

CONCEPTUALIZING SURVIVORSHIP IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND: APPLYING AN AFROCENTRIC LENS

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LOCATION:

The most populous city in Scotland and the third most populous city in the United Kingdom overall, founded in the 6th century, Glasgow is home to approximately 600,000 people. Glasgow started as a small town on the River Clyde and gradually manifested as the "Second City of the British Empire" by way of the industrial revolution.The city expanded through the trade of sugar, cotton, and tobacco with American colonies; it now prospers as one of the world's wealthiest cities and has the largest economy in Scotland.



GLOBAL INDEPENDENT STUDY:

The purpose of this Graduate Independent Study (GIS) was to conceptualize survivorship in the community of Glasgow. This was done through qualitative primary and secondary data collection on preventative measures, the political climate, intersections with the healthcare and criminal justice systems, available options for survivor support, and more.

AGENCY CORRESPONDENCE:

As part of my GIS, I had the privilege of conducting a research interview with the Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis Center (GCRC). Founded in 1976, this "by women, for women" agency supports approximately 2500 women and girls who have experienced sexual violence per year. GCRC has three focal categories of service: triage and survivor support; justice and community support; and consultancy and training support.

Triage & Survivor Support: Free, confidential interventions and trauma-informed survivor advocacy.

Justice & Community Support: Legal advocacy provided to individuals who wish to report sexual violence.

Consultancy & Training Support: Sexual assault prevention and bystander intervention education.

GLASGOW AND CLYDE RAPE CRISIS

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A GLOBAL CONCERN:

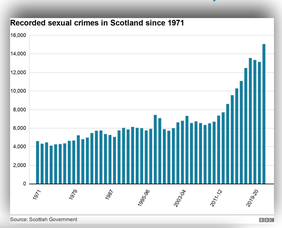
A. RELEVANT STATISTICS (GENERAL)

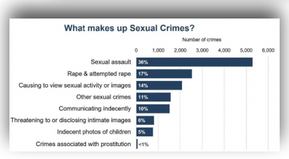
- Women and girls experience sexual violence at higher rates
- Native Americans are approximately 2.5x more likely to experience sexual assault than all other races
- For every Black woman who reports an experience of sexual violence, at least 15 do not report
- Every 68 seconds, an American is sexually assaulted
- Majority of attempted and completed sexual assaults are perpetuated by male-identifying individuals

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B. RELEVANT STATISTICS (UK & SCOTLAND-SPECIFIC)

- Every seven minutes, a woman is raped in the United Kingdom
- Sexual assault accounted for 36% of sexual crimes in Scotland from 2022-2023
- The number of sexual offenses in Scotland has steadily increased over the last decade
- Glasgow ranks second for Scottish cities with the highest rates of violent crime, which includes sexual offenses





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PROJECT FINDINGS/OUTCOMES:

1. Scotland's criminal justice system significantly limits the outcomes and delivery of the support that is available to experiencers of sexual violence, specifically those with marginalized identities.
2. Individuals residing in what are called "deprived areas" are the least likely to seek support, and therefore are the least represented at GCRC; however, the risk of sexual assault is exceedingly higher in these areas.
3. The Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform Bill is pushing for a trauma-informed framework to be used across the Scottish Justice System, particularly in response to cases involving sexual violence.
4. Rac**ism**, class**ism**, and sex**ism** are risk factors for experiencing sexual violence.

Currently, I am working on a short report and audiovisuals that further details my research.



RELEVANT COURSE CONNECTIONS:

A. SW509: Essentials of Community and Organizational Practice

This course helped me to develop the practical skills required for engaging in policy, programming, and community-based interventions. With an emphasis on socially just, culturally-sensitive, holistic, interpersonal, and reflective assessment and data collection, this course provided me with a stepping-stone for completing ethical macro research.

B. SW611: An Afrocentric Approach to Practice w/ African-American/Black Individuals, Families, and Communities

As a student in this course, I was encouraged to freely explore my curiosities and apply African-centered perspectives, values, and principles to my learning and experiences. This course provided me with a framework to view the world, which informs my social work practice. Hence, why I aimed to apply an Afrocentric lens to my research in Scotland, whose ethnic population is **96%** white-identifying.

RELEVANT CAREER CONNECTIONS:

In the short-term, this project experience has given me a foundation to build upon as I continue my internship experience with U-M's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) and my role as a co-coordinator of SAPAC's Graduate Research, Outreach, Workshops, and Evaluation (GROWE) program. From this global experience, I was able to identify areas of growth within these organizations and my role(s).

Additionally, as I project further into my future, as an aspiring culturally-specific Trauma and Abuse Advocate/Therapist, my project has helped me to bridge my experiences with micro and macro practice.



SKILLS DEVELOPED:

- Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Adaptive and Innovative Thinking
- Engaging in Diversity and Difference
- Practicing Effective Global Communication

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. Some places are [already] engaging in Afrocentric standards of practice without having exposure to the terminology.
2. While by definition, Afrocentrism places an emphasis on African culture, experience, and contribution, an Afrocentric perspective/worldview can be adopted by *anyone* making an effort to dismantle Eurocentrism. That is, we can all benefit from being Afrocentric, particularly as we think about social work practice.
3. Many theories have circulated globally in an effort to 'explain' why sexual violence happens as opposed to conceptualizing survivorship.

ADVICE:

- Approach your entire global experience with cultural humility.
- Do your research on the social *and* cultural norms of the country that you are visiting. With this, ensure that although their 'normality' may be new to you, you can respect the difference(s) and ethically engage with the community.
- Make a connection prior to your departure— it can make your transition much smoother upon arrival. Even if you never meet in person, they can share recommendations and tips.
- Research the accessibility of public transportation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

My deepest gratitude to the Office of Global Activities and the SSW Alumni Board for financially supporting my Graduate Independent Study. In addition, thank you to Dr. Camille Quinn for believing in the project and Dr. Daicia Price for demonstrating Afrocentrism so effortlessly. Certainly not least, a special thank you to Mom, Dad & Tiyanda; Mikey & Jaden; Uncle Tommy; Uncle Zach; Grandma Iva; Kelly Nephew, and Uncle who wishes to remain anonymous.

None of this is possible without your continuous support!