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Protecting Fido, protecting the family

Developing domestic violence law
to include companion animals

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This article argues that by developing domestic violence laws to include and protect individual companion animals in the home, it might be possible to prevent violence against other victims in the home. Protecting a companion animal from persistent violence by, for example, having properly integrated reporting systems between government departments, could protect various vulnerable members of the family. The article briefly sketches the status of intimate partner violence in South Africa and explores the current implementation of the Domestic Violence Act. The status of companion animal abuse in South Africa and other jurisdictions is briefly explored. The article then shows that an intersection of violence exists in the home between women, children and companion animal and that protecting specific victims of violence (such as companion animals) can potentially act as a mechanism that can protect all victims from future or persisting violence.

“It is neither new nor coincidental to accord lesser importance to violence done to marginalised groups such as animals and women.”

N Taylor and H Fraser²

“Women residing at domestic violence shelters... were nearly 11 times more likely to report that their partner had hurt or killed pets than a comparison group of women who said they had not experienced intimate violence.”

F Ascione et al.³

Introduction

During the Covid 'lockdown' period of 2020 to 2021, South Africa experienced what could be described as an onslaught of gender-based violence (GBV). President Cyril Ramaphosa famously declared that gender-based violence in South Africa during this period was "a second pandemic".⁴

GBV rates steadily increased in South Africa since 2017, with a decrease in 2020/2021. This decrease could be due to barriers to reporting during the Covid lockdown period or alternatively, fewer sexual offences committed because people were mandated to stay at their homes and thus there were fewer acquaintance and stranger perpetrated sexual offences. The number of sexual offences reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS), however, remains high, with 49 660 cases reported in 2017/2018, to 46 214 cases in 2020/2021.⁵

During 2019, the increase of GBV in the country inspired the hashtag movement #AmINext.⁶ The movement gained support and went viral following a series of GBV cases, such as that of Uyinene Mrwetyana, a young woman who was raped and murdered in a post office by a post office worker in Claremont,⁷ as well as a female boxing champion, Leighandre Jegels, who was killed by her policeman ex-partner, against whom she had a protection order.⁸ The movement spurred on anti-GBV marches in both the cities of Cape Town and Johannesburg as well as night vigils in support of victims at universities across the country.⁹

Importantly, violence against children during the same period was similarly unrelenting. The Children's Institute reported that during 2018/2019 child homicide rates increased by 2,9% from 985 in 2017/2018 to 1 014 in 2018/2019.¹⁰ The number of child homicides increased by 71 in the period of 2019/2020.¹¹ It was also found that younger children are at the greatest risk of being killed by a parent than

by any other individual.¹² Crittenden and Craig explain that child homicide most commonly occurs at the hands of parents of younger children and is often linked to child abuse and neglect.¹³ Furthermore, Stöckl et al. show, in a worldwide systemic review, that parents are the primary perpetrators of child homicide, finding that 56,5% of homicides were caused by parents and 77,8% of homicides were committed by parents in children under the age of one.¹⁴

Domestic violence is the most common form of violence between partners in South Africa, with violence against young children also primarily occurring within the home.¹⁵ What is not commonly noted, however, is that violence in the home is also committed against companion animals.¹⁶ For example, Ascione et al. found that 74% of women at a domestic violence (DV) shelter reported having a companion animal 12 months before entering the shelter and that 71% of those women reported that their intimate partner had either threatened violence or committed violence (including killing) against their companion animal during that time.¹⁷ Studies have shown that there is a correlation between intimate partner violence (domestic violence), child abuse and the abuse of companion animals in the home.

I argue that through developing domestic violence laws to include and protect individual companion animals in the home, it is possible to prevent violence in the home committed against other victims (may it be a child, woman, man or another companion animal). This may be achieved through including all victims of violence in the home in the protection order, having the perpetrator face criminal sanction for violations of the order, and in developing cross-reporting mechanisms between various departments to help assist in preventing further violence, where violence is detected against one victim.

I will begin by arguing the above by briefly sketching the status of intimate partner violence

in South Africa, as well as exploring the current implementation of the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 (DVA).¹⁸ I will then briefly explore the status of companion animal abuse on South Africa and other jurisdictions. I will then show that there is an intersection of violence in the home, which includes women, children and companion animals. It will then be argued that the objective of protecting all victims of domestic violence may in fact be achieved, by adopting a multi-pronged intervention.

