
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Feminist Ethnographic Qualitative Interviews Unveiling Gender-Based Violence Targeting Black Lesbians in Cape Town Townships

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| ABSTRACT

The study is to bring awareness to public healthcare professionals and law enforcement about the discrimination faced by Black lesbians in townships when seeking support after the rape and to encourage an empathetic and responsive approach to addressing their needs. The research applied a qualitative research design of in-depth interviews with 17 Black lesbian women living in township areas of Cape Town. Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The results of the study indicate that Black lesbian women in townships experience high levels of GBV, including corrective rape, and face significant stigma from both their communities and outside of townships. Participants also reported a lack of support from law enforcement and the legal system. The study took place in Cape Province, South Africa. The findings of this study highlight the urgent need for policymakers and civil society organisations to prioritise the issue of GBV against Black lesbians in township areas of Cape Town. Recommendations include increasing awareness and education around the issue, improving access to support services for survivors, and executing interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination.

| KEYWORDS

Gender-based violence; health care access; lgbtiq; queer: lesbians

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 February 2024

PUBLISHED: 07 March 2024

DOI: 10.61424/ijah.v1.i2.48

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) against LGBTIQ people is not limited to South Africa (Chinweizu 1978; Currier 2010; Abrahams et al. 2014; Hate & Canada 2017) alone; however, it is a global health pandemic (Pichon & Kourchoudian 2019). The South African Police Service (SAPS) year 2021 shows crime statistics indicated an increase of 1.4 % from April 2020 to March 2021 (Anon.). This data shows the ongoing violence prevalence of crime and violence in various provinces across South Africa (ibid.). It is imperative to contextualise hate crimes against LGBTIQ people within the historical legacy of apartheid violence and how crime is normalised in South Africa (Armstrong 1994; Ratele 2014; Smythe 2015). Feminist (Dosekun, Simidele 2007; Dosekun, S. 2013; Gqola, P. 2015; Moore 2015) argues toxic masculinity and heteronormative perpetuated by men shown in a study conducted in South Africa (Constitution & Africa 2001; Moffett 2006; Hames 2011; Muholi et al. 2012; Alwis 2014). Due to societal beliefs on religion, culture, and morality, the progressive LGBTIQ legislation and criminal justice system (Du Toit 2008, Anon. 2023a) in South Africa face significant challenges in delivering justice to the survivors (Anon.) and their families (Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga & Bradshaw 2002; Andrew Martin, Anne Kelly 2009a; Koraan & Geduld 2015).

The effects of GBV and hate crime on Black lesbians (Andrew Martin, Anne Kelly 2009b) women and men (Ratele 2014; Vincent & Howell 2014) have a profound impact on victims'/survivors' mental and physical well-being (Vetten & Haffejee 2005; Ciarlante & Fountain 2010; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle 2010). Although post-apartheid South Africa brought progress and change (Du Toit 2016), protecting the most vulnerable groups, such as LGBTIQ, both women (Holland-Muter 2019), men and children (Dutton 2011; Ngidi 2022), seems an ongoing battle in South Africa. The legislative order alone cannot guarantee hate crimes and sexual violence against LGBTIQ (Meyer 2012) people in South Africa are eradicated. Various methods were used, such as corrective rape (Smythe 2015), hate crime, and homophobic (Awondo, Geschiere & Reid 2012) violence against Black lesbians living in the townships. Scholarly works of literature (Herek 2004; Di Silvio 2011; Msibi 2011; Swarr 2012; van Klinken & Gunda 2012; Dartnall & Jewkes 2013; Ratele 2014; Vincent & Howell 2014; Hockett & Saucier 2015; Sarojini Nadar & Adriaan van Klinken 2018; Holland-Muter 2019; Matzopoulos et al. 2020; Hatcher et al. 2022) shows corrective rape (Di Silvio 2011) and hate crime against Black African lesbian have become an epidemic (Jewkes & Abrahams 2002a; Sandfort et al. 2015) and a rape nightmare (Gqola, P. 2015) in South Africa despite the progressive legislation and the country known globally organising for its yearly pride festival annually.

South Africa is known as the "rape capital" (Govender, 2023, p. 1). To combat GBV on Black lesbians in South Africa, various international (Escobar & Baptista; Faulkner 2005) and local human rights scholars (Llm & Karels; Moffett 2006; Andrew Martin, Anne Kelly 2009b; Meyer 2012) have continued to mobilise campaigns protesting violence against LGBTIQ people, who have become targets for hate crimes. Zanele Muholi, a queer activist (Muholi et al. 2012), worked through her visual art to develop awareness among Black lesbians to safeguard personal safety and stepped-up their legal right to bring the perpetrators to justice (du Toit 2013). Unfortunately, despite advocacy campaigns (Anon.) and awareness-raising initiatives by academic activists (Andrew Martin, Anne Kelly 2009a; Naidoo & Karels 2012; Lake 2017; Wilson 2017) and local human rights organisations (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) 2016), violence against Black lesbians remained a common occurrence. Few studies criticised South African law enforcement for victim blame and lack of accountability toward LGBTIQ people when reporting the perpetrators (Gqola, P. D. 2007a; Rumney & van der Bijl 2010; Gqola, P. 2015). Evidence of gender regimes can be seen in how police and officials of the criminal justice system respond to gender-based violence (GBV) of LBGTI people. The attitudes and behaviours of public servants, such as the police and other law enforcement officials, when called on to intervene in police lack of support show gendered institutions in public service. Gqola (ibid.), an acclaimed South African feminist, in her book *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, reminded all South African women they are all potential rape victims who fear of rape. She argues one must not differentiate or assume rape against lesbian women is more significant than heterosexual women. For her (ibid.), all rape on women and men is rape. Gqola (ibid.) also argues about the South African justice system and how police officials, criminal court officials, and politicians fail to address GBV in South Africa on a national scale (Gqola, P. D. 2007a). Gqola (Gqola, P. 2015) navigated studies on South African fear of rape around critical intersectionality issues and showed the influence of culture, religion, class, race, ethnicity, age, and geographical location on the feminist understanding of the rape script (ibid.).

