) and rape (unlawful and intentional act of sexual penetration without that person’s consent).
3. A term developed by feminists referring to a set of general cultural beliefs supporting men’s violence against womxn, including the idea that this violence is a fact of life, and that men have a right to sexual intercourse (Phipps, Ringrose, Renold, & Jackson, 2018).

4. A radical black feminist movement that emerged from the 2015 student-led calls for the decolonialisation of South African IHL. The hashtag movement drew great interest and citizenry participation on social media platforms as a protest against institutionalised cultures of machismo and patriarchy that lead to sexual violations of womxn in IHL and in South Africa at large. (see Daniels, 2016; Pilane, 2015).

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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African Safety Promotion


Family-centered interventions for intimate partner violence: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The effect of intimate partner violence (IPV) has a spill-over effect on all family members, and as such, any intervention directed at IPV should include all family members directly affected. The spill-over effect indicates that if one part of the family system (e.g. parents) experiences discord or conflict, it may affect the other parts of the family system (through e.g. the parent-child relationship). The aim of this paper was to systematically review family-centered interventions aimed at addressing IPV. Intervention studies were systematically collected from data bases such as PubMed, BioMed Central, SABINET, SocIndex, PsycArticles, and Academic Search Complete for the time period 2005-2015. These studies were methodologically appraised, and results presented according to the RE-AIM framework. Family-centered interventions focused on IPV yielded long-term positive results in improving parent-child interaction, including reductions in IPV, trauma symptoms of mothers, and problematic child behaviours.

Keywords: Domestic violence, family intervention, intimate partner violence, Family re-unification.

INTRODUCTION

The effect of family violence on the family is documented in studies on intimate partner violence (IPV), child abuse, and elder abuse (Tolan-Gorman, Smith & Henry, 2006). Yet, most studies fail to consider the commonalities between family violence subsets, especially its effects on the family, an understanding of which is needed for an integrated, effective response (Gracia, Rodriguez, Martín-Fernández, & Lila, 2017; Ryan & Roman, 2017). The various forms of family violence, namely, IPV, elder abuse, and child abuse, are what is known as subsets of family violence (McClenman, 2010; Gelles, 1999; Tolan et al., 2006; Wallace & Roberson, 2016). IPV refers to abuse (physical, sexual, psychological attacks) occurring between two people in a close relationship (current or former partners), with the violence existing on a continuum from a single episode of violence to ongoing battering (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006; McClennen, 2010). Often, when IPV occurs, family members are present. These family members may include parents, in-laws, siblings and children (Bassadien & Hochfeld, 2005; Rasool, Vermaak, Pharouh, Louw, & Stavrou 2002).

Youth witnessing family members intentionally hurting one another, were thrice as likely to carry weapons, twice as likely to be in a fight, and four times more likely to have threatened or injured someone with a weapon than youths who had not been exposed to violence in the home (Holborn & Eddy, 2011). Women exposed to IPV in childhood, are at risk for IPV revictimisation in adulthood (Gass, Stein, Williams, & Seedat, 2011; Ryan, Rich & Roman, 2015). Abrahams and Jewkes (2005) report that up to 27% of IPV would not have occurred if boys had not been exposed to IPV, with males

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seen as the main perpetrators in IPV cases, as shown in numerous multi-country studies (Fleming, McCleary-Sills, Morton, Levto, Heilman, & Barker, 2015; Fulu, Warner, Miedema, Jewkes, Roselli, & Lang, 2013; García-Moreno, et al., 2013; World Health Organization, 2012). These studies imply that young people may learn strategies to cope with violence in their current domestic life which often thereafter impacts on future domestic and other experiences. Therefore, with such ‘spill-over’ effects, it is argued that a more holistic response is needed to effectively address IPV, as opposed to the individualised batterer, victim or child programmes that are more common (Sartin, Hansen & Huss, 2006; Stover, Meadows & Kantman, 2009; Tolan et al., 2006; Whitaker et al., 2006).

There is a need to consider the family when addressing IPV, namely through a family-centred approach. A family-centred approach focuses on the inclusion of all family members in the intervention and has been argued as the preferred method for family violence interventions (Lock & Le Grange, 2015; Tolan et al., 2006).

A family centred-approach includes all members of the family affected by the violence in the home and emphasises collaboration between the family and the practitioner. In addition, this approach balances the needs of the family with the best interests of its individual members, encourages family input on the plan of care, and treats each family as unique, instead of prescriptive to a specific group (Burns, Dunn, Brady, Starr, & Blosser, 2008). A family-centred approach facilitates a partnership, where the challenges presented are understood contextually, and minimising individual blame. What is happening in the family is focused on, rather than what is wrong with the family; with greater support provided through this approach (Bromfield, Sutherland, & Parker, 2012; Burns, Dunn, Brady, Starr, & Blosser, 2008). Family-based interventions have been reported to reduce IPV and enhance family functioning (e.g. Chaudhury et al., 2016).

Family-centered interventions show long-term success in comparison to victim-centred or perpetrator-centred programs (Gillum, 2008; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009; Sumter, 2006). This is attributed to the entire family seen and engaged as the change agent which is paramount in creating a strengthened family equipped with family-centric skills to respond healthily to various stressors.

Previous systematic reviews focusing on IPV examined child and women health outcomes (Bair-Merritt, Blackstone, & Feudtner 2006; Beydoun, Beydoun, Kaufman, Lo, & Zonnderman, 2012; Coker, 2007); predisposing risk factors (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt & Kim, 2012; Gil-González, Vives-Cases, Ruiz, Carvasco-Portiño, & Álvarez-Dardet, 2008); screening tools and programmes (Rabin, Jennings, Campbell, & Bair-Merritt, 2009; O’Reilly, Beale, & Gillies, 2010; O’Campo, Kirst, Tsamis, Chambers, & Achmad, 2011). Regarding family interventions aimed at IPV, a review examining family therapy and systemic interventions by Carr (2009) found IPV to be mainly addressed through couple’s therapy. A study conducted by Rizo, Macy, Ermentrout and John (2011), reviewed family interventions addressing IPV over a 20 year period, but from a child-focused perspective. A family-centred intervention extends its focus beyond a particular family member, which is arguably required for addressing IPV which affects all members. A family-based intervention has been reported to reduce violence in the family and enhances family functioning, however, few studies have explored family-based interventions in relation to IPV (Chaudhury, et al., 2016). Therefore, the aim of this paper was to systematically review family-centered interventions aimed at reducing IPV. The objective was to methodologically appraise these interventions in order to identify the most robust evidence-based interventions aimed at IPV reduction through a family-centered approach.