Domestic violence in South Africa

Domestic violence is an umbrella term that often includes violence against women and children within the home. However, in the South African legal context, the term is expansively defined and includes “any person in a domestic relationship with a respondent”, where a domestic relationship includes forms of relationships such as a current or former marriage (in terms of any law, custom or religion); living or having lived together in a relationship similar to a marriage; parents of a child or persons who have/have had parental responsibility for a child; family members; persons who are or were engaged, dating or in a customary relationship, who are or were in an actual or perceived romantic, sexual or intimate relationship for any period of time; and persons who share or have recently shared a residence.¹⁹

The expansive definition of domestic violence in terms of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) shows some understanding by the legislature around the nature of violence in the home in so far as victims are not necessarily uniquely women or children and furthermore in many instances violence is not isolated to one individual.

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence are terms interchangeably used where violence is committed against an intimate partner (most often a woman).²⁰ Intimate partner violence is

described as one of the most common forms of violence against women according to the World Health Organization.²¹ In South Africa's rates of intimate partner violence are extremely high in comparison to other jurisdictions. For example, in a 2010 study by Gender Links and the Medical Research Council of South Africa it was found that almost 50% of women in South Africa will experience intimate partner violence within their lifetime.²² By comparison, in the United Kingdom (UK), one-third of women would experience intimate partner violence during the duration of their lifetime.²³

Intimate partner violence must be seen as occurring within a continuum of violence or a continuum of harm. Meyersfeld explains that a continuum of harm is constituted by “[a]cts of violence that are not in and of themselves severe [but] may become severe and debilitating if they induce an ongoing environment of fear and control from which the victim is unable to escape” and that it must be acknowledged that intimate partner violence is not always solely isolated to one act of physical harm or emotional abuse.²⁴ Instead,

A bout of violence may appear erratic or less serious in a vacuum, but if it is brought into the context of a continuum, it takes a far more pernicious character. Emotional and physical harm may operate separately, but generally are combined to spin a web of abuse in which the exigency of violence escalates.²⁵

This continuum of harm/violence can often escalate in degree and severity of violence over time with the final act of intimate partner violence culminating in death, referred to as intimate partner femicide.²⁶ Intimate partner femicide can include various forms of relationships and is in no way isolated to heterosexual relationships. However, according to the report of Rashida Manjoo, the former UN Special Rapporteur on violence against

women, its causes and consequences (2009–2015), the most common victims of intimate partner femicide are women in heterosexual relationships.²⁷

The intimate partner femicide rate in South Africa in 2000 was five times higher than the world average, which, according to Statistics South Africa had improved over the period of 2000–2005.²⁸ In 2016 the South African rate improved marginally, dropping to a rate of 4,8 times higher than the global average of 2,6. South Africa has been ranked by the World Health Organization as being the country with the fourth highest femicide rate out of 183 countries canvassed.²⁹

The problematic implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) in South Africa was recently re-emphasised in the Western Cape Provincial Parliamentary hearing on gender-based violence and femicide in the province.³⁰ It emerged from the hearing that, country-wide for the period of 2018/2019 there had been approximately 145 567 new applications for protection orders. Of these new applications only about 60% resulted in an interim protection order being issued. In more than 25% of cases no interim protection order was issued and instead a notice to show cause was given. If one considers that 145 567 applications are made each year, then approximately 36 392 individuals did not receive any form of protection during the period between application and until the return date to show cause. This issue becomes compounded in that 78% of all protection orders are applied for by women, which leaves these women in a vulnerable and potentially life-threatening situation with limited recourse during this waiting period.³¹

That so few interim protection orders are issued is surprising, considering the low standard of proof required by the DVA. In terms of section 5(2) the issuing of interim protection orders

are decided on a *prima facie* standard.³² The *prima facie* standard has been expressed as evidence which is considered “at first sight”, or “[evidence which is] sufficient to establish a fact ... unless disproved or rebutted”.³³ This would require that the complainant shows that the respondent is or has been committing an act of domestic violence and that undue hardship may be suffered by the complainant of the order is not issued immediately.³⁴ The presiding officer would then make the decision on whether or not to issue an interim protection order, based solely on the complainant’s assertions. No higher standard is required. Therefore, if on the face of the application there was an act of domestic violence (as per section 1), and the complainant may face harm, then the order must be granted.

