

**MALE ANTI-RAPE ACTIVISTS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

**BY**

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## Abstract

This thesis focuses on two questions: Why some men have chosen to work as anti-rape activists and what ideas these men have about the nature of rape, its causes and the way in which activism should combat rape. Information was gathered from face to face interviews with 12 male anti-rape activists from Cape Town, who were chosen using “snowball” sampling. This technique involves the location of one or more informants and requesting them to supply names of other people who would be likely participants in the research. The interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Nine of the respondents were interviewed in their offices while three were interviewed at home. The method of analysing data was to re-arrange it in terms of the main themes in the interview schedule.

The report concludes that :

- The respondents are not representative of males in South Africa and also of male anti-rape activists but their ideas on rape and why they have chosen to fight against rape are of significance.
- The subjects have adequate knowledge about what constitutes rape and its causes.
- Although the respondents’ theories about rape are largely feminist, they were engaged in the anti-rape crusade through a non-feminist point of view. They were concerned about humanism and not about patriarchy per se.
- Some men have awakened to the need for change in relations between men and women and to the abatement in sexual violence against women.

The thesis makes some observations about the need for further research on male anti-rape activists. It also makes a number of recommendations which have important implications in the prevention of rape.

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## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Most women live with the fear of rape. A woman's life is shaped by the continuing threat of rape; every woman is afraid to walk alone at night, to live alone and to move around and engage in whatever activities interests her. Rape expresses the exercise of brutal force of men over women. Rape, like many other forms of violence, is a world-wide phenomenon and evidence indicates that every woman is at risk of being raped. (The Prevalence and Consequences of Rape on Women in Botswana: An Agenda for Research and Action, 1994). A survey conducted in the United States of America reveals that murder is the only crime feared by women more than rape (Gorden and Ringer cited in Laurer, 1992).

In South Africa, with a history of state-sanctioned human rights abuse during the apartheid years, the legacy of violence, criminal and political, and of gender-bias remains one of the most severe social problems. In this country violence against women is so prevalent and tolerated that Eagle and Vogelmann (1991) describe it as endemic. The high rape rate in South Africa is of concern because it is indicative of the violent nature of the society in general. Vogelmann (1990) asserts that violence by men against women is the most common form of direct physical violence in South African society. He points out that such prevalent sexual violence results in intimidation and restrictions on women's freedom and mobility.

Rape is violent and coercive and violates a woman's rights as far as sexual intercourse is concerned. For a rape victim, rape is very traumatic, it is an invasion of a person's privacy. Not only does it belittle women, it is also dehumanising. The victim never really forgets; the

survivor always flashes back to the rape. Rape shows women the horror of men taking control of women's lives. Brownmiller views rape as an act of "humiliation, aggression, trespassing and possession that is committed as an expression against women in general or a woman's personality" (in Burchell and Milton, 1997:204). Several studies have revealed how rape can severely affect a woman psychologically ( Lewis, 1994; Benedict; 1994, Russell; 1975, Abrahams, 1996; Hanson; 1993). Hanson (1993) states that most victims suffer from what is known as Rape Trauma Syndrome, symptoms of which include shock, eating disturbances, weeping more than usual, and depression. A rape victim can also suffer from STDs or AIDS transmitted by the rapist. The effect of rape felt not only by the victim but also by her family family.

In the "New" South Africa there is now a strong language of "change" or transformation. This includes changing attitudes towards rape. There are also many political arguments around men's commitment to ending rape. Some South African men have chosen this as a cause worth fighting for. Their stand against sexual violence was demonstrated during the National Men's March against violence against women, rape and abuse, which took place in Pretoria on 23rd November 1997. The men who attended the march argued that they "wanted to tell the nation as men, the main perpetrators of violence against women and children, we are prepared to make a public stand against it" (The Sunday Independent, 23 November 1997:3).

## **1.2 Aim of the Study**

The objective of the present study is to develop a better understanding of some male activists' ideas about rape.

### **Specific Objectives :**

The overwhelming majority of rapists in South Africa are men, but a few men have shown the willingness to fight against sexual violence against women. Feminists have argued that all men benefit from sexual violence against women hence it would be helpful to discover why some men have started protesting against rape. Within the overall objective the study has four specific aims :

- To discover why some men become activists against rape;
- To determine the perceptions of male anti-rape activists about why some men do not rape (what factors or experiences in a man's life determine his choice not to rape);
- To ascertain the views of male activists about the causes of rape; and
- To establish what male activists opinions are about the prevention of rape.

## **1.3 Overview: Rape And The Law In South Africa**

The way in which the South African law worked in the past caused confusion and pain to Black people for a very long time. The interaction between the law and the apartheid government was so close that for some women, particularly black women, the whole legal system was inefficient and inequitable. The law was in favour of white people and discriminated against black people. Today most women, both white and black, still believe

they are disadvantaged when it comes to establishing their legal rights. These women feel that they are discriminated against in every aspect of the legal procedure dealing with women's lives, not least in connection with rape.