**METHOD**

The search strategy was formulated by both reviewers (JR & NR). The full search and examination of titles and abstracts matching the selection criteria were done by the first reviewer (JR) and the second reviewer (NR).
Due to the limited family-centered interventions addressing IPV, broad search terms were used. Data bases utilised were PubMed, BioMed Central, SABINET, SocIndex, PsycArticles and Academic Search Complete. Limiters were adapted where necessary (certain data bases needed specificity, e.g. ‘Humans only’ studies). Search terms included family-centered, family-based, interventions, strategies, programmes, intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, partner violence, domestic violence and community-based.

All publications that focused on family-centred interventions aimed at IPV were included. Articles were searched for within a 10 year span to date of the study being done (2005-2015) and in English. A 10 year span was decided upon in order to elicit latest trends and interventions used at the family level for IPV reduction.

The search protocol was developed using the PICOS framework for systematic reviews (Green, Higgins, Alderson, Clarke, Mulrow, & Oxman, 2008), specifically: i) Population: family members affected by IPV; ii) Intervention: interventions aimed at reducing IPV and its effects, but including more than one family member in the intervention; iii) Context: interventions that were community-based, offered via NGOs and primary health care (as these could ensure programmes to be taken to scale); iv) Outcomes: based on the RE-AIM framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation or Maintenance) of the intervention; and v) Study Design: Search was not limited to a specific study design but the studies however had to report on an intervention including process data. Process data refers to the perceptions and actions regarding intervention implementation and its influence on the overall result of the intervention (Abildgaard, Saksvik, & Nielsen, 2016).

The RE-AIM framework assists to facilitate development, delivery and evaluation of health interventions according to five elements, namely: i.) Reach – which refers to which target population the intervention has reached and whether the intervention was used on the intended target population, ii.) Effectiveness – refers to the intervention having achieved its objectives/outcomes, iii.) Adoption – refers to target staff or organisation having adopted the intervention, iv.) Implementation – refers to consistency and adaption of intervention protocol to practice, v.) Maintenance – refers to intervention effects on participants over time (Matthews, Kirk, MacMillan & Mutrie, 2013).

Exclusion criteria included protocols, interventions focused only on one individual hence not inclusive of the family, case studies, interventions not aimed at IPV, systematic reviews, reviews, and also studies which had not reported on interventions inclusive of process data. Process data is vital, as these help inform future interventions but also to replicate effective complex interventions. In order to replicate but also create ease in knowledge translation of key intervention features, procedural details such as intervention implementation, delivery, how the intervention operated within its setting, specific mechanisms of change within the intervention initiating desired outcomes, need to be identified (Frykman, 2017; Sutcliffe, Thomas, Stokes, Hinds, & Bangpan, 2015). As Sutcliffe et al. (2015) elaborate, having these details outlined, aids in identifying what works? Where does it work? And for whom does it work? It is also for this reason, RE-AIM had been selected not only as an appraisal tool but for framing the data extraction as well, as this will bring forth those key intervention features.

DATA EXTRACTION AND QUALITY APPRAISAL

Data relating to study characteristics (such as country of study, study design, and the elements of RE-AIM) and findings were extracted and tabulated and performed by one reviewer (JR) and reviewed by the second reviewer (NR). Inclusion and exclusion criteria were used to clarify differences of opinion. The RE-AIM Framework evaluation (adapted from Blackman et al., 2013; Glasgow 1999; Glasgow, McKay, Piette & Reynolds, 2001) was used to evaluate the interventions fitting the selection criteria as illustrated in Table 1.
Table 1. RE-AIM Framework evaluation – Appraisal sheet (Adapted from Glasgow 1999, 2001 and Blackman et al. 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RE-AIM Dimensions</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REACH</td>
<td>1. Indicate who the program is intended for (Inclusion and exclusion criteria)?</td>
<td>Y= 1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Report on the representativeness of the target population?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Report on participation rate?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>4. The program achieves the intended objectives?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Report on the limitations of the intervention?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Reports on at least one outcome of the intervention?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Reports on attrition?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>8. Is the setting clearly described?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Report on the adoption of the intervention by the participants / organization?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Reports on who delivered the program?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>11. Describes duration and frequency of the intervention?</td>
<td>Y = 1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Has the staff / participants of the organisation / intervention been involved in delivering the program?</td>
<td>Y = 1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. Reports on intended and delivered interventions?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>14. Report on long term effects of the intervention (after 6 months)?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Report on the indicators used for intervention follow-up?</td>
<td>Y=1 / N=0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS

The results as shown in Figure 1, show a total of 18 038 search hits found via the electronic databases through the various search terms. After duplicates were removed and article titles screened, 25 abstracts were retrieved. A further 18 articles were removed due to studies not fitting selection criteria as they were either reviews, case studies or only directed the intervention at one member of the family. Six articles had met the desired score of 67%-100% as per methodological quality as seen in Table 2, which were scored according to the questions in Table 1. The data extraction of the six articles is shown in Table 3.
Figure 1. Flow diagram of results process

18 038 potential records (hits) obtained from PubMed, BioMed Central, SABINET, SocIndex, PsycArticles as well as Academic Search Complete.

1429 duplicates which appeared in searches

69 titles which match search terms

25 Abstracts

A further 18 abstracts excluded due to exclusion criteria:
Not intervention – 12
Intervention only aimed at one family member - 6

6 articles included as final sample
Table 2. Scoring sheet of selected abstracts according to rated questions in Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becker, Mathis, Mueller, Issari, &amp; Atta (2008)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermentrout, Rizo &amp; Macy (2014)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham-Bermann, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe, &amp; Halabu (2007)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graham-Bermann &amp; Miller (2015)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grip, Alqmist, &amp; Broberg (2012)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>80%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan &amp; Feinberg (2015)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>McWhirter (2011)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REACH

Of the interventions, 5 were implemented in the USA (Becker, Mathis, Mueller, Issari & Atta, 2008; Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe & Halabu, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Kan & Feinberg, 2015), and 1 in Sweden (Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012). Interventions were directed at a diverse group of participants who had either volunteered (Graham-Bermann, et al., 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012, Kan & Feinberg, 2015) or been court mandated to participate (Becker, Mathis, Mueller, Issari & Atta, 2008; Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014). Four out of the six interventions were directed at parent-child dyads (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012), one at pre-natal couples (Kan & Feinberg, 2015), and one incorporated two parents and child / ren (Becker, et al, 2008). The majority of participants completed most of the intervention sessions (e.g. 7 out of 8 or 10 out 12). Most of the interventions involved participants from low-socio economic circumstances. The interventions were conducted largely with white families, with only two interventions involving African Americans (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014) or multi-ethnic families (Becker, et al, 2008).