With this in mind, we should ask whether the refusal to issue an interim protection order in so many instances is due to magistrates using a standard that is higher than the *prima facie* threshold set out under section 5(2)(a) of the DVA. Or are some forms of domestic violence, such as verbal, psychological or economic violence not being seen as sufficient for an interim protection order to be issued?

The latter does appear to be true in many instances of economic abuse. Husa explains that magistrates have a hesitancy around giving recourse for economic abuse, despite the express provisions in the DVA to include economic abuse (section 1) and section 7(3), which provides for emergency economic relief.³⁵ Husa’s findings are supported and furthered by Artz and Smythe, who find that magistrates remain conservative in granting orders in instances of sexual, psychological/emotional and economic abuse.³⁶ Artz and Smythe also cite “deep biases” in the decisions of magistrates, as some will show caution around the “intentions of women” as well as strong scepticism regarding the above three forms of violence.³⁷

Another issue that arises from the 2018/2019 statistics is that of the approximately 145 567 new applications only 34,8% culminated in the issuing of a final protection order.³⁸ This percentage has actually worsened over the past ten years, with a study by Tshwaranang in 2010 showing that only 40% of applications for protection orders were made final.³⁹

Tshwaranang cite that, although personal circumstances (such as a change of heart or intimidation) may make up part of the number of 'non-returns', the other factors seem to lean towards institutional issues. These include in which court the application was made, whether or not an interim order had been served, and the presence of the complainant at court.⁴⁰ Regarding the absence of the complainant, Artz and Smythe note that section 6(2) allows the court to proceed without the complainant being present, yet that this is largely ignored by magistrates.

Although there are numerous issues regarding the implementation of the DVA, this remains the primary piece of legislation to effect change around the high rates of violence in the home. Thus, while advocacy concerning the correct implementation of the Act must persist, other vehicles for change to ensure all victims of violence in the home are protected need to be explored and implemented. These developments and implementations could bring about positive changes in the number of domestic violence incidents committed against all groups, as well as correctly reflect the true intersecting nature of violence in the home.

Violence against companion animals in the home

Rates of violence against companion animals, and animals in general, are not sufficiently tracked in South Africa. There is no real impetus for reporting as there are no legislative mandates in terms of animal-focused legislation, such as the Animals Protection Act of 71 of

1962 and the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1993.⁴¹ However, one of the ways of ascertaining animal abuse rates is through analysing the annual reports of the National Council of Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA), as well as tracing the reports of animal cruelty in the various NSPCA branches.

The NSPCA stated that for 2018–2019 there were 1 800 animals inspected by the branch for reports around animal care.⁴² There were 97 criminal court cases during this period and a total of 18 convictions. Furthermore, for the period 2020–2021 the Durban branch of the NSPCA reported 10 833 cruelty investigations, five prosecutions and one successful conviction.⁴³ From these statistics we can see that there are relatively high rates of animal cruelty reports and unfortunately extremely low rates of successful prosecution for these crimes.

Routinely, however, NSPCA statistics do not specify the types of animals being reported, such as companion animals, farm animals or wildlife. Nor do the reports set out the forms of violence that commonly occur in relation to different species of animals. This makes it difficult to ascertain accurate figures of animal abuse in the home. The closest one can get to some form of data around companion animal abuse is in the NSPCA annual report for the period 2019 to 2020, wherein they state that 155 animals were removed from the "cycle of violence".⁴⁴ Moreover, similar issues around a lack of reporting domestic violence incidents occur in relation to reporting violence against animals in the home and thus we may assume that violence against animals in the home occurs more frequently than currently reported.⁴⁵

Although, from the above, we can see that there are relatively high rates of recorded animal abuse in the country, animal abuse and

neglect remains an overlooked form of violence in South African legislation. An example of this is the problematic Animals Protection Act of 1962 (APA).⁴⁶ The APA is the primary Act that protects companion animals against abuse and neglect. The APA retains problematic provisions such as the definition of ‘animal’, which is described as “any equine, bovine, sheep, goat, pig, fowl, ostrich, dog, cat or other domestic animal or bird, or any wild animal, wild bird or reptile which is in captivity or under the control of any person”. The problematic nature of the definition is the very specific citing of certain animals to the exclusion of others (such as dogs and cats having protection yet rodents such as guinea pigs and hamsters do not, although all would often be kept in the home as companion animals), where a general overarching descriptor would be preferable.

Another issue is that the scope of animals protected in terms of the Act is not in line with current scientific knowledge, which has shown that certain species of animals (such as certain invertebrates) have the capacity to feel pain and should thus also be protected.⁴⁷

Triad of violence: the intersection of violence

Carol Adams, a feminist animal rights theorist and the author of the seminal text on the intersection of the objectification of women and animals, *The Pornography of Meat*, explains that

[e]mpirical connections that reveal connections between the abuse of animals and the abuse of women expose another layer of intentional infliction of suffering by violent men, another way of comprehending the phenomenology of sexual violation.⁴⁸

Adams provides anecdotal evidence of the intersection of companion animal abuse with domestic violence when she recounts the testimony of a victim of domestic violence that

she was assisting in leaving her (the woman’s) abusive partner. She recounts:

The children, the husband, and the wife returned after his visitation was over... Something enraged him. Simultaneously, the family dog appeared in the driveway. He plunged the truck forward so that it ran over the dog. He then threw the truck in reverse and backed over the dog. He repeated this forward and backward motion several times. Then he ... grabbed his shotgun, and, in front of his devastated family, shot the dog several times.⁴⁹

This anecdotal evidence is supported by studies, one of the earliest of which is by Ascione in the US in 1998. In Ascione’s study he looked at companion animal “ownership” (caregiving) by women 12 months prior to residing at a GBV shelter. The study considered threats or actual violence (including killing) of companion animals by an abusive partner as well as acts of violence against a companion animal committed by the woman and/or her children.⁵⁰ Ascione found that around 68% of women at the GBV shelter had been caregivers of a companion animal, with dogs and cats being the most common species of animals kept as companions, although other pets, including horses, fish, birds, chickens and a goat, were also mentioned by victims. Ascione also found that 71% of women who cared for a companion animal prior to entering the shelter reported that their partner had threatened to harm/kill their companion animal and/or actually had harmed/killed their companion animal. In 57% of cases, actual harm/killing of a companion animal occurred. This should be compared to Flynn who found that 46,5% of women reported such.⁵¹ The instances of harm included slapping, throwing, shacking or shooting dogs and cats, drowning a cat and pouring lighter fluid on and igniting a kitten.⁵²

A study by Volant et al. shows that the intersection of abuse of women, children and

companion animals (the triad of violence) is present in Australian society. Volant et al. found, similarly to Ascione, that dogs and cats were the most common form of companion animals, where 53% of families in the “domestic violence group” had at least one dog and 40% had at least one cat.⁵³ In 32% of the total number of “domestic violence households” the most common form of violence against a companion animal was kicking, followed by punching or hitting (15%) and throwing a pet (10%).⁵⁴ Volant et al. also questioned women who had experienced domestic violence if having to leave her companion animal with an abusive partner delayed her seeking assistance at a GBV shelter. Of women currently residing at a shelter 33% reported having delayed leaving due to concerns about a companion animal’s welfare.⁵⁵

Studies reveal that some of the main reasons why an individual commits acts of companion animal abuse includes displacement of aggression, retaliation, advancing personal aggression, and sadism.⁵⁶ Yet, the most commonly cited reason, when looking at the commission of companion animal abuse and its intersection with domestic violence, is coercion and/or control.⁵⁷ The use of threat or violence against a companion animal by an abusive partner is very often focused around dominance and control. In relation to this, Walker has recognised that abuse or threat of a companion animal can be used by perpetrators to “intimidate, terrorize, and control their female partners”.⁵⁸

Other forms of coercive control include cases where perpetrators have prevented women from leaving the relationship by threatening to deprive animals of food. In one instance, according to Loring and Boldren-Hines, a perpetrator punished a woman for getting home late by putting her cat in the microwave.⁵⁹ Loring and Boldren-Hines also found that women’s abusive partners also threatened their companion

animals in order to get the women to be complicit in illegal acts.⁶⁰ In questioning women who lived in a family violence shelter, it was found that 44% of the women committed an illegal act based on threat of harm (and in one instance actual harm) to their companion animal. Illegal activities committed by these women include bank fraud, being a get-away driver, bank robbery, stock fraud, credit card theft and drug trafficking.⁶¹ These women admitted that they had felt a sense of ‘desperation and anguish’ at having to violate their own value systems by becoming perpetrators of a crime.⁶²

Victims becoming perpetrators

The idea of the triad of violence, one where both women, children, and animals are victims of the woman’s intimate partner’s attacks becomes more complicated when the victims of violence in the home in turn become the perpetrators.

Deviney et al. found that in 88% of households where child abuse was present, this was also accompanied by companion animal abuse.⁶³ In these homes 26% of children who were physically or sexually abused and/or neglected displayed animal maltreatment.⁶⁴

Reasons for a child abusing a companion animal, in the context of the intersection of violence in the home, can emerge from two forms of violence. The first is the actual perpetration of abuse and/or neglect of a child by a parent. The second emerges in instances where a child has observed violence against, for example, their mother by her intimate partner.⁶⁵

On the abuse of children, Ascione discusses both the effects of physical abuse and/or neglect and/or sexual abuse on children.⁶⁶ He refers to an account made by Mary Wertch, a child victim of physical and emotional abuse by her father, who speaks about her companion animal. Wertch states:

I’m ashamed to tell this... I remember bringing this dog in (the hallway) once,

a small dog, and I remembered shutting all of the doors to the hall so it had no escape, and getting a belt, and *whipping* this dog. Just *whipping*. And delighting in hearing this dog cry... *Then* I remember trying to hug the dog, to make the dog realize I really loved it.⁶⁷

In instances of sexual abuse in the home, Ascione refers to the study by Frederich where he examined 271 cases of substantiated sexual abuse in children aged between two and 12 years old and 879 non-abused children of the same age.⁶⁸ Rates of parental reports of animal violence were seven times higher in instances of sexually abused boys compared to non-abused boys; in the case of sexually abused girls, it was eight times higher than in cases of non-abused girls.⁶⁹

The effect of witnessing violence in the home can, similarly, to experiencing physical/emotional/sexual violence, be very traumatic for children.⁷⁰ A commonality between both children that are abused and those who witness abuse is that these children may commit companion animal abuse. A study by Currie found that children who witnessed domestic violence in the home were significantly more likely to commit companion animal abuse than participants who had not witnessed domestic violence.⁷¹ Currie goes on to suggest reasons why a child may turn to violence against an animal. She suggests that one reason may be that children learn aggression and aggressive acts from their parents and then react similarly against animals. She explains that “[p]arents who engage in aggressive acts teach children that aggression is a powerful and appropriate tool for interpersonal relations”.⁷² Currie suggests that another reason for the abuse of companion animals by a child who has witnessed domestic violence is a lower level of empathy. She quotes Ascione who states that “[i]n a climate of pervasive terror, the roots of human empathy may wither and die,

or fail to develop at all”.⁷³ Wolak and Finkelhor too claim that one of the social problems that children exposed to such violence may have is the inability to empathise with others.⁷⁴

Developments of South African domestic violence law

In acknowledging both the intersection of violence in terms of victims as well as the interchangeability of victim-perpetrator, our current legal and policy framework is shown to be insufficient in dealing with the true complexity of violence in the home. As will be suggested below, in order to prevent, protect, treat and in some instances punish violence in the home, numerous developments in South African domestic violence law must take place. What is set out below are only some of the legal and policy developments that can be put in place to adequately acknowledge and address the true nature of domestic violence in the home.

Amending the definition in the DVA to include companion animals

The current status of protection of companion animals from violence in the home in the form of a protection order can only arguably be achieved through the inclusion of such animals under section 1 of the Act, which includes damage of property as an act of domestic violence. Naturally, this is a problematic route to protect companion animals, as referring to animals as property does not acknowledge that animals can experience pain and suffering. Constitutional jurisprudence supports the idea that animals are not property, as in *National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals v Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development* the Court explicitly acknowledged that animals could experience pain and suffering and furthermore that the law has moved on from the objectification of animals in cases such as the 1929 case of *R v Smit*.⁷⁵

The inclusion of animals in domestic violence protection orders is not a novel idea. For example, in the state of Arkansas in the US, Chapter 15 Domestic Abuse ('DAA'), which falls under Title 9 – Family Law of the Arkansas Code, explicitly states that the court may provide the following relief with regard to companion animals: “[d]irect the care, or control of any pet owned, possessed, leased, kept or held by either party residing in the household”.⁷⁶ Although this legislation is progressive in its scope of protection, it remains problematic in its objectifying language, where animals are seen as objects of ownership.

In light of both the intersection of animal, child and abuse of women, as well as the Constitutional Court’s acknowledgement that animals are more than mere objects, it is proposed that companion animals be added to the definition of “complainant” under section 1 of the DVA, which should read:

‘complainant’ means any individual⁷⁷ who is or has been in a domestic relationship with a respondent and who is or has been subjected or allegedly subjected to an act of domestic violence, including any child or *animal* in the care of the complainant (emphasis added).

This thus creates a situation where somebody could apply for a protection order on behalf of a companion animal, which is permitted for humans under section 4(3) of the DVA, where they are minor children, psycho-socially unable to do so, unconscious or unable to provide the require consent. The interested party that could assist in obtaining a protection order for a companion animal could be a family member, a neighbour or even a veterinary professional. However, in the instance of a veterinary practitioner there should be a legal obligation for such a practitioner to report violence and/or neglect of companion animals. In South Africa we have a legal duty to report violence and/

neglect of children under section 110 of the Children’s Act 2005.⁷⁸ This provision extends this liability to a range of individuals, including medical practitioners, lawyers, dentists, homeopaths, police officials, religious leaders, and failure to do is a criminal offence. Similarly, section 54 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 2007 makes it a legal obligation for any person who has knowledge of a sexual offence perpetrated against a minor or a person with a psycho-social disability to report such.⁷⁹ Failure to report, similarly to the provision in the Children’s Act, attracts a criminal penalty.

This obligation to report violence/neglect of companion animals is already present in some other jurisdictions. In Arizona in the US, veterinarians have a mandatory duty to report abuse, cruelty, neglect or animal fighting under section 32-2239 of the Arizona Revised Statutes Annotated Currentness ('ARS'), where they reasonably suspect this to be occurring.⁸⁰ Importantly the ARS also includes exemption from civil liability for any report made in good faith.

The mandatory reporting of child abuse, child sexual abuse, and/or neglect is important when we combine it with mandatory companion animal abuse and/or neglect reporting mechanisms. This becomes an area where the abuse of one victim really can prevent or stop the abuse of another victim in the home.⁸¹ It is therefore suggested that the Department of Social Development (DSD), the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the NSPCA establish a cross-reporting system. A report of child violence can also be reported to the NSPCA, who can then check on the welfare of the companion animal and vice-versa.

This currently occurs in 15 states in the US, where, for example, California county child or adult protective services officials, who have knowledge of or observe the abuse

and/or neglect of an animal, may report such to the relevant animal protection agency.⁸² Furthermore, in instances where a veterinarian or animal control officer has knowledge or reasonably suspects the abuse and/neglect of a child she/he is mandated to report such. There is an issue that in terms of companion animal abuse there is no mandatory reporting obligation yet in South Africa, whereas there is in terms of children. Both should be mandatory.

South Africa has a serious lack of GBV shelters, as reported by Heinrich Boll Stiftung in its study called “Policy Development and Financing of the Operations of Shelters for Abused Women”. An example of this is Gauteng, where there is a need for approximately 5 077 spaces in GBV shelters, yet there are only 627 spaces available.⁸³ Although this must be kept in mind, the Department of Social Development must progressively aim to include housing for companion animals with women in shelters. As shown above, many women delay entry into GBV shelters due to not having a place for their companion animal. By providing shelter for women, children and companion animals all these victims can access shelter facilities sooner.

Conclusion

This article has argued that by acknowledging the intersection of violence against women, children and companion animals in the home, policy and law can respond to this intersection and either prevent or stop the violence committed against each individual.

The current status of intimate partner violence in South Africa has been discussed, and some of the limitations around the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act have been reflected upon. I then turned to explore the status of companion animal abuse in South Africa, and due to limited research in this field in South Africa, I referred to other jurisdictions. I then

showed that studies support the idea that there is an intersection of violence in the home, with women, children and companion animals all experiencing abuse. From the intersection of violence in the home I finally argued that protecting different victims of violence (and specifically companion animals), can prevent violence against other individuals in the home.



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Notes

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