Political violence ended along with the apartheid system (Du Toit 2016) BV persists and has various manifestations (e.g., 'corrective rape (Di Silvio 2011),' femicide (Jewkes & Abrahams 2002b), rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, homophobic attacks on LGBTIQ people (Msibi 2011; Ratele 2014; Vincent & Howell 2014), virginity testing (Smythe 2015), sexual mutilation of girls (female circumcision) and sexual assault (ibid.). Such forms of violence are the post-apartheid continuum of gender violence. Violence and rape within the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic are also escalating, which is confirmed in a cross-sectional study conducted among South African men (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle 2011). There are cases where HIV/AIDS-infected men rape young girls who are virgins to "cure" themselves by transferring the disease to the girl (Leclerc-Madlala & Susanne-Leclerc-Madlala 2003). Hate crimes have been one of the core activists for the South African women's movement and various women's organisations in the country. This article delves into the daily experiences of 17 Black lesbian rape survivors living in township areas. By exploring their first-hand accounts, the study aims at various forms of motivated violence and its connection to forbidden desire in this context. Shedding light on the experiences of Black lesbian women who have suffered violence and discrimination based on their sexual orientation, desire serves a significant social and scientific purpose.

The study will address the gaps in the literature on rape perpetration and sexual violence on Black lesbians in townships of South Africa. Research has shown that rape and sexual violence against LGBTIQ people are prevalent in South Africa, particularly in townships with high levels of poverty and crime. However, there is a lack of research on the experiences of Black lesbians who were seeking help and support from law enforcement and public healthcare workers after the hate crime legislation was rectified in South Africa. This study used a qualitative approach to data collected during the writing of PhD dissertation. The study contributes to the gap in the misconception in Black queer studies and gender studies that sexual violence is unrelated to structural or institutional violence, which less harms LGBTIQ people. By exploring the challenges faced by Black lesbians when seeking support after experiencing rape, the study aims to inform healthcare professionals and law enforcement on how to provide more effective support for the LGBTIQ population in South Africa. The study will also contribute to a broader understanding of the experiences of Black lesbians in townships who face multiple forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Overall, this research study has significant implications for addressing the issue of sexual violence in South Africa and promoting the well-being of Black lesbian women in townships.

2. Conceptual Framework

Galtung's (1994,) concepts of direct, structural, and cultural violence from a feminist outlook to better understand what motivates rape within the South African context. By doing so, Galtung's (Galtung 1990) theory violence triangle was used to provide a robust framework within which corrective rape can be interpreted as direct, structural and cultural violence against lesbians. It will also allow the identification of the interplay between the victims, perpetrators(Gqola, P. D. 2007b), culture(Gunkel 2010; Msibi 2011; Bongmba 2016), and the South African State(Di Silvio 2011; Swarr 2012; Ratele 2014, Anon. 2023f).

Galtung(Galtung 1994) postulates that structural and sexual violence intersect with many aspects of daily life. Often, people's wealth and personal accomplishments are defined by education, the community they live in, and the overall structure of social institutions, which ensure the fulfilment of peoples' needs. When people feel unsafe, or an individual or the community at large is harmed, there is no choice but to depend upon the intervention of social institutions, such as law enforcement officials. Similarly, people rely on the support of leaders and service providers in healthcare institutions, especially during health crises. Hence, the current study includes details of how Black lesbians experience their interaction with healthcare professionals when they report rape incidents and seek help for post-rape counselling.