EFFECTIVENESS

The interventions aimed to assist families to reduce violence and minimize IPV effects, such as depression in parents and behavioural misconduct in children. Intervention themes included conflict resolution and communication skills, with four out of the six interventions including knowledge and awareness raising of family violence (Becker, et al, 2008; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012). Safety planning had been included in three of the six studies (Ermentrout, Rizo, & Macy, 2014; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015). All interventions stated that their aims were achieved which included improved family functioning, behavioural outcomes, and psychological well-being, even though one intervention only got through 95% of their program content due to time constraints (Kan & Feinberg, 2015). Limitations noted were issues specific to the IPV population, which included custody battles which greatly affected child participant attrition (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015), loss of housing or moving (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015); and inconsistent contact information (Becker, et al, 2008; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015), all of which created challenges in sample attrition, session planning and rapport building.

ADOPTION

The intervention settings were described as community-based with only two interventions specifically identifying the community (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015). Recruitment occurred through the courts or health care settings (hospitals and clinics). The interventions were well-received with improvements seen in the parent-child interaction, co-parenting, decreased psychological distress in adults, and improved conduct in children (diminished aggression and delinquency) (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012). Interventions were facilitated by clinicians with family violence training who were recruited specifically for the program. Five of the six interventions were at the time of this study already fully functioning community-based interventions (Becker, et al, 2008; Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012).

IMPLEMENTATION

Only one study indicated the time allocation for the sessions, which ranged from 8 to 12 sessions, with sessions being 2 1/2 hours for adults and children (Ermentrout, Rizo, & Macy, 2014). The other studies did not indicate the session time for child participation if sessions were not scheduled for the same day.
Organisation members were active in the training of facilitators and in conducting post-assessment. Most of the interventions held parent and child groups separately, though concurrently, with similar session themes; except parent groups which included parenting skills or parenthood. This is to say the family may be in one intervention, although the intervention may be implemented with the entire family in one setting or family members in separate settings as arranged by age or other characteristics (i.e. children with children; perpetrators with perpetrators), but all received similar session content. One study addressed parenthood transition, as the target sample was pre-natal couples (Kan & Feinberg, 2015). The interventions focused on family violence education, beliefs and attitudes of family violence; emotional affect, communication; conflict management, decision-making, and focus on the self. Only one study addressed gender stereotypes (Becker, et al, 2008).

MAINTENANCE

Only four out of the six interventions clearly indicated post-intervention follow-up (Graham-Bermann, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe, & Halabu, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist, & Broberg, 2012; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). The remaining two studies either indicated that a follow-up was done, but did not state when exactly it occurred (either soon after intervention had ended or six months or later) (Ermentrout, Rizo, & Macy, 2014); or only occurred on the last day of the intervention, not stating long term follow-up thereafter (Becker, et al, 2008). Follow-up ranged from six months to a year post-intervention (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Kan & Feinberg, 2015).

Indicators used for follow-up assessment included positive parenting practices (improvements in communication and the parent-child relationship) and child conduct. For parents, three of the six interventions used interviews and recorded observations to monitor program efficacy (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). Questionnaire assessments were used in four of the six interventions and included Beck’s Depression Inventory; The Anxiety and Parental Child Rearing Styles Scales; and checklists which used rating scales to measure improvements around trauma symptoms, psychological outcomes, parenting practices, attitudes about IPV, as well as behaviour (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Becker, et al, 2008). Children’s outcomes were assessed through interviews with children (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014), interviews with parents (Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Kan & Feinberg, 2015), and using questionnaire assessments specifically the Child Behaviour Checklist (Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Becker, et al, 2008).

Five interventions reported sustained outcomes at follow-up (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). Three of the six studies indicated sustained positive outcomes from eight months to one year post-intervention, namely reduced IPV; reduced trauma symptoms of mothers, reduced problem child behaviours, and increased child pro-social activities (Graham-Bermann, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe & Halabu, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). Only one of the six interventions showed outcomes not sustained at one-year post-intervention follow-up, but which was attributed to screening not being done at baseline for pre-existing disorders, which may have needed an intense, individualised therapeutic process (Grip, Almqvist & Broberg, 2012).
Table 3: Data extraction table of final studies included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Study design</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ermentrout, Rizo &amp; Macy (2014)</td>
<td>Multi-method qualitative design</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Of the current follow-up study, 8 were child participants (demographics not collected) 18 adult participants (62.50% Black/African American) M=2.25 children, and 7 staff participants (all White, 85.71% female).</td>
<td>The study aimed to test the feasibility of a child program concurrent with the Mothers Overcoming Violence Through Education and Empowerment (MOVE) program. Attrition showed 33% for children attended 8 or more sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grip, Almqvist &amp; Broberg (2012)</td>
<td>A repeated-measure design without comparison group.</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Mother-child dyads were sought with 34 mothers and 46 children present at pre-assessment, 23 mothers and 31 children present at post assessment and 17 mothers and 24 children present for follow-up. Inclusion criteria: 1.) help was sought for mother and child at the unit, 2.) reports of physical, psychological or sexual violence.</td>
<td>The intervention had achieved its aim in reducing behavioural problems and social impairment. Limitations include no comparison group and frequent moves, loss of housing, custody issues, and lack of consistent contact info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham-Berman &amp; Miller-Graff (2015)</td>
<td>Randomised-control Trial (RCT)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Women participants were 33 years old (SD 5.29), largely 57% White, Monthly income varied considerably and was generally low (M $1,366, SD $1,315). The women’s children ranged in age from 6–12 years (M 8.49, SD 2.16).</td>
<td>The intervention aimed to assess intervention efficacy for women exposed to IPV and was achieved. Limitations include the study represented few minorities, frequent moves, loss of housing, custody issues, and lack of consistent contact info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham-Berman, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe, &amp; Halabu (2007)</td>
<td>Randomised-control Trial (RCT)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Children ranged in age from 6 to 12 years (M 8.49, SD 2.16). There were 110 boys and 111 girls. Child ethnicity was largely 52% Caucasian. Mothers’ mean age was 33.10 years (SD 5.29 years), with 57% Caucasian. Monthly income varied (M $1,366, SD $1,315).</td>
<td>The overarchign aim of the present study were to assess the efficacy of a group intervention for children and their mothers exposed to IPV and to identify factors associated with treatment efficacy. Limitations include loss of housing, custody issues, and lack of consistent contact info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kan &amp; Feinberg (2015)</td>
<td>Randomised-control Trial (RCT)</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Participants were 169 heterosexual couples. At baseline, 91% of mothers and 90% of fathers were Non-Hispanic White. Median annual family income was $65,000.00 (SD = $34,372.79). Attendance ranged from 0 to 8 sessions.</td>
<td>The program aimed to inoculate parenting from the effects of pre-birth IPV which was noted as being met. Limitations included a largely White sample, selection bias, and only focusing of physical IPV through triadic observation. Attrition reported loss of 2:30.1% of the children completed all 12 sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becker, Mathis, Mueller, Issari, &amp; Atta (2008)</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td>USA (Hawaii)</td>
<td>A sample size of 106 children (37 boys, 69 girls) between the ages of 3 and 17 (M = 8.64, SD = 3.72). Ethnically, 52.8% identified as multi-ethnic. Of the 106 participating parents, 104 were mothers (98.1%). The majority of families participating in the program had an annual income of less than $13,000.</td>
<td>The program is noted as meeting its goals in improving child and parent outcomes. Limitations of the intervention were inconsistent information, lack of no-treatment control as well as e report bias. Only 30.1% of the children completed all 12 sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adoption
Private space was used at one of the partner agencies. The groups were co facilitated by a clinician with a master’s level and a student intern or volunteer.