In the South African law, there are two forms of rape, statutory rape and forcible rape. Statutory rape refers to the action of a male who engages in sex with a female under the age of consent, even if she participates willingly. Forcible rape "consists in a male having unlawful and intentional sexual intercourse with a female without her consent" (Syman, 1995:424, Joubert, 1996:270).

The latter definition has severe limitations. Forceful sexual intercourse is a very narrowly defined crime in South African law. The definition excludes rape by a man on another man, and by a woman on a man. According to the South African legal definition rape is an act which happens only between a man and a woman, and a penis and vagina; a woman cannot commit rape, and a man cannot be raped. Where anal intercourse with a man happens without his permission, even though the act is as savage, insulting and repulsive as heterosexual rape, this is not recognised by the law as rape (Jagwanth et al, 1994:163-164).

The law does not consider gang rape, and the use of weapons by the rapists. It is also silent on acts such as the use of objects for penetration or oral and anal penetration, even though these forms of sexual conduct may violate the victim's body, soul and mind. By focusing on the penetration of the vagina, the law turns attention away from other coercive sex acts and

the life-threatening experience of rape. Vaginal penetration by the penis may be less offensive for the rape victim than some other forms of attack. Brownmiller (1975:378) summarises this point well:

While the penis remains the rapist's favourite weapon, his prime instrument of vengeance, his triumphant display of power, it is not in fact his only tool... sticks, bottles, and even fingers are often substituted for the "natural" thing... Who is to say that the sexual humiliation suffered through forced oral or rectal penetration is a lesser violation of the personal private inner space, a lesser injury to mind, spirit and sense of self?... All acts of sex forced on unwilling victims deserve to be treated as equally grave offences in the eyes of the law, for the avenue of penetration is less significant than the intention to degrade.

The law views rape as a sexual crime and not as a crime of violence, which is experienced by most rape victims. Hall (1988) argues that the avenue and the tool of penetration are not relevant for acts of rape and that sexual access does not have to be equated with penetration of any part of the survivor's body. She asserts that sexual acts which do not entail penetration are also part of rape behaviour. Many feminists have suggested that rape should be viewed as an act of violence and humiliation instead of sexual coercion. A British criminologist, Zuzsanna Andler, who studied English rape trials in the early 1980's, argued that "so long as rape is seen as an act of sexuality rather than aggression and hostility, it will continue to be interpreted as predominantly pleasurable to both parties rather than harmful to the victim" (quoted in Lees, 1996:256). An American psychologist, Groth (cited in Lees, 1996:257), who treated convicted rapists asserted that "rape should be considered as a pseudosexual act, a pattern of sexual behaviour that is concerned more with status, hostility, control and dominance than with the sensual pleasure of sexual satisfaction". In a number of articles in the Guardian, written in 1995, Germaine Greer made an effort to resolve the question of how

rape should be defined by partitioning off the violence from the sexual aspect and giving priority to the violence (Lees, 1996:257). Talking about her own experience of being raped, she says “I was more afraid of the rapist’s fists and his vicious mind. In a sense the penis came to my rescue”. There is no justification for why penetration of the vagina by the penis should be considered as any more serious than forced oral sex, coercive male intercourse or penetration of other orifices by other objects. Rape should be regarded generally as any sexually exploitive act.

Furthermore, in a rape case the prosecution imposes the burden of proof on the female, the rape victim. The law believes that a manifestation of resistance take many forms. Physical resistance, where the woman is overpowered by the man, is the most clear form of non-consent (Ross, 1993). In addition to the difficulty of proving that there was an absence of consent to sexual intercourse, the opposition to this formulation is that it transfers the inquiry from the behaviour of the accused to the behaviour of the rape victim (Hall, 1988). The result is that the victim’s non-consent and not the offender’s coercion becomes the point in question. Hubbard (in Jagwanth et al, 1994:170) asserts that “... it is the issue of consent that usually stimulates questions about the woman’s sexual history, or allegations of promiscuity, or suggestions that the woman’s clothing or behaviour were provocative, it is this approach to the crime which puts the victim ‘on trial’ as well as the accused”. Unless the prosecution is able to prove non-consent beyond a reasonable doubt, the charge of rape will fail and the rape victim’s consent is assumed (Hall, 1988), whereas with most other crimes the law does not place the burden of proof of non-consent on the prosecution (and the complainant) (Jagwanth et al, 1994). This dependence on proof of non-consent on the part of the rape victim works to misrepresent the main issue, which is the presence of coercion.