2.1 Defining Structural Violence

The term structural violence was coined by Galtung (1969) (who defined three types of violence: (a) personal (direct), (b) structural (indirect, e.g., consequences of poverty), and cultural (e.g., media glorification of violence) (see Figure 4). A lack of understanding exists regarding how different forms of violence interplay with the daily aspects of people's lives. People often hear about violence as merely a form of direct violence; however, there is much more to violence. Furthermore, structural violence is included in feminist studies of peace and conflict(Alexander). I employed a structural violence perspective to establish intersectionality in exploring the lived experience of corrective rape survivors in townships and how rape affected and changed their lives. Corrective rape(Di Silvio 2011; Gqola, P. 2015; Koraan & Geduld 2015) crimes are often associated with Black lesbians residing in townships(Jewkes, Penn-Kekana & Rose-Junius 2005; Moffett 2006; Koraan & Geduld 2015; Lake 2017; Wilson 2017). The association is because the Black lesbian and the township environment remain racially segregated; the residential area remains undeveloped and is perceived as an apartheid legacy(Buiten & Naidoo 2016) for poor people(Moffett 2006). Townships, in general, because of their low status, are areas that continue to experience crime, causing social problems for residents. Undoubtedly, South African scholars have produced vast amounts of material with intersectionality lenses, writing on the historical evidence of the consequences of abject poverty, including exploitation, violence, rape and slavery, all of which are remnants of the country's former apartheid regime and colonisation (Gqola, P. D. 2007a, 2007b; Gqola, P. 2015); Gunkel(Gunkel 2010) and Judge(Judge, M. 2018; Judge, Melanie 2020). Galtung's (1969, 1990, 1994, 1996) theory has limitations because he does not examine gender as a social construct whereby women face inequalities based on their gender. Galtung's (1969) structural violence triangle would benefit from a feminist framework that could enrich the knowledge gap to ideally bring about the social acceptance of LGBT people and thereby re-write the

cultural norms of corrective rape in South African townships. Acceptance of alternative sexuality starts with self-acceptance, followed by family- and social acceptance and the abolishment of corrective rape (Muholi, 2014).

3. Methodology

3.1 The study design and population sample

This study focused on the experiences of Black lesbians residing in townships in Cape Town, South Africa. The sample size consisted of 17 participants recruited in 2017. The participants' socio-demographics, ages, sexual orientations, and education were represented descriptively (Anon. 2023b). The study was anchored in feminist methodology (Lane 2016); however, some researchers have argued against using statistical inference in feminist research. In contrast, Judith Stacey (Stacey 1988) claimed there is no uniform canon of feminist research principles. Some studies show (Abramson & Dohan 2015) that feminists have noted that nonparametric and descriptive statistics are often considered acceptable and appropriate (Lecompte & Goetz 1982). Current trends in some ethnography research areas do not preclude using/borrowing ways of presenting findings or data in a more digestible or intuitive format, such as "ethnoarrays" (see the figures in Abramson & Dohan (Abramson & Dohan 2015).

To sum up, my position is twofold. Firstly, [feminist]ethnography should strive to be a social science, not simply a narrative mode of humanistic impinge upon the spirit of feminist ethnography. Secondly, by using histograms or inferential inquiry, the credibility of its published research can be strengthened by being more forthcoming, accessible, and open. Intuitively, a first step toward achieving this entails sharing data with a reader in a less cryptic and more straightforward manner, which can be done using graphs and tables. Although this way of conveying factual aspects of a research participant's biography might be at odds with the "spirit" of feminist ethnography, it is indeed at one with that of scholarship in its general, knowledge-seeking/creating sense. A similar argument was recently made by (Lecompte & Goetz 1982), given that knowledge accumulation depends on what we deem to qualify as data (or information), enhancing its transparency.

3.2 Socio-Demographics of Study Participants

The inclusion criteria required that participants were Black lesbians who resided in the townships of Cape Town during the data collection or had previously lived in the area. Participants were also required to be 18 or older and provide voluntary consent to participate in the study. The oldest person in my sample was 53 years old (hence, the sample range = 34 years). Heterosexual Black women were excluded from the study.

The age distribution of the participants was as follows: one participant was under 20 years old, while the majority (11 of 17) were between 20 and 40 years old. Regarding self-identified sexual orientation, over 75% of the respondents identified as "Butch", while only 18% identified as "Femme". "Futch" was a relatively rare identity (6%). Regarding education levels, most participants (76%) had some tertiary education, while a smaller proportion had only completed high school (23%). Only one participant held a university degree. The income levels of the participants varied significantly. Excluding the 19-year-old who was a non-earner subsisting on student loans, the median income of those under 40 was higher than that of those over 40. The median income was 5,000 Rand per month and 60,000 Rand per year.

Table XX, YY, ZZ, and GG Socio-Demographics of Study Participants

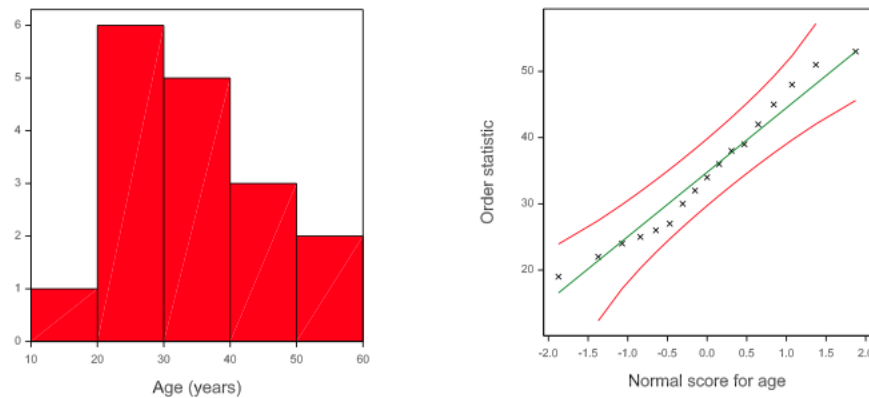


Table: XX:

Histogram and normal probability plots (left and right, respectively) for the distribution of age data of the $n = 17$ respondents from in-depth interviews in 2016-2017; ethnography fieldwork was done in Cape Town, South Africa. According to the distribution of my sample of black lesbian respondents (Fig XX, left panel), just one was under 20 years old, with the majority (11 of 17) being 20 to 40 years old. The normal probability plot (Fig. XX, right panel) suggested this sample's age followed a Gaussian distribution, which was confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality ($W = 0.9585$, $P = 0.604$). The age data had a standard deviation of 10.46, and its measure of dispersion relative to the mean, given as the coefficient of variation, was 30.07 ($CV = \text{ratio of mean to SD}$). The respondents had a mean age ($\pm SE$, standard error of the mean) of 34.8 ± 2.54 years. The variance of the sample was 109.3, and there was little evidence to suggest a skewed distribution (skewness = 0.269).

Table: YY:

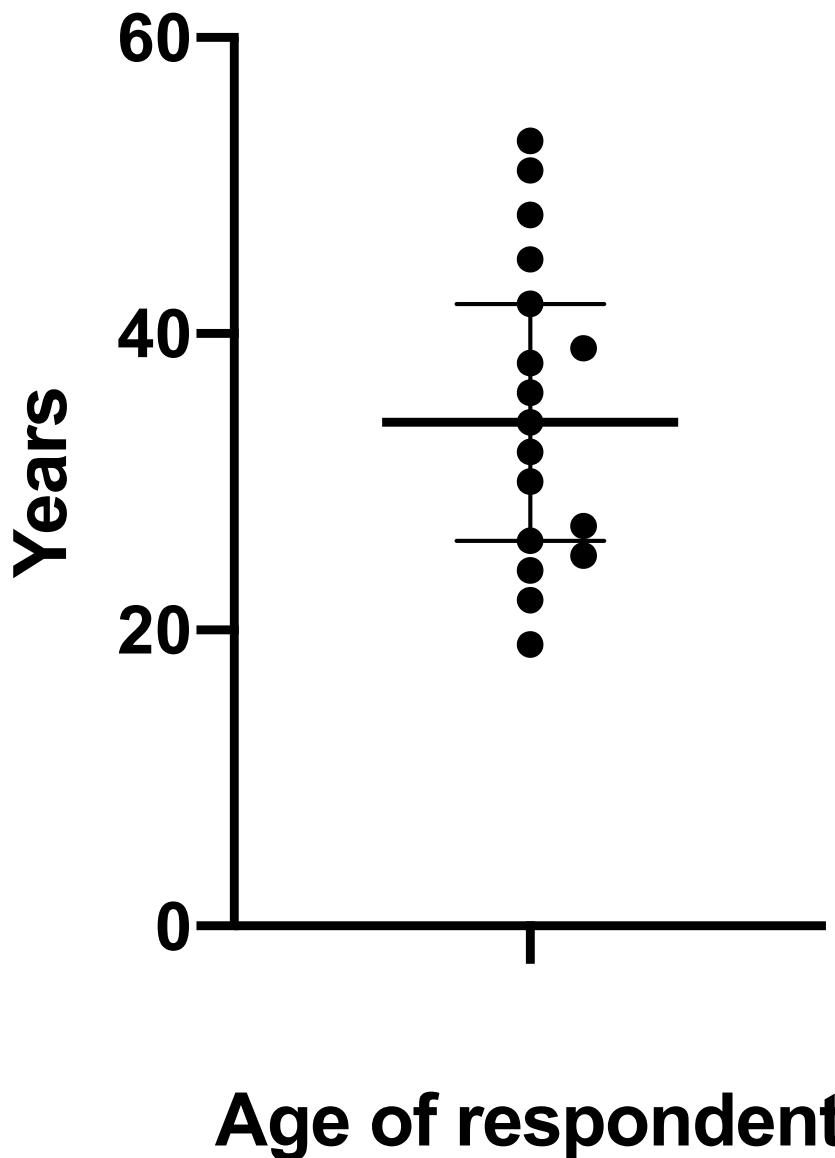
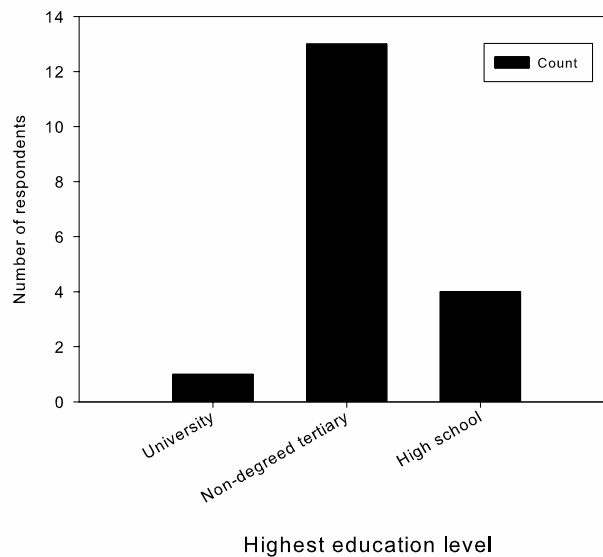
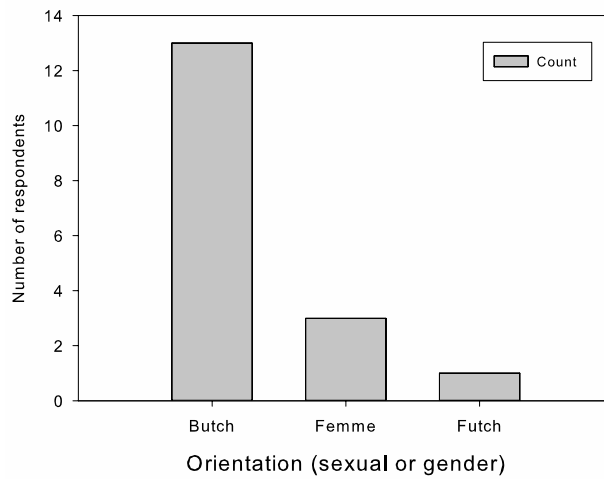