Implementation
The program consists of 12 weekly group sessions, each session lasting two and a half hours. Facilitators were clinicians at master’s level. The intervention had been noted as being successfully implemented.

Maintenance
Follow up period not clear. Results show improved family functioning. Parents able to communicate effectively and children participating in pro-social activities and reporting better emotion management. Indicators included

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program satisfaction and program efficacy. Additionally, the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and Impact of Event Scale (IES) were used to assess parents as well as the mother’s trauma symptoms. improved parenting, and improved child behavioural outcomes. CM [child-plus-mother-] condition continued to make significant improvement in externalising problems relative to the CO [child only] condition. between IPV and parenting over time. knowledge and awareness, behaviour control (Child behaviour checklist), parenting practices, and appropriate coping skills.
DISCUSSION

Most of the interventions targeted the mother-child dyad, with the parent-child dyad sought after for engaging with positive or negative experiences within the family. The importance of the parents’ relationship as well as the parent-child relationship may be understood within the relational connections considered in the spill over hypothesis. The hypothesis indicates that if one part of the family system (e.g. the parents) experiences discord or conflict, it may affect the other parts of the family system (e.g. the parent-child relationship) (Levendosky, Leahy, Bogat, Davidson, & Von Eye, 2006). Mother-child dyads were found to more notably display the parent-child relationship whether indicating positive or negative child outcomes (Renner & Boel-Studt, 2013).

The intervention participants completed most of the intervention sessions, which is encouraging as high-risk families often show low retention rates in intervention programs (Pereira, D’Afonseca & Williams, 2013). However, the interventions in this review may not have been sufficiently diverse, with four out of the six interventions incorporating a majority white sample, despite the high IPV risk reported amongst black populations, with women located in the African region reported to bear the greatest risk for being killed by an intimate partner or family member (Capaldi, Knoble, Shortt, & Kim, 2012; Cho, 2012; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Selwyn, & Rohling, 2012; UNODC, 2018). IPV interventions in the United States have generally focused on the victim or perpetrator have not only shown short term success, but inadvertently also excluded ethnicities such as Hispanics, African Americans and Asians (Gillum, 2008; Sumter, 2006). These ethnicities are noted as being group-centered and would turn to their community (e.g. church) or family when in need (Gillum, 2008; Sumter, 2006).

Many of the reviewed interventions were implemented at community level. Recruitment was mainly done from health care facilities such as clinics or hospitals, which is a common form of recruitment within IPV research (El-Khorazaty, et al, 2007). Only two studies however stated a recruitment criterion; these included a mother and child/ren (aged 6 to 12 years) affected by violence, mothers court-mandated to attend and identified as the primary caregiver, and those affected by IPV but not the primary abuser (Ermentrout, Rizo, & Macy, 2014; Graham-Bermann, et al, 2007). Clearly defining eligibility criteria for participants is vital, as selecting the right participants for an intervention affects attrition, outcome event rates, and external validity, while clear reporting of such criteria aids in estimating cost per person as well as identifying strategies for hard-to-reach populations (Cooke & Jones, 2017; Townsley, Selby, & Sui, 2005; Uchino, Billheimer, & Cramer, 2001).

The reviewed interventions involved themes commonly addressed within family violence (Tolan et al., 2006). Only one intervention addressed gender (Becker, et al, 2008), contrasting the body of knowledge which shows gender as being integral to interventions at individual or community level (Whitaker, et al, 2006). This may reflect a growing trend in the USA towards what is reported as a gender ‘neutral’ framework for understanding IPV where interest groups strive for greater recognition of female perpetration and male victimisation cases of IPV (Reed, Raj, Miller, & Silverman, 2010). This trend is however criticised as women and girls are still at greatest risk of being killed or injured by an intimate partner (Reed, Raj, Miller, & Silverman, 2010). Disregarding gender inequality within IPV is however a missed opportunity to explore deeply entrenched gender-power abuses occurring in the lives of women and girls (Reed, Raj, Miller, & Silverman, 2010). This gender inequality and ‘lethal victimisation’ is aptly discussed in a recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2018, pg. 11). Though women and girls constitute a smaller share of the global homicide rates, for every 1 out of 5 homicides committed by intimate partners or family members, women and girls comprise the majority of those deaths (36 per cent male versus 64 per cent female victims) and are still majority victims of exclusively intimate partner related homicide (82 per cent female victims versus 18 per cent male victims) (UNODC, 2018).

In this study, interventions ranged from 8 to 12 sessions, being 2½ hours for adults and children (Ermentrout, Rizo & Macy, 2014). Generally, there is no prescribed time duration for interventions, due to flexible implementation regarding IPV (Eckhardt, Murphy, Whitaker, Sprunger, Dykstra &
Woodard, 2013). Though not time prescriptive, intervention facilitators would prescribe that at least one risk topic is thoroughly covered in a session, mindful of time constraints and the comfort of participants in engaging the risk topics set out for the session (Katz, Blake, Milligan, Sharps, White, Rodan, Rossis, & Murray, 2008).

The current findings show that interventions indicating long term follow-up, such as at eight months to 1-year post intervention sustained long-term positive outcomes (Graham-Bermann, et al., 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). These positive outcomes included reduced IPV, reduced trauma symptoms of mothers, reduced problem child behaviours and increased child pro-social activities (Graham-Bermann, Lynch, Banyard, DeVoe & Halabu, 2007; Graham-Bermann & Miller-Graff, 2015; Kan & Feinberg, 2015). The research literature supports the notion that family-centered approaches do facilitate long term success especially in comparison to batterer programs (Gillum, 2008; Stover, Meadows, & Kaufman, 2009; Sumter, 2006).

In summary, the current findings show commonalities between the interventions reviewed, in that they all used broad reaching recruitment techniques, required facilitators to act as role models in addition to facilitating the sessions and providing educational material, and used a randomised control trial study design to assess impact.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

The study may be the first systematic review of interventions that focus on the family in addressing IPV. Additionally, the study also aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a family-centred approach in reducing IPV found positive outcomes, such as a reduction in IPV, trauma symptoms of mothers, and problematic child behaviours. The study utilised a rigorous process to identify strong methodological studies, used more than one reviewer to facilitate the process; and used broad terms to support the scope of the search.