For this reason, it is suggested that when a female claims to have been raped by a male, the legal presumption should be that force has been used, as:

... truly consensual sexual activity requires independent, equal parties and a context in which neither can coerce the other. Given the economic dependence of many women on men (or at least their relative economic weakness) and men's stronger social, organisation and physical power, the sexes rarely meet on a footing of complete equality (Hall cited in Jagwanth et al, 1994:171)

Moreover, by focusing on the offender's behaviour, "then the question is whether force or threats of force were used instead of whether the woman's behaviour can legitimately be considered consent" (Hubbard quoted in Jagwanth et al, 1994:171). Therefore, a shift in interest to the coercive behaviour of the offender would demand the legal definition to be broad enough to include all situations which may overpower another person's freedom of choice.

There are several conditions in which, though a male has sexual intercourse with a female against her will, the conduct still does not, according to the law, constitute rape. In terms of the law the offender must honestly believe that the victim does not consent. If he believed that the rape victim was consenting, even though his belief is unreasonable, the conduct does not constitute rape (Ross, 1993, Reddi, 1993, Jagwanth et al, 1994). The intent to rape is judged from the perspective of the perpetrator, and for that reason the court examines the man's perception of consent as opposed to the female's actual consent. This legal principle becomes questionable when it is applied in a society that is "suffused with discriminatory assumptions about interactions between men and women" (Hubbard in Reddi, 1993:20). For example, one of the rape myths is that a woman cannot say "yes" to sex even if she wants it.

Her “no” is usually interpreted as meaning “yes”. The belief is that women think they should play hard to get even when they want sex, and if they do not men will think they are “cheap” or “loose”.

The weaknesses of the legal definition of rape in South Africa reflect the fact that the legal system has helped to maintain male control over women. The legal system deserves to be blamed because:

not only does the law serve to reproduce social order(not that it always does this) but it actually constitutes and defines that order. The law is a “cultural underpinning”. The legal form is one of the main forms of social practice through which actual relationships embodying stratification have been expressed (Freeman cited in Jagwanth et al, 1994:174).

Notwithstanding the broader definitions discussed above, in this thesis rape will refer to forced sexual intercourse in which a female is the victim and a male is the offender. It needs to be mentioned that this is not always the case, but in the overwhelming number of cases the rape victims are women and the perpetrators are men.

#### **1.4 Prevalence and Incidence of Rape**

The absence of comprehensive statistics make it impossible to provide a definitive report on the prevalence of rape in South Africa. The actual number of women who are raped every year is not known but the incidence of rape is certainly far higher than estimated since not all rapes are reported to the police. It is generally assumed that rape is the most under-reported of all major crime. It has been estimated that only one in 35 rapes is reported in this country. It has been calculated that rape occurs on average every 34 seconds (Human Rights Watch in South Africa Now, 5 May 1997; Rape Crisis, 1994). This means that there is no minute that a woman is not raped in this country. Burchell and Milton (1997:210) state that experts

estimate that every day one in four women will be raped, less than 10 percent will report the assault and less than five percent of the offenders will go to prison. For example, there were 24,304 rape prosecutions but only 11,901 convictions in South Africa between July 1993 and June 1996 (National Policy Guidelines for Victims of Sexual Offences, Department of Justice in <http://www.saps.co.za>) The cases of rape reported in the media every day in this country have reached alarming proportions. Unofficial annual figures of rape incidence in South Africa vary from 390 000 (Carolyn Raphaely in Cosmopolitan magazine, November 1990) to a million (Human Rights Watch in South Africa Now, 5 May 1997; Femina magazine, May 1997) in a total population of approximately 38 million ( $\pm$  20 million females and  $\pm$  19 million males) (Central Statistics, June 1996).

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Table 1 below shows that between 1974/75 and 1995 reported rapes in South Africa increased by 149 percent. It is to be noted that these statistics do not include the former TBVC States, namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

**Table 1:      The Number Of Rapes Reported To The South African Police Between 1974-1995<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Rapes Reported</b>	<b>No. of Women</b>	<b>% of Women Raped in the Population</b>
1974/75	14 815	10 552 000	0.14
1975/76	15 394	10 772 000	0.14
1976/77	15 109	11 009 000	0.14
1977/78	15 175	11 246 000	0.13
1978/79	15 263	11 495 000	0.13
1979/80	16 149	11 766 000	0.14
1980/81	15 318	12 075 000	0.13
1981/82	15 535	12 404 000	0.13
1982/83	15 342	12 760 000	0.12
1983/84	15 785	13 118 000	0.12
1984/85	16 085	13 480 000	0.12
1986	15 816	13 838 000	0.11
1987	18 145	14 199 000	0.13
1988	19 368	14 554 000	0.13
1989	20 458	14 910 000	0.14
1990	20 321	15 274 000	0.13
1991	22 761	15 637 000	0.15
1992	24 360	15 973 000	0.15
1993	27 039	16 309 000	0.17
1994	32 107	16 649 000	0.19
1995	36 888	20 858 000	0.18

**Sources :**      South African Institute of Race Relations Survey 1996/97, Central Statistics Service, 1997

<sup>a</sup> Prior to 1987 the South African Police annual reports covered the period from 1st July of a particular year to 30th June of the following year. From 1987 the reporting period changed to run from 1st January to 31st December of a particular year (a calendar year). Comparative figures for the 1986 calendar year, however, have

According to Table 2 below Gauteng has the highest incidence of rapes in the whole country and Northern Cape has the lowest number of reported rapes.