Fig. YY. Boxplot of the age data of the n = 17 respondents from in-depth interviews in 2016- 2017 ethnography fieldwork done in Cape Town, South Africa. The whiskers are 95% confidence intervals on the median value (thick solid bar). The boxplot above shows the actual age values of all 17 respondents. The median was 34 years, which is very close to the mean value, further confirming that the age of my sample was normally distributed. Only the youngest person (19 years old = minimum value) fell outside the range of 10th/90th percentiles; this was the only possible outlier, corroborated by the age's low kurtosis value (-1.078) data distribution. The oldest person in my sample was 53 years old (hence, the sample range = 34 years).

Table ZZ:

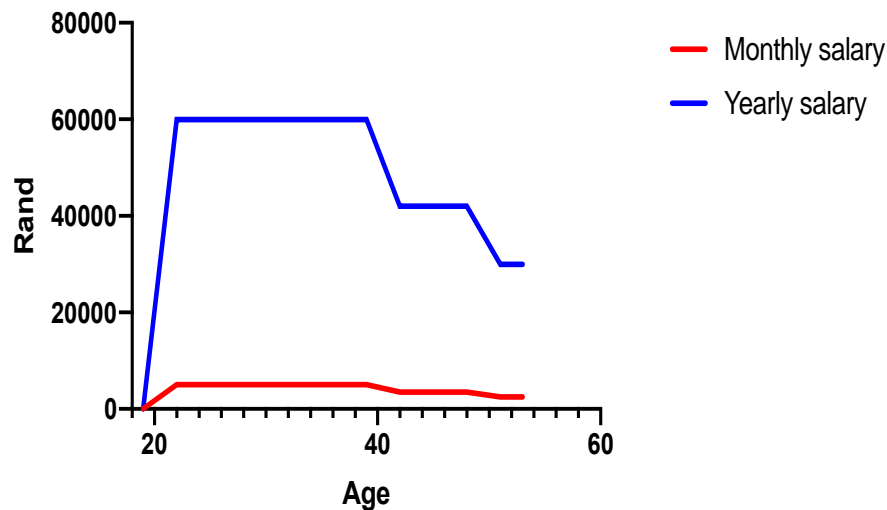
Table: ZZ: (bottom)



Bar charts showing the distribution of the n = 17 respondents regarding their self-identified orientation (top panel) and education attained.

Data came from in-depth interviews in 2017 ethnographic fieldwork in South Africa. Table ZZ (see below) reveals that just over 75% of my black lesbian respondents self-identified as "Butch", whereas only 18% were "Femme". However, being "Futch" is relatively rare (6%). Regarding the sample's education levels, it was also rare for respondents to hold a university degree (just one did, ~6%), but most (76%) did have some tertiary schooling. A smaller proportion had only completed high school (23%). The graph below (Fig. GG) depicts the income of each respondent plotted as a function of her age. The 19-year-old has zero employable earnings (being a student, subsisting on loans). Income level is constant for those aged 20 through the late 30s, but afterwards, it sharply declines. The median income was 5,000 Rand and 60,000 Rand per month and year, respectively. Excluding the 19-year-old, those under 40 had a significantly higher income than those black lesbians older than 40 (two-sample nonparametric test, Mann-Whitney U = 3.5, P < 0.001; samples sizes were n = 11 and 5 for the two groupings, respectively).

Table ZZ:



3.3 Sampling Procedure

Black lesbians residing in Cape Town, South Africa, were recruited through purposive snowball sampling (Heckathorn 2011). Snowball sampling was preferred for this study as the Black lesbian rape survivors population is vulnerable and hidden (Sydor 2013). This method involved finding prospective participants through referrals from individuals who fit the study's inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling (Thompson 2012) was then used to select participants who met the requirements intentionally based on their experience with the phenomenon under investigation. However, snowballing was introduced to preserve the participants' confidentiality (ibid.). This study prioritised carefully selecting participants and preserving their anonymity while researching vulnerable populations.