However, the identified interventions reported largely on populations in high income countries and majority white families; thus, limiting the relevance of the findings to other demographics and settings. These limitations may also highlight the lack in reporting on intervention outcome and process information in low income settings.

Finally, it is noted that none of the interventions in this study followed a clear format in reporting and presenting intervention information and results, making it challenging in consistent comparison. This systematic review presents the RE-AIM framework as a structure to report intervention information in such a way as to allow easy translation of evidence.

CONCLUSION

Family-centered interventions focused towards IPV reduction yielded positive results not only on an individual level but also at a family systemic level in improving parent-child interaction. This merits the possibility that family-centered interventions addressing IPV can maintain long term positive outcomes and can be adopted and sustained at community level.

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Perspective

School violence, mafiarisation and curriculum trajectories: A need for a pedagogy of disarmament

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Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

“We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in society – a life free from violence and fear.” Nelson Mandela

ABSTRACT

This perspective problematises violence and so-called mafiarisation, which is fast becoming a characteristic of many South African schools. Mafiarisation interrupts sustainable learning environments, as schools become unsafe sites for teaching and learning. While there is appreciation for various efforts that address school violence, it is essential to address this problem from all possible angles. This paper proposes that the problem can be addressed more effectively at a pedagogical level as a counter-hegemonic strategy to combat school violence, through an infusion of pedagogy of disarmament in the school curriculum. Pedagogy of disarmament comprises four elements that can be infused into the curriculum, which are a moral imperative, peace-building, knowledge of the law and individualised counselling services. I earth arguments in decoloniality theory, which is a theory that unmasks and challenges various oppressive elements that can impel school violence. This paper concludes by arguing that South African schools require pedagogy such as disarmament to address school indiscipline and violence to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning, and that is devoid of fear and mafiarisation.

Keywords: pedagogy of disarmament, mafiarisation, decoloniality, school violence, sustainable learning environment

INTRODUCTION

June 16, 1976 marked the start of a new era for the South African education system. Learners at Naledi High School in Soweto took to the streets to denounce the apartheid system and the enforced use of the Afrikaans language as a medium of instruction (Ndlovu, 2002). The learners used all means possible to indicate their opposition, including violence. During the apartheid years, violence was used as a tool of oppression, but it also served as a tool of resistance (Power, 2017). From this date on, increasing numbers of learners joined the liberation struggle, until political independence was attained in 1994. The first decade post 1994 was a honeymoon period, during which educationists and politicians arguably took for granted and assumed that issues relating to race, marginalisation and segregation (which had sparked resistance through violent means) no longer existed. This assumption was devoid of the understanding that political independence for South Africa did not mean the end of colonialism, which continued to manifest itself through informal apartheid. In addition, the new education system, after 1994, did not have mechanisms to disarm the protesting learners on their return to class from the liberation struggle.

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Many research studies have been done on school violence in South Africa (Lazarus, Khan & Johnson, 2012; Moen & Steyn, 2016; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2012; Ngqela & Lewis, 2012; Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009), but a close interrogation of these research studies shows that their focus was on the causes of violence at schools. They fail to divulge much about how day-to-day curriculum activities can address school violence head-on. Given the intensity of school violence, research that has arguably romanticised school violence by only interrogating the causes of violence, without proposing activities and approaches to eradicate the violence, is not particularly useful.

I use the term pedagogy of disarmament in this paper, which is conceptualised, in the words of Kadayifci-Orellana (2003), as seeking to “promote peace and nonviolence, common humanity, encourage coexistence and negation of use of weapons in resolving school difference” (p. 32). The term pedagogy of disarmament seems to be fit for post-militant societies, and unfit for educational discourses, but it is time that South Africa acknowledges that the extent to which schools have become armed environments pose a serious problem to sustainable learning environments. It is shocking that even young learners bear arms – learners are armed from primary school to tertiary levels. There is, generally, a notion in some South African communities that every social pressure or challenge has to be addressed through violent means, which includes the use of weapons. I attempt to demystify the notion that argues that a pedagogy of disarmament is unfit for educational purposes, because, as long ago as the 1980s, countries such Albania, England and Cambodia have attempted to achieve peace and disarmament through education (Albanian Peace and Disarmament Education Manual, 2006; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1980).

Hence, the pedagogy of disarmament is not a new phenomenon and involves attempts to reconstruct the school milieu, so that it contributes to sustainable development. The pedagogy of disarmament is, therefore, different from other forms of disarmament (usually used in post-militant communities), because it contextualises school violence; in this case, the pedagogy responds directly to the needs and challenges of the South African context. It may even be possible to transfer the pedagogy to countries that have similar circumstances as South Africa. Contextualising school violence within the pedagogy of disarmament is informed by the approach to decoloniality that frames this paper, which seeks to shift biographies of knowledge, from Euro-Global North and neo-liberal spaces to local milieus, to address the lived realities of South African learners (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). It is a theory that works “toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ”, which often leads to resistance and violence (Mignolo, 2007).

In this paper, I refer to mafiarisation, a term I have used in reference to the group of criminals known as the Mafia, which is known, in particular, for using drugs and dangerous weapons to commit various crimes (Garzon, 2008; Paoli, 2007; Paoli, 2008). Used in this paper, mafiarisation refers to the systematic use of weapons by learners to inflict pain on other learners, which it appears the schooling system is failing to deal with at present. To illustrate this failure with statistical data, Burton and Leoschut (2013) report that a total of 2 445 756 high school learners were affected by the use of arms in 2012 nationwide. It is argued that most schools in South Africa have become highly volatile and unpredictable places (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, & Van der Walt, 2004). As Hazler (2000) points out, this type of atmosphere is characterised by a culture of insults, threats, harassment, frustration, resentment, use of weapons, and anger. Thus, it is in this regard that there is a need for a pedagogy that dismantles school violence. In short, school mafiarisation, in this paper, refers to an unsafe school environment characterised by the use of weapons, which the education department is struggling to eliminate and to create an environment conducive to learning.

Against this background, it is imperative for curriculum innovation to consider the pedagogy of disarmament across the schooling system. This pedagogy is one that emphasises peace, conflict resolution, democracy, peaceful coexistence and individualised counselling. It acts as a counter-hegemonic strategy against the mafiarisation of schools. Eurocentric narratives have created a colonial mentality that suggests
that Africans can only solve their problems through violent means, thereby, ultimately, negating attempts to create a sustainable learning environment.

The paper is theoretically framed around decoloniality, followed by an explanation and conceptualisation of the pedagogy of disarmament, its rationale in the South African context and, finally, its four pillars, which can mitigate the use of weapons by learners.