**Table 2: The Incidence of Reported Rapes Between January and September 1997**

Provinces	Cases Reported Jan - Sept				Ratio per 100 000 of the population				% difference in cases reported			
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1994	1995	1996	1997	95/94	96/95	97/96	97/94
Eastern Cape	3913	4176	4493	5218	60.8	64.4	68.8	79.4	6.7%	7.6%	16.1%	33.4%
Free State	2446	2731	2754	2781	89.7	98.2	97.0	96.0	11.7%	0.8%	1.0%	13.7%
Gauteng	7460	8427	9390	9292	108.6	119.6	129.8	125.2	13.0%	11.4%	-1.0%	24.6%
Kwazulu - Natal	4893	5657	6220	6381	57.5	64.9	69.7	69.8	15.6%	10.0%	2.6%	30.4%
Mpumalanga	1712	2031	2261	2279	58.6	67.5	73.1	71.5	18.6%	11.3%	0.8%	33.1%
North West	2538	2983	3186	3384	78.0	89.0	92.3	95.1	17.5%	6.8%	6.2%	33.3%
Northern Cape	899	1067	1060	1089	121.9	143.8	141.9	144.9	18.7%	-0.7%	2.7%	21.1%
Northern Province	1788	2153	2364	2619	34.4	39.9	42.2	45.1	20.4%	9.8%	10.8%	46.5%
Western Cape	3750	3914	4409	4862	103.2	105.2	115.7	124.5	4.4%	12.6%	10.3%	29.7%
Total	29399	33139	36137	37905	73.0	80.3	85.6	87.7	12.7%	9.0%	4.9%	28.9%

Source: South African Central Statistics Service, 1997

The figures given in Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the crime of rape is common in South Africa and is increasing every year. South Africa has the highest rates of reported rapes in the whole world. Schiff (in Russell, 1991) reports that statistics available show that South Africa has a rate of reported rapes that is double the rate in the United States. It is worth noting that rape statistics indicate that the United States has the highest rape rate of the international countries that publish such statistics, 20 times higher than Japan, 13 times higher than England and four times higher than Germany (Scully, 1990). The Department of Justice reveals that world charts show that in 1994 the official figure for reported rapes in South Africa was 99.7 per 100,000 people, followed by Belgium with 89.9 per 100,000 people. In contrast, Argentina and Cameroon reported just 0.1 cases per 100,000 people (Mail & Guardian, February 26 1997).

been supplied by the police with the 1987 report.

Table 3 below indicates that the significant differences in the number of reported rapes from one country to another. Countries such as Australia, India, England and Wales have far fewer rapes than South Africa, even though their populations are larger than that of South Africa.

**Table 3: International Comparisons of the Number Of Rapes Reported to the Police**

Country	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Australia	2 106	2 278	2 561	2 822	2 806
Botswana	419	599	658	581	614
Denmark	587	550	576	527	486
England\Wales	2 288	2 471	2 855	3 305	3 391
Ethiopia	596	622	718	710	289
India	7 952	8 559	9 099	9 752	10 068
Rwanda	1 0921	970	1 339	1 162	721
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>15 816</b>	<b>18 145</b>	<b>19 308</b>	<b>20 458</b>	<b>20 321</b>
Swaziland	352	375	383	508	558
Venezuela	2 481	2 669	2 695	2 858	2 928

**Source:** Fourth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and the Operation of the Criminal Justice System in Crime and Conflict, 1997:10

### **1.5 Reasons why Women do not Report Rape**

As indicated above the number of rapes in this country is far higher than the official figures because some women do not report rape to the police. One cannot say with certainty why most rape victims never report such cases; however, there are a number of reasons which have been put forward.

One of the main reasons why women do not report rape is perception of the way they will be treated by the police. Studies reveal that women do not report such crimes to the police because they fear that they will be:

- Disbelieved;
- Humiliated or embarrassed by inappropriate questioning;
- Re-victimised by police handling of the report.

Women also lack confidence in the willingness or ability of the police to take appropriate action (Chamber and Millar, Millmore and Duff in Stanton et al, 1997:16)

The procedures that rape victims have to follow are often regarded as degrading and frustrating for them (The Prevalence and Consequences of Rape on Women in Botswana: An Agenda for Research and Action, 1994). Rape victims have to report the incident immediately to the police, and sometimes the police interrogate them insensitively. Rather than making their trauma worse some rape victims prefer to put the experience behind them. Connors (cited in Stanton et al, 1997) argues that women fear that the police may not believe the victim, may discourage her from pressing charges and may also be very insensitive. Furthermore, the media officer for People Opposed to Women's Abuse Organisation (POWA), Sally Shackleton, reports that "generally the police treat rape victims with little sensitivity" (Mail & Guardian, 26 February 1997).