3.4 Data sources and data collection

For data collection, participants were given an English information sheet explaining the study's purpose, title, and consent details. Demographic materials such as age, gender, sexual orientation, geographic location, and education level were collected for each participant upon receiving their consent to participate in this study voluntarily.

3.4.1 Interviews

Seventeen individuals participated in face-to-face, in-depth interviews, including semi-structured and structured interviews. The face-to-face interviews varied from 50 to 90 minutes and were divided into three stages. In the first stage, participants were asked a broad question: "Tell me your story in the order you are comfortable to begin." (Wengraf 2001a, p. 6) The researcher took notes without interruptions. In the second and third stages, follow-up questions were generated based on keywords provided by the participants (Wengraf 2001a, 2001b, 2004, 2019; Wengraf & Chamberlayne 2013). Additionally, a single unstructured interview was conducted with each participant to understand their life stories without probing due to the sensitivity of the topic and the risk. All the participants are provided with counselling information readily available to them.

3.4.2 Trustworthiness

In this feminist Black queer ethnographic study (Lane 2016), which focuses on the experiences of 17 Black lesbian rape survivors in townships, it is crucial to establish trust as the researcher is an insider and an outsider (O'Leary 2009). The recruitment process was challenging, as it is often difficult to fully gain confidence in the recruitment process because of the researcher's outsider position interviewing a group of individuals with whom the researcher does not share

class, social location, nationality and ethnicity, which is an ethical dilemma in feminist research (Ramazanoğlu & Holland 2002). At the same time, the researcher was in an insider position, a student at Rhodes University in South Africa and a coloured person who also gained her participants' trust over time. The researcher gains confidence, and the respondents are willing to depart their knowledge. Being reflexive and self-reflexive (ibid.) with one's positionality (Kirsch 1999a), having a position in the power axes becomes a mental academic exercise. As the researcher is aware, the respondents' social, cultural, political, and economic background, experience, education and embodied presence in the world provide extensive knowledge of how their experiences have shaped their worldview (Kirsch 1999b). The researcher applied reflexivity (England 2010), a feminist compass to beware of power position and differences, including class, age, race/ethnicity, and life experiences that may influence the researcher as well as the respondents' perspectives about her, which might also limit them not sharing every detail of their lives. Feminist research ethics (ibid.) take into consideration social categories such as power (ibid.) and intersectionality position between the researcher and research subject during the interview process and making oneself aware of the exploitative nature of privilege as well as unequal axes of power relations in research in the quest of knowledge production itself as an exercise of power (ibid.; Peake 2017). It is crucial to transform impersonal relationships into genuine friendships during the interview process to build trust and rapport. This is often considered the cornerstone of a successful interview, as it allows for a deeper connection and more open dialogue (Oakley (Anon. 2023c) and Reinharz (Reinharz & Oxford 1992)). Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity should be ensured to protect the participants' identities and minimise any potential harm they may face due to their involvement.

Additionally, providing a thorough and transparent account of the research process is crucial to demonstrate credibility and confirmability. This includes detailing the methodology, data collection techniques, and analysis procedures, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how the study was conducted. The reliability of the study's findings can be enhanced through the triangulation of data sources and member checking. Triangulation involves using multiple data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to validate and corroborate the findings. On the other hand, member checking involves involving the participants in the research process to confirm the accuracy and relevance of the collected data. Adhering to these principles, the researcher produces a trustworthy and valuable ethnographic study that sheds light on the experiences of Black queer individuals in townships. This study has the potential to contribute significantly to the existing knowledge and understanding of this Black lesbian township community, ultimately fostering social change and promoting inclusivity.

3.4.3 Ethical Review Procedures

My research proposal went through two ethical reviews. First, it involved meeting the requirements of the Ethical Review Committee at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (South Africa), and the second involved synthesising information in the written consent letter to the participants for my doctoral research with the Triangle Project in Cape Town, South Africa. All the requirements of the Ethical Review committee members were met, and Miss Noelle Obers from the administration informed me that ethical clearance had been granted (honest clearance application number: RU-HSD-16-04-0015). All respondents signed informed consent forms and had the right to withdraw from being interviewed at any time. Ethical clearance application number: RU-HSD-16-04-0015

3.5 Data analysis:

Based on the experiences of 17 Black lesbian rape survivors in townships, a thematic content analysis coding reveals several key themes. These themes include the pervasive nature of homophobic violence, the intersectionality of oppression experienced by Black queer individuals, and the lack of support and justice for survivors. Survivors also reported feeling unsupported by their families and communities, with some even being forced to leave their homes. Data were gathered on each participant's demographic characteristics, including age, gender, sexual preference, location, level of education, and income. Mac Pro Book using voice recording was done using thematic content analysis using NVivo transcription (Wainwright, Update & 2010). In a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of 17 Black lesbian rape survivors, it is essential to utilise NVivo transcription. The tool facilitates qualitative data analysis and NVivo; like all analysis programs, CAQDAS are not without flaws (Zamawe 2015). The first step is to import the audio recordings of the interviews into the NVivo system, the latter audio file converted to mp3 (ibid.). By doing so, the rich and diverse narratives these survivors share can be readily accessed for further analysis. Next, accurate and

complete transcriptions of the interviews were generated using NVivo transcription (McLafferty, times & 2006). The researcher ensures the transcriptions' analysis, capturing every word and nuance expressed by the survivors (ibid.).