**THEORETICAL FRAMING: DECOLONIALITY**

Decoloniality is not a single, theoretical school of thought (though it is grounded in the earlier works of Enrique Dussel and Anibal Quijano), but a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as being the fundamental problem of the modern age (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Decoloniality refers to a commitment to challenging and reformulating the communicational scientific discourse, from a criticism of the mediating power of Anglo-American hegemonic thinking to a native cultural paradigm (Huerfano, Caballero, & Rojas, 2016). The theory rejects modernity, which is located in the oppressed and exploited side of the colonial difference, in favour of a Decolonial liberation struggle to achieve a world beyond Eurocentric modernity (Ramon, 2011).

Decoloniality should not be confused with decolonisation. The latter refers to political liberation from colonisers, whereas the former deals with the aftermath of colonisation, where the thrust is to challenge colonial systems that have remained in place long after the apartheid or colonial rulership had been “displaced” (Muchie & Gumede, 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013).

In the context of school violence, I argue that learners are trapped in a colonial mind-set that suggests, amongst others, that every conflict can be solved through violent means, from the foundation phase to the tertiary level. The apartheid system taught and forced learners to engage in violence in an attempt to end the system; once the apartheid system had been dismantled, the education system failed to disarm learners and create safe learning environments. In light of this, a decoloniality approach is needed to redress the damage caused by coloniality (Boaten, 2010). Coloniality is defined by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) as an invisible power structure that sustains colonial relations of exploitation and domination, long after colonisation.

The preceding argument is buttressed further by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), who considers decoloniality as a “melee against invisible vampirism of imperialism technologies and colonial matrices of power that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations, and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South” (p. 11). School violence is a new form of coloniality in South African schools and makes schools fearful sites that are ungovernable (Ngobeni, 2014). This coloniality needs to be confronted. In arguing for decoloniality, I concur with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) that;

> What African [schools] must be vigilant against is the trap of ending up normalising and universalising [school violence] as a natural state of the world, however, it must be unmasked, resisted and destroyed because it produces a world order that can only be sustained through a combination of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies (p. 10).

School violence and mafiarisation should not be naturalised or romanticised, but rather exposed and challenged, because the possibility of it spilling over into the rest of South African society is real. Society has become so violent and is so characterised by arms, to the extent that scholars who desire peace are indebted with the burden of finding ways to arrest this problem. Recently, the South African Council of Churches described South Africa as moving towards becoming a “Mafia state” (Strydom, 2017).
announcement was echoed by Cyril Ramaphosa, at the time the deputy president of South Africa (Stoddard, 2017).

EXPLAINING THE PEDAGOGY OF DISARMAMENT

The pedagogy of disarmament is a coinage through which I attempt, to quote Kadayifci-Orellana (2003), to "promote peace and nonviolence, common humanity, and encourage coexistence" (p. 32). It is premised on a philosophical underpinning that promotes the creation of learning places that are not only aesthetically pleasing (Lippman, 2010), but also safe, to ensure a sustainable learning environment. It is a pedagogy that, as Brown (2004) states, attempts to "create effective classroom management which utilises essential research-based pedagogical processes that respond appropriately to the emotional, social, ethnic, cultural and cognitive needs of students" (p. 268).

It is a pedagogy that seeks to address various issues among learners – issues that make violence, including all forms of abuse, the carrying of weapons, and violent approaches to resolving differences, prevalent in schools. This pedagogy should be part of curriculum activities; only then will South Africa be seen as being serious about addressing school violence before schools deteriorate into mafia states. The pedagogy includes research into all phases of schooling, including early childhood settings, primary schools and high schools, to improve theoretical and methodological foci and to enhance commitment to ending school violence (Bhana, 2013). The pedagogy of disarmament should be infused into the curriculum space and taught daily, if we are to have any hope of derailing the maifarisation of schools and mitigating the use of weapons.

WHY IS A PEDAGOGY OF DISARMAMENT NEEDED IN SOUTH AFRICA?

South African society is immersed in violence, hence, redirecting efforts to address violence at school level presents opportunities to reframe the violent terrain, by cultivating the "arming" of learners with non-violent means of conflict resolution. This argument is necessitated by the fact that, despite measures that have been taken to eradicate bullying, whether through legislation or policy, school violence persists (Laas, 2012). In addition, Dube and Hlalele (2017) note that "school violence in South Africa frustrates the quest for sustainable learning ecologies because schools are war zones, street-fighting centres and, in some cases, murder scenes" (p. 5). Learners' aggression has the potential to create turmoil in schools and, ultimately, render schools ungovernable (Singh & Steyn, 2013).

School violence negates the observation by Burton (2008) that schools are generally seen as mechanisms to develop and reinforce positive citizens with pro-social attitudes, and as sites where individuals are prepared for the roles, they are to play in society at large. The goal of the pedagogy of disarmament is, among other goals, "to transform groups and societies through mechanisms and institutions that can channel the energy of conflict into constructive rather than destructive channels" (Abu-Nimer, Khoury, & Welty, 2007, p. 131).

As suggested by Jebungei (2013), the role of the school is not merely to help learners accumulate knowledge, but also to mould them into cultured citizens. Through this curriculum, learners will be empowered to challenge coloniality, which reinforces the legacy that Africans choose to use weapons for conflict resolution instead of other options they have at their disposal. It is essential that this Eurocentric notion is challenged. Given this context, the pedagogy is, as suggested by Singh and Steyn (2013), intended to manage learner aggression within the school system, to enhance academic performance and to achieve holistic development. In so doing, the pedagogy of disarmament opposes romanticising school violence. This opposition involves taking radical steps to end the colonality challenge, namely, the use of weapons in schools. In light of the previous discussion, the pedagogy of disarmament intends cultivating deliberative
encounters during the education of young citizens as a means of alleviating the scourge of school violence (McDonald, 2013).

PILLARS OF THE PEDAGOGY OF DISARMAMENT

The pedagogy of disarmament rests on four pillars, namely, moral imperative, peace-building, knowledge of the law and individualised counselling services. Because of the complexity of the problem of school violence in South Africa, there is a need for interdisciplinary collaboration between social and human scientists (Bailey, 2002; McDonald, 2013; Power, 2017; Ward, 2012). In the quest to create safe schools in South Africa the collaboration of actors who support non-violent means for achieving conflict resolution is crucial. These pillars are, according to Akinsola (2010), "open to further debate on how to engage minds in a critical manner to effectively deal with the issue of school violence in high schools in South Africa” (p. 658).

MORAL IMPERATIVE

The moral imperative includes religion (I refer only to the religious aspects that promote the respect of human rights, dignity, peaceful resolution of difference and social cohesion), and Ubuntu philosophy. Religion, despite being accused of being the cause of wars and conflict, has positive aspects, including enhancing morality among people (McKay & Whitehouse, 2015; Norenzayan, 2014; Nthontho, 2018). While the study by students of religion has been problematised, which warranted its removal from the curriculum, this removal has contributed to and arguably paved the way for the emergence of violence and various social ills (Cawood, 2018; Clarke & Woodhead, 2018; Dinama, 2010). Because religion often has however primarily been associated with tolerance, it is argued that once religion was removed from schools, the value of tolerance received less attention, contributing to the escalation of violence and conflict (Dube & Hlalele, 2017). The problems experienced today that of schools becoming armed, were, arguably, less severe when a religious discourse was present in schools, due to the emphasis on tolerance by religion.