In a study conducted in South Africa Stanton ( in Stanton et al, 1997) reveals that 23 percent of rape victims did not report the crime to the police because they had no faith in the police or the court system. It is further stated that where a woman did report the crime to the police this did not mean that her statement of rape would even be recorded. It is worth noting that the South African police are required by the law to investigate all cases; however, this does

not always happen. Fifty seven percent of rape victims who reported the crime did not lay a charge because police had refused to let them do so (Stanton et al, 1997). Rape Crisis activist, Anne Mayne, asserts that the main reason for not reporting cases of rape is that “the police take rape very lightly” (cited in Russell, 1991:19). The problem is not confined to South Africa. In Australia, two thirds of respondents from the state of Victoria thought that the police would not believe them while half felt that it would do no good to report the assault (Corbette in Easteal, 1992). Walker (in Easteal, 1992:2) in her study found that the major reasons for not reporting rape were “fear, dislike of going to the police or a belief that it was not serious enough for the police”. Sally Shackleton argues that historically rapists in South Africa have not been severely condemned by the society or by the courts (in Mail & Guardian, 26 February 1997). A rape counsellor, Anna Blackshaw, reports that only 40 percent of reported rape cases end up in court and when they do magistrates often give absurdly low sentences (Mail & Guardian, 26 Feb, 1997).

According to Stanton et al (1997) it is argued that the experience of most victims of sexual violence is that the processing of their cases through the criminal justice system worsens rather than alleviates the overwhelming effects of such crimes and works to intensify the pain experienced by the plaintiffs, resulting in an experience of re-victimisation. The plaintiff undergoes aggressive cross-examination while on the other hand the alleged rapist does not. The complainant is subjected to an examination of her relationship with the defendant, to an analysis of her character and an examination of her sexual history (Mogwe, 1992). The complainants have to describe in great detail the sexual act and private parts, and they are also required to tell the magistrate in open court “exactly what happened”. Most women are

embarrassed to use the language that the law requires and as a result the charge of rape may fail (The Prevalence and Consequences of Rape on Women in Botswana: An Agenda for Research and Action, 1994; Taylor and Steward, 1991; Stanton et al, 1997).

Thus, some rape victims decide not to prosecute because they do not want their personal lives and rape experiences aired publicly. A rape victim may “fear being accused of provocation, active participation, or irresponsibility. She may experience shame or a desire to protect her reputation. She may also fear the reactions of her husband, boyfriend or parents” (The Prevalence and Consequences of Rape on Women in Botswana: An Agenda for Research and Action, 1994:1). Fear of being blamed and of their families finding out that they have been raped are some of the reasons why women do not press charges (Criminal Justice Newsletter in Easteal, 1992). Some women may blame themselves and think that they deserved to be raped or “asked for it” and as a result are reluctant to report rape.

The relationship between the offender and the victim is another important factor influencing women’s decisions to report rape when it occurs. In many rape cases the perpetrator is known to the victim. Familiarity with the rapist makes reporting the crime even more difficult. A number of reports reveal that rape by a stranger is more likely to be reported than rape by a partner, date or acquaintance (Belkap cited in Easteal, 1992; Greenberg and Ruback in Stanton et al, 1997; Williams in Laurer, 1992). Williams says that women who are raped by someone they know may not report the crime because they are more likely to blame themselves for the attack under these circumstances.

An additional reason why these kinds of crimes are not reported is that the victims may fear that the offenders may attack them again. A woman told Russell (1991) about a rape victim

from Cape Town who had been raped 14 times on different occasions by gang members. The woman stated that “people wouldn’t try to lay charges against gangs for the rape for fear of being killed in retaliation” (1991:19).

Another major reason for not reporting rape is that in some cultures the consequences of rape and the stigma connected to being raped make it impossible for women to prosecute. In some Asian, middle Eastern and African cultures an unmarried woman’s value is equated with her virginity and rape victims are avoided by potential husbands and by the community (Heise in Stanton et al, 1997). Some women may think that “their lobola (sic) may be diminished and their chances of marriage marred if society gets to know they were once raped or sexually abused” (The Prevalence and Consequences of Rape on Women in Botswana: An Agenda for Research and Action, 1994:1). In some societies, such as Peru, Mexico and Thailand, the cultural answer to rape is “to have the young woman marry her rapist, thus legitimising the union and preserving the family honour” (1994:1).

Whatever the reasons may be for not reporting the crime of rape when it occurs, the fact is that most women do not press charges. Women will continue not reporting rape as long as the legal system and societal attitudes towards rape victims do not change.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

Even though some women do not report rape when it occurs for several reasons discussed in this chapter, available statistics indicate that the incidence of rape in South African Society has reached horrifying proportions. South Africa has the highest rates of reported rapes in the whole world. The high rape rate in this country is of concern because it is indicative of the

violent nature of the society in general. We cannot, however, argue that all men rape or condone rape. This study will focus specifically on those men who have taken an active and public stand against rape in order to deepen our understanding of gender and sexual violence in South Africa.

The limitations in the legal definition of rape show that South African women are still disadvantaged when it comes to legal procedures dealing with rape. The weaknesses also indicate that the legal system has contributed to maintain the control of men over women.

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## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Though many researchers have explored the possible explanatory factors of rape, there is still no single uncontested theory. In tackling the question of why some commit rape, four main theories emerge: namely, the evolutionary theory, the feminist theory, the social learning theory and the synthesized theory. These theoretical perspectives seem to complement each other in attempting to explain the reasons for rape, and no single theory fully explains the occurrence of rape. This may be due to the fact that the motives for rape are complex. However, each theory has something to offer towards our understanding of the causes of rape.

#### **2.1.1 The Evolutionary Theory of Rape**

The evolutionary theory relies on genetic inheritance when explaining social behaviour. The major hypothesis is that nature selects the fittest genes to survive. According to this theory social behaviours evolve because they are “genetically adaptive and serve to produce offspring” (Allison and Wrightsman, 1993:35). Certain behavioural tendencies, such as aggressiveness, observed in human beings are seen as natural aspects of human nature. “Fitness maximisation”, to quote the proponents of this theory, underlies all human behaviour and is genetically based. With respect to reproduction, males and females are seen to have evolved tendencies to assign their time and energy in different ways. Symons (cited in Russell, 1984) points out that the distinct differences in male and female sexuality are almost certainly biologically based.

Evolutionary theory sees rape as resulting from natural selection for males who are keen to have sexual intercourse with as many females as they can, whereas females are committed to retain control over who will have sexual intercourse with them (Ellis, 1989). Symons (in Russell, 1984:12) argues that "male animals and human beings have a built in urge to pass on their genes to as many offspring as possible". Females, the argument continues, must commit a great deal of reproductive time and energy to carrying offspring, while males do not. Given the relative speed with which males can make new offspring, there is no more productive activity to which males can commit themselves than having sex with numerous females (Quinsy in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993, Ellis, 1989). Males do not fall pregnant and as a result of lower parental certainty they have a tendency for naturally developing traits that increase their chances of impregnating many females. Symons (cited in Russell, 1984 and in Wallace, 1996) supports this by pointing out that males, unlike females, are biologically inclined to attempt to copulate with numerous sex partners because it increases their reproductive opportunities.

Ellis (1989) asserts that, because males spend less time and energy in producing offspring compared to females, having sexual intercourse with many sexual partners would be more advantageous to males than it would be to females. These sex differences in reproductive possibility mean that there is great payoff in terms of genes transmitted to future generations for males who can impregnate large numbers of females using whatever method necessary, including force. Natural selection would also have favour females who resist males' forceful tactics to inseminate them. Rape prevents a female from choosing who will be the father of

her offspring and her choice can be used to reduce the sex inequalities in parental investment (Mellen, 1981 in Allison and Wrightson, 1993, Ellis, 1989). Van den Berghe (1975:62-63) also supports this by pointing out that:

The reproductive game is however, quite different for men and women because of the asymmetrically greater investment of the female in the offspring. Since women have more at stake, and since their reproductive mistakes are far costlier, they have developed strategies (such as coyness and slower erotic arousal compared to men) to resist seduction and to capture and retain man in a co-operative pair-bond with themselves.

The evolutionary theory assumes that all men have the potential to rape and may be expected to do so if they can get away with it. According to Symons (cited in Russell, 1984:112) when females resist male attempts to have sexual intercourse with them, this act involves a possible cost to males in terms of time, energy, and/or risk. Symons argues that:

Male attempts to force resisting females to copulate can be expected to occur only in circumstances in which the outcome cannot be "predicted" by the principals: when females are capable of very effective resistance ... selection will not favour male attempts to copulate with nonconsenting females, and when females are incapable of effective resistance, selection will not favour attempts of nonconsenting females to resist.

Allison and Wrightsman (1993:36) argue that the evolutionary perspective does not contribute to the assertion that all men will rape but rather that rapists do so because they are "unable to pass on their genes and produce offspring in other more socially acceptable ways, such as through marriage". This concept, the argument continues, expresses cultural values, that a man must have resources and status in order to attract women. If a man is without these advantages, women will not be interested in having sex with him because this would not ensure the survival of their genes, and for this reason the man would not have a chance to reproduce. Men who are unable to find sexual partners may commit rape as a last resort (Allison and Wrightson, 1993). However, the argument that unattractive men are forced by circumstances to rape does not mean that men who are attractive, in terms of resources and

status, do not have a reason to rape and therefore do not rape. The fact that some men who do not have sexual partners may rape cannot be denied. However, several studies reveal that lack of sexual partners may not in itself be a motive for rape. In a survey of Colorado State Penitentiary, MacCaldon, Katz and Mazur (cited in Russell, 1984) report that most of the rapists were married. Rada (1978) points out that 30 to 40 percent of rapists were married, 50 to 60 percent had been married at some time and many of the single rapists in her study were engaged in sexual relationships with women they were dating. Similarly, when Scully (1990) interviewed 114 rapists in the United States, her study revealed that not all the rapists were sexually frustrated when they committed rape; about 50 percent had consensual sexual opportunities as they were married or cohabiting. Rada (1978) argues that sexual intercourse was of secondary importance to the rapists. The primary motive was to control a woman. This theory therefore does not explain why men who have sexual outlets still continue to rape other women. The reasoning that sexually deprived men rape to satisfy their sexual desires does not take into account why these men should rape, rather than seek other outlets, to lessen or end their sexual frustrations.

Although the evolutionary theory may be useful in explaining how rape evolved, it undermines the complex causes of rape. Although, rape may result in pregnancy, rapists are not necessarily concerned about reproduction and desperate to transmit their genes to future generations. This is not to argue that rape may not increase a man's biological fitness, but reproduction may not be the motive behind rape. Moreover, not all rapes result in pregnancy. The evolutionary theory explains male aggression and why rape has been prevalent in all communities, but it does not explain why some men do not rape. If rape serves reproductive purposes, then why do some men rape while others do not?

Some evolutionary theorists such as Williams and Lea Shields (in Fausto-Sterling, 1992), admit that aggression or the desire for sexual satisfaction may be among the causes of rape. However, they argue that these factors represent evolution's way of carrying out its "ultimate desire for maximizing genetic fitness" (1992:193). The theory may also imply that rape is inevitable as long as powerful counter-strategies have not evolved. Nevertheless, it can not be denied that there are "good" men who do not rape mainly because of their personalities, self-discipline, strong fear of legal consequences and/or the kind of upbringing they had. Some men strongly believe that it is morally wrong to have sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent. Men who fall into this category some who are poor, ugly, have difficulty finding sexual partners, or even do not have sexual partners.

Women in their fertile years are more likely to be raped mainly because they are more sexually attractive than children and old women. During her reproductive years a woman has a way of attracting men by the operation of her natural signals. Animals have scents, for example a female lion will emit her scents to attract a male when she is ready to have sexual intercourse. Women are also animals, and in their fertile years such scents (pheromones) operate. This may be an explanation of why most rape victims are women of reproductive age.

The validity of the evidence provided by several studies (Russell, 1984, US Department of Justice, 1985 in Ellis, 1989 Pandely, 1986 cited in Ellis, 1989) which have revealed that the majority of rape victims are women of reproductive age cannot be questioned, but the evolutionary theory does not account for the fact that some men do rape children as young as two years old and women as old as 70 years or above. For example, Lewis (1994) reports that a man from Westonia raped a five year old mentally and physically handicapped child

and also that an attempt to rape a 64 year old woman was made by a man from Paarl. In the United States it has been reported that an eight year old boy raped a seven year old girl in Allinois; a six year-old girl was raped in Georgia by a 46 year-old man (Allison and Wrightson, 1993). Several surveys have found that between 10 per cent and 12 per cent of rape victims are women who are aged above 50 (Katz and Mazur, 1979 cited in Allison and Wrightson, 1993). Females of any age are susceptible to rape. Many people who are infertile, including postmenopausal women, men and children are raped and some rapists even kill their victims. How then does the evolutionary theory that rape serves reproductive purposes explain this?

Groth (in Allison and Wrightson, 1993) notes that a considerable number of rapists experience sexual problems such as failure to achieve erections and ejaculation during the act of rape itself. Johnson (cited in Taylor and Steward 1991:159) reveals that "up to half of all rapists are sexually dysfunctional during the rape. This means that they are unable to achieve erection or that they exhibit either premature ejaculation or no ejaculation at all. These same rapists report no sexual difficulties when they are engaged in consenting sexual relationships". The above evidence also contradicts the hypothesis that rape is a tactic employed by men because they need to reproduce.

Women resist rape not only because of the sex inequalities in parental investment as postulated by the evolutionary theory, but mainly because rape undermines a woman's self-respect and self-esteem, also her trust in other people, especially men. Several studies have revealed how rape can severely psychologically affect a woman (Lewis, 1994; Benedict, 1994, Russell, 1975). A rape victim may feel anxious, worried, powerless, depressed, angry, hysterical and so on. Women consider rape as a violation of their bodies, their right to deny

or give permission. Rape not only belittles women, but it is also dehumanising. As Lees (1996:xiii) argues “rape is the ultimate objectification, in which the woman’s consent is overruled and her humanity denied. The offence poses a threat to physical integrity and this is compounded by humiliation and deprivation of privacy and autonomy”.

Finally, although the evolutionary theory claims that men rape because they want to transmit their genes into future generations, it does not state the actual genetic factors which might differ among males to influence them to rape (Ellis, 1989). This is a major weakness of this theory.

### **2.1.2 The Feminist Theory of Rape**

There are different feminist approaches as far as the causes of rape are concerned. Feminist theory sees rape as a result of a patriarchal social system in which men subordinate women. According to socialist feminists any study of rape must consider economic control of resources and male domination in the private and public spheres of life (Vogelman, 1990). They argue that economic, political and social components of society are all integrated. Social issues, domestic life, sexuality and interpersonal relations are viewed as supporting, strengthening and maintaining the status quo. Rape, the argument continues, serves to perpetuate patriarchal oppression. According to Vogelmann (1990:32) radical feminists assert that:

...woman’s subjugation is derived rather from the motive force of history, namely men’s striving for power and domination over women -the dialectic of sex. Male supremacist attitudes and norms are said to pre-exist and outlast any specific social formation, so that the history of the world is a history of patriarchy” .

Women’s subjugation by men is viewed as “built into the organization of society- in the opportunity and reward structure - so that women are systematically disadvantaged in respect

to attaining valued socio-economic resources on which the perpetuation of male power depends" (Baron and Straus, 1989:6). The proponents of feminist theory argue that male domination lies in their control of social, political and economic matters. Women are regarded and treated as men's property because they do not control access to all sorts of resources in the society. Rape is seen as one of the strategies that men use to exercise their power (Ellis, 1989; Baron and Straus, 1989). Archer (1994) asserts that rape is used by men to disregard a woman's sexual choice, rendering her completely undeserving of respect and powerless even on her own body. Thus, rape is interpreted as part and parcel of the historic powerlessness of women in male-dominated societies.

According to Baron and Straus (1989), early feminists writing on rape state that rape functions as an instrument of social control whereby all men keep women in a state of fear. Full participation of women in the society is restricted by rape and the fear of rape. Not all females are raped, but all women have to live with the possibility that they might be raped one day. This limits women's activities and movement and encourages their reliance on men for physical safety. According to Mehrof and Kearon (in Hall, 1988:82) rape is "... primarily a lesson for the whole class of women - a strange lesson in that it does not teach a form of behaviour which will save women from it. Rape teaches instead the objective innate, and unchanging subordination of women relative to men" . Mackellar (1975) argues that rape should be seen as an instrument of fear for keeping women at home at night. She says "fear of rape thus becomes a means of protecting men's "property" as surely as a lock on a gate" (1975:130). The major argument is that the powerlessness of women causes dependency and submission to men. Dworkin (1989) quoted in Allison and Wrightsman (1993:16) argues that "all men benefit from rape because all men benefit from the fact that women are not free in the society" .

The proponents of this theory do not see sexual gratification as a motive for rape; rather sexuality is used in rape to maintain the status quo (Ellis, 1989, Burt, 1980 in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993, Brownmiller, 1975, Groth et al, 1977 in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993). Rapists choose to commit rape even when they can get sex in other ways. Johnson (cited in Taylor and Steward, 1991) asserts that "in areas where prostitution is readily available for sexual release, rape is still a problem. This is because rape is motivated by a totally different, non-sexual need, the need to dominate, control and degrade women" (1991:160). A rapist interviewed by Groth said "You know, I could get all the sex I wanted because my brother ran a chain of massage parlours. But if they were giving it to me, I wasn't in control, I wanted to make it" (cited in Taylor and Steward, 1991:160). . Several researchers such as Johnson (in Taylor and Steward, 1991) and Vogelmann (1990) reveal that the primary motivation for rape, according to the rapists they interviewed, is not sex but the need to dominate women. Feminist theory considers rape as a crime against women which does not give them freedom to control their own bodies, select their own sexual partners or choose to abstain from sex. Rape represents violation of freedom, sexual objectification, male dominance and force (Williams and Holmes, 1981). Brownmiller (1975:14-15) summarises this quite well by pointing out that:

Men's forcible entry into a (woman's) body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being, the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood ... From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear.

Some feminist theorists have recognised the role that pornography plays in rape. The argument is that pornography degrades and humiliates women and this leads to a treatment of women as sexual objects. A study undertaken by McKenzie-Mhr and Zanne's study (cited in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993) reveals that pornography can influence certain types of men

to rape. Pornography portrays women in submissive and degrading ways; it makes men view women as property (Clark and Lewis, 1977, Duorkin, 1981 in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993). Brownmiller and Lips (cited in Vogelmann 1990) argue that pornography conveys the message that women are available and they do not mind being raped, possessed and dominated sexually.

African feminists link patriarchy with colonialism. Mama (1997) asserts that during colonialism women and children were economically as well as sexually abused. She points