The researcher transferred coded data to NVivo transcription into software (ibid.) to identify themes that emerged from the transcriptions. Then, the researcher explores themes tied to violence, family, police healthcare workers, and community healthcare workers. A comprehensive understanding of the survivors' experiences can be developed by coding relevant text segments to these themes. The researcher also created nodes within NVivo Transcription (ibid.) to represent each theme, allowing for organised and systematic analysis. These nodes serve as conceptual containers for related text segments, enabling the researcher to locate and analyse specific aspects of the survivors' narratives in this study (Wainwright, Update & 2010).

4. Results

The study highlights the importance of understanding the experiences of Black lesbians residing in townships in Cape Town, South Africa. The findings suggest that more research is needed to address the population group's unique challenges. It is important to note that the sample size is small, so the findings should be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless, this study provides a valuable contribution to the literature on the experiences of Black lesbians in South Africa.

Researcher: Tell me your story in the order you are comfortable to begin. I'll just take notes with no interruptions (Wengraf 2004, 2019).

Respondent B: My name is..., and I'm from XX Cape townships. And I'm 27 years old and live in the townships. I went to drama school in the location, and we won a competition. I went to the tavern for some beers. My friend fought with her boyfriend at the tavern, and he thought I was dating his girlfriend. I wanted to pee and went to the toilet, and he followed me. After three smacks, I realised he was beating me.

Researcher: (Wengraf 2004, 2019) Tell me your story in the order you are comfortable to begin. I'll just take notes with no interruptions.

Respondent C: After the rape, I didn't go to school for three years. I only told a childhood friend what happened. She told me to tell my mother. I told her my mother wouldn't believe me. We contacted the counsellor at school, and She called in my mother. My mother was shocked, but she said she knew something was wrong. The rapist stayed away, making excuses for not visiting us anymore.

(Wengraf 2004, 2019).

Respondent L: I was going to school in grade 9, going home from Basketball practice, and I saw this car. They poured something into my eyes, and I couldn't see where I was going. Three guys took me to this unknown place, the one raped me and kept me in that place for four days, and on all those days, he raped me. My parents noticed that I was pregnant, but because they were Christian, I couldn't have an abortion. The second rape was in 2002.

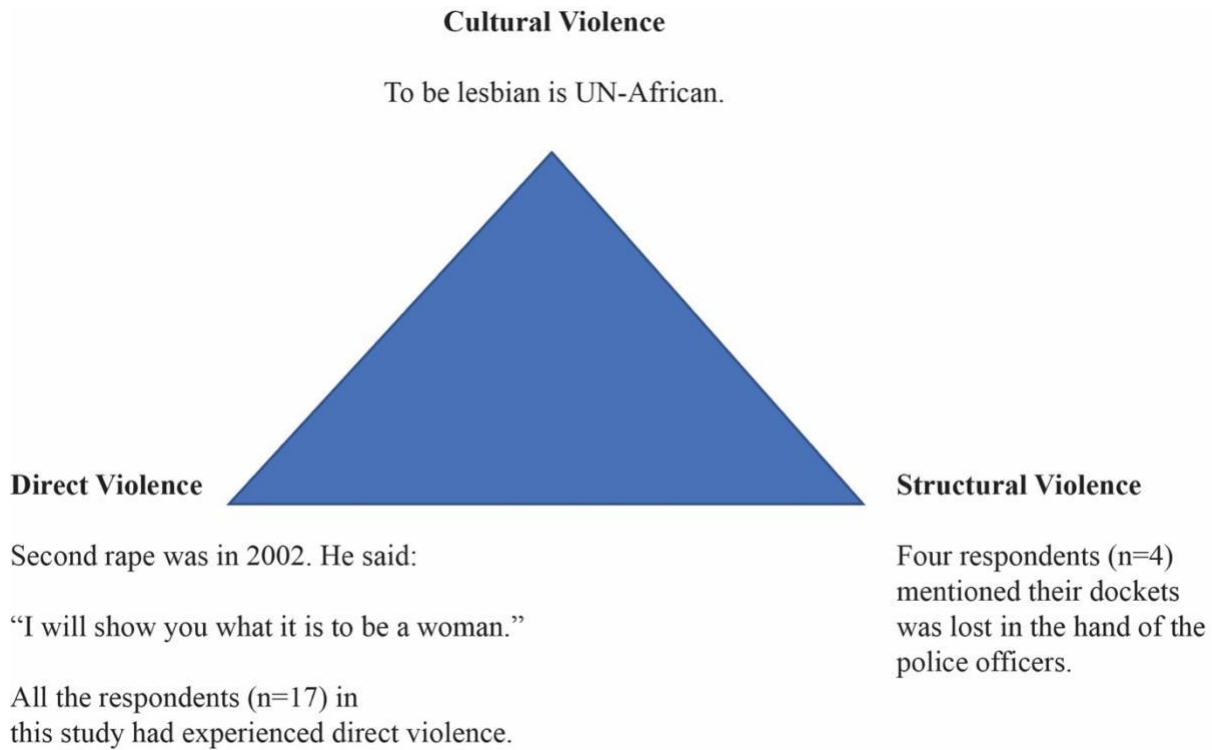


Table ZZ1: (see above)