Arguing from decolonial theory, the removal of religion from the mainstream curriculum practices, speak of knowledge contestation competing for recognition. Infact, as argued by Nkoane (2015), “dominant ideologies portray other ways of knowing and knowledge construction as deficient and non-rigorous” (p. 37). In addition, Nkoane (2015) says, “hegemonic dominance in circles of knowledge construction, is a political battle in which the discursive weapons of knowledge and power are used, and which determines what worthwhile knowledge for inclusion and exclusion is” (p. 39). While Preis and Russell (2006) argue that various religions, “convey a message of peace, justice and human solidarity” (pp. 15-16), which I believe must be exploited to address the problem of school violence. Thus, the relegation or negation of religious knowledge as non-rigorous for the holistic development of learners, especially in a context where schools are mafiarised, should be contested through the lens of decoloniality. To this end, I argue that, legitimisation of knowledge should be depoliticised, and made natural (Suarez-Krabbe, 2009), by drawing from all perspectives as much as possible, to address pressing issues of the day, including school violence. In short, all forms of knowledge should be appreciated in the curriculum as long they can contribute to the end to school violence.

The morality imperative can also be acquired through infusing the values of Ubuntu in the school curriculum, first, as a base for African identity, and second, a strategy to resolve conflicts through non-threatening terms, such as engaging elders. Ubuntu is an African philosophy that offers a counter-hegemony strategy to unmask the coloniality hibernating through and in school violence. The philosophy is generally premised on humanness as a reciprocal mechanism to enhance social solidarity. This humanness is conferred on another person through solidarity with one another and care for each other’s quality of life within the contexts of communal relationships and human dignity (Metz, 2011:559). Ubuntu, as an African
philosophy, is a powerful tool for strengthening a community; it promotes dignity, identity, mutualism, empathy, generosity, and community commitment (Tutu, 1999). Thus, when the curriculum engages learners and teachers to embrace Ubuntu in addressing social and academic difference, there is a likelihood that school violence will be reduced significantly in South African schools.

I advocate for the moral imperative pillar, informed by Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasello and Koenig (2007), that claims that embracing morality as a key aspect of the curriculum could reduce feelings of loss of control and helplessness, provide a cognitive framework that can decrease suffering, and strengthen purpose, tolerance, coexistence and love among learners. Curriculum changes, premised on promoting morality among school stakeholders, should involve building a nonviolent organisation and a society of just peace (Moore, 2015). In short, a curriculum that negates morality in education is geared to produce immoral citizens, who disregard and endanger people who are different, and militate against the sustainable development of learners and other educational stakeholders (Dube & Hlalele, 2017).

**PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES**

The second pillar of the pedagogy of disarmament is peace education. Countries such as France, the Netherlands and Austria have experienced considerable peace and safety since embracing peace education in the curriculum (Wintersteiner, Spajić-Vrkaš, & Tuetsch, 2003). Peace education makes people refine their approach to conflict. It aims to confront and resist violence and to transform societies into cultures of peace (Kester, 2010). The pedagogy of disarmament evokes the need to “promote human good, provide basic human needs, guarantee protection of human rights and promote the integral development of the globe” (Ogbonnaya, 2012, p. 2).

It can be argued, then, that the pedagogy of disarmament falls within the realm of peace education pedagogies (Reardon & Cebezudo, 2001) that attempt to combat mafiarisisation of schools by inculcating citizenship values that accept contestation as inevitable, and state that violence never offers a solution to contestation. Decoloniality is premised in peace education and aligned to the pedagogy of disarmament, and provides a framework and an environment in which people's fundamental rights, interests and wishes are respected (Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010). In this vein, decoloniality is a struggle for recognition, respect, accommodation and appreciation of others, as a means of achieving a better future and education for learners.

A pedagogy of disarmament curriculum, "include[s] education for citizenship at an international level and address[es] the conditions necessary for the construction of peace, including conflict resolution, human rights, democracy, an end to racism, and the elimination of sexism" (Ardizzone, 2001, p. 18). It also includes managing anger, modifying behaviour, adopting a social perspective, developing morality, building social skills, solving social problems, and resolving conflicts (Lazarus et al., 2012). In addition, peace education, premised on the pedagogy of disarmament, emphasises political policies that are sensitive to the needs of the people, in order to avoid contestation that promotes violence. In support of the preceding observation, Gerson and Opotow (2004) warn that coexistence-enhancing peace education initiatives may be problematic when they are supported by the more powerful party in a conflict, or when they do not address political issues, resource and power disparities, and perceptions of injustice that underlie long-standing, deadly conflict.

**LEGAL CONSCIENTISATION**

The pedagogy of disarmament embraces legal conscientisation as one of the elements that can reduce mafiarisisation of schools in South Africa. Incidents that happen in schools evoke and often necessitate legal or quasi-legal responses from teachers, learners and school administrators (Delaney, 2013). It may be that
learners engage in violent activities, such as shootings, because they are unaware of the legal implications of their actions. It is desirable and possible to educate learners, so that they become knowledgeable about and comfortable with the constitutional rights of learners and educators (Doctor, 2013). This knowledge enables learners and educators to be sensitive about actions that may stimulate school violence and its consequences.

The pedagogy of disarmament argues that part of the curriculum should make learners aware of the consequences of violence, in case they are convicted. In this regard, Doctor (2013) says, "If educators and learners fail to arm themselves with the knowledge and understanding of such laws, they too will find themselves among the four walls of a courtroom. Ignorance will not excuse a crime in the eyes of a judge" (p. 7). It is exposure to legal knowledge in the curriculum that will, in the lens of decoloniality, empower learners to confront the situation and conflicts from a legal space, and promote respect for human rights.

Again, the aim of informing learners about the consequences of violence is not to scare them, but to create a knowledge base, so that they understand that violent actions against another person represent a violation of the law. Such understanding has the impetus to contribute to the maintenance of social cohesion (Sârbu, Dimitrescu & Lacroix, 2015).

INDIVIDUALISED COUNSELLING

The fourth pillar of the pedagogy of disarmament, namely, individualised counselling, can help learners to deal with violent behavioural experiences and tendencies (Muribwathoho, 2015; Muribwathoho & Shumba, 2006). These studies indicate that there are situations that require individualised counselling for learners. I admit that, while individualised counselling is desirable, in most South African schools this will present a serious challenge, because of the high learner to teacher ratio. However, this complication does not eradicate the need and importance of individualised counselling, especially in cases where school violence is rampant.