4.1 Discussion

This qualitative study conducted in Cape Town aims to bring attention to the experiences of Black lesbians who have faced a lack of support from public health workers and law enforcement following their sexual assault. The study seeks to raise awareness and advocate for queer-friendly healthcare safe space development of more effective administration of police organisations support systems for the LGBTIQ population. By highlighting the shared narratives of these survivors, the research aims to shed light on the challenges and barriers for LGBTIQ questioning rape survivors seeking police support. Black lesbians in townships confront a multitude of hurdles when it comes to accessing support services after experiencing rape. The intersectionality of their identities often compounds these challenges as they navigate the complexities of their racial, sexual, and gender identities within an environment that may be hostile or unsupportive. One of the primary difficulties faced by Black lesbians in townships is the pervasive stigma and discrimination they encounter. Society's deeply ingrained prejudices and stereotypes surrounding homosexuality and race further exacerbate the already traumatic experience of rape. Discrimination can manifest in various ways, including victim-blaming, lack of empathy, and dismissing their experiences.

Respondent D: The police traced the calls. I fell pregnant again. I now have two boys aged 15. Both cases were reported to the police, but dockets went missing.

The evidence provided in the testimonies highlights a concerning lack of accountability within law enforcement when it comes to handling cases involving profile D. Galtung (1990) puts forth the notion that violence is a social condition that degrades the humanity of individuals, where violence is used as a means of communication between the subject and the object. According to Galtung, violence is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon, illustrated by the three corners of his triangle. While "institutional violence" is a commonly used term, Galtung argues that "structural violence" is more appropriate as it encompasses abstract concepts not limited to specific institutions. For instance, instances of police bias and prejudiced ideas support using the term institutional violence, as they provide concrete examples. Furthermore, Galtung mentions that due to limited resources within police institutions, violence can manifest within the structure itself. Galtung's (1990) violence triangle (see table ZZ1) aligns with the personal

testimonies of Black lesbian individuals who have reported rape as an act of violence to the police. Galtung advises against fixating solely on violence and instead encourages us to view structural violence as social injustice.

5. Conclusion

Limited availability and accessibility of support resources pose significant obstacles for Black lesbians in townships. Townships' healthcare clinics often lack the necessary infrastructure and resources to help the needs of survivors of sexual violence adequately, let alone those specific to the intersectional experiences of Black lesbians. This scarcity of support services leaves survivors feeling isolated, unheard, and without the necessary tools to heal and recover. Traditional gender roles, patriarchal norms, and cultural beliefs can contribute to the marginalisation and invisibility of this population. These norms may discourage survivors from coming forward, fearing further discrimination or victimisation.

In light of these challenges, it is crucial to raise awareness and advocate for more effective support systems specifically tailored to the needs of Black lesbians in townships. This entails not only addressing the systemic issues that perpetuate discrimination but also amplifying the voices and experiences of survivors themselves. By creating safe spaces, promoting inclusivity, and fostering a more empathetic and understanding society, law enforcement and public healthcare workers should work towards dismantling the barriers that prevent Black lesbians from accessing the support they desperately need and deserve for their well-being. By raising awareness and advocating for change, the author hopes to promote more effective support systems and ultimately create a society that ensures the safety, well-being, and empowerment of all individuals, irrespective of their race, gender, or sexual orientation.

5.1 Limitations of the study

The study's limitations focus on Cape Town's LGBTIQ organisations due to the researchers' limited accessibility and connection to the LGBTIQ community outside the city. The research was conducted in Cape Town, and participants were recruited with the assistance of a Tringle Project fieldworker. Future studies should aim to include multiple provinces to gain a more comprehensive understanding from the perspective of rape survivors. This would provide a broader scope and facilitate a more nuanced analysis from rape survivors' perspective.

5.2 Recommendations

Further studies are recommended to address the issue of gender-based violence against Black lesbians in South African townships. Black Queer studies should focus on various aspects to comprehensively understand the problem and inform effective interventions and policies.

Firstly, a comparative analysis should examine gender-based violence against Black lesbians in different townships across South Africa. This will help identify regional variations in the prevalence and nature of violence, providing a broader understanding of the issue.

Additionally, the intersectionality of gender-based violence against Black lesbians should be explored, considering factors such as race, class, and age. This will enable researchers to develop a more nuanced understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by different groups within the Black lesbian community. Research on community-based interventions and initiatives that aim to prevent and address gender-based violence in townships is also necessary. Assessing the impact of these interventions and identifying best practices that can be replicated in other areas will contribute to more effective strategies to combat violence. Ethnography on the mental health consequences of gender-based violence on Black lesbian survivors is crucial.

Competing interests: The author of this article categorically states that she has no financial gain in conducting the study or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced the author in writing this article.

Funding information: The researcher did not receive any grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors in South Africa or internationally.

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