As a way to implement individualised counselling in the contexts of South Africa, where most classes have many learners, educators can identify key influential learners with either disruptive or violent tendencies, and refer such learners for individualised counselling. In this case, individualised counselling would involve targeting individual learners who exhibit violent behaviour and involving them in a counselling process. When a learner escalates to violent behaviour, and all we say is, "we knew it was going there", the question is, thus, since you knew, what did you do to address the situation? Often, educators observe learners with disruptive behaviour and fail to find the best ways of dealing with such learners. In such circumstances, there is a need to refer complicated issues to trained counsellors (Western Cape Department of Education, 2007).

The type of counselling that is recommended by this paper involves educators being encouraged to form relationships and develop trust with learners to find the best ways of disarming them. For example, an educator can identify learners with disruptive behaviours, engage them, and eventually initiate conversations that can contribute to effective counselling, thus supporting an orientation to peaceful living, and talk to them about morality issues, such as tolerance.

Individualised counselling enables both learners and educators to refine their approach to and ways to strengthen disarmament (Bailes, Christiansen, Plesch, & Wood, n.d.). This pillar is often the last resort and is only considered when group strategies have not yielded desirable results in relation to the disarmament of learners. Its success depends on the provision of counsellors for every school, who conduct individual counselling, on a rotational basis, from different angles and perspectives. This approach also promotes among learners learning from experience, self-confidence and calmness in dealing with difficulties (Peres et al., 2007). This consequently creates a "charitable and sacrificial giving; respect for fellow humans and
other living beings; compassion and assistance for the poor and needy in society; the pursuit of equity and justice; and care for the natural environment” (Lunn, 2009, p. 938). The observation by Lunn (2009) has been one of the goals of interrogating (through individualised counselling) the inherent colonising character of the present state of world affairs, as well as to unmask/dismantle and centre any tendencies that cause school violence (Dussel, 1996). In this way, decoloniality works to deconstruct violent tendencies that are manifest but often ignored, perhaps because educators are afraid of learners, or because they are helpless to confront violent symptoms.

CHALLENGES OF THE PEDAGOGY OF DISARMAMENT

While a pedagogy of disarmament is an alternative that, can mitigate school violence and mafiarisation, it will be uncritical to assume it will gain space within the mainstream curriculum practices. This expectation is realistic, because its implementation in schools requires expertise, which some educators may not have. It also requires time and, in the context of curriculum overload, it may be impractical. Furthermore, the pedagogy of disarmament requires buy-in from various stakeholders, including learners. Also, while the need for counsellors is inevitable for the success of a pedagogy of disarmament, the challenge is that not all schools possess the resources to have counsellors, let alone to cater for individual needs.

CONCLUSION

The paper argues for the need for curriculum change in schools, by engaging the pedagogy of disarmament as a means to confront and mitigate the challenges posed by school violence, which has rendered some schools ungovernable and consequently unfit for teaching and learning purposes. Decoloniality has been used to frame the study, because it opens an opportunity to deconstruct the school mafia matrix, which, when unearthed and unchallenged, promotes school violence. Again, decoloniality arms all school stakeholders to move towards the promotion of fairness and equality, as highlighted by the pillars of the pedagogy of disarmament. I conclude by calling on education offices, religious leaders and other stakeholders to buy into the pedagogy of disarmament as a means to address school violence.

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Conference Report

7th International Conference on Community Psychology
Conferencia Internacional De Psicologia Communitaria, Chile-2018

Naiema Taliep
South African Medical Research Council- University of South Africa (SAMRC-UNISA) Violence, Injury and Peace Unit; Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa

Hazel Swanepoel
Community research team member

Prominent academic scientists, community activist researchers and scholars from across the globe gathered in Santiago Chile for the 7th International Conference on Community Psychology, entitled “The Community on the Move: Building Spaces of Diversity, Coexistence, and Change”.

The focus of the conference, held from October 4 – 7, 2018 at the University of Chile at the Juan Gómez Millas campus spotlighted the work of community-based researchers and other social actors on community participation and mobilisation in the quest for transformation and social justice within multiple diverse and shifting spaces across the globe.

The conference’s keynote address by Brinton Lykes, Contesting the Global North Priorities: Transforming Psychosocial Well-Being through Critical Community Psychology, Feminist Anti-Racist Participatory Action Research, And Grassroots and Grasstops Activism, drew attention to the necessity for well-being to be considered within the frame of everyday politics and activism.

A poignant symposium at the conference, which incidentally coincided with the anniversary of Chileans’ rejection of the Pinochet authoritarian military regime, focused on the repercussions of Chile’s history of human rights violations. For conference participants, the graffiti adorned walls on campus, depicting the course of military dictatorship and violent repression was a stark reminder of the past atrocities not to be repeated.

Mario Venegas, who was detained and tortured for three years because of his opposition to Pinochet, gave a compelling account of his experiences of physical and psychological torture and the post-traumatic stress that he still endures today.

His presentation particularly resonated with us South Africans, who lived through the dehumanizing experience of Apartheid and its concomitant torture, murder, and violations of human rights. As South Africans, effects of the Chilean oppression resonate with us in our political, social and economic life.

Another conference highlight for us, was sharing a platform with community members in a roundtable discussion entitled Community-based Participatory Research as an emancipatory modality: Promoting social transformation, agency and activism. As community activist researchers, we encourage participation and need to ensure the foregrounding of marginalized voices, when publishing in peer-reviewed academic
journals. The participation of community members in this roundtable reflected the critical insertion and importance of local indigenous knowledges into the conversation. All our voices matter.

To this end, we experienced some of those local indigenous voices with a visit to the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos with our Mapuche hosts. Here we learned in great depth about the systematic suppression, torture, and human rights persecutions against those who opposed Pinochet (Tikannen, 2019). We were fortunate to have met a human rights lawyer from the Mapuche. In her quest for truth and justice, she painstakingly documents violations and file cases of the Mapuche people.

For academics and community activist researchers in the field of Community Psychology, the conference provided an invaluable interdisciplinary platform to share their knowledge on current advances and trends in theory, practice, innovation, and social change and discuss practical challenges and solutions.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

African Safety Promotion: A Journal of Injury and Violence Prevention (ASP) is published twice a year. Submissions within the following guidelines are welcome. Please submit your contributions or queries to the Editor-in-Chief, African Safety Promotion: A Journal of Injury and Violence Prevention, at the Violence, Injury and Peace Research Unit, South African Medical Research Council, PO Box 19070, Tygerberg, 7505, South Africa, or via e-mail to ghouwa.ismail@mrc.ac.za or africansafetypromotion@mrc.ac.za. Scientific contributions are to be prepared and submitted as indicated below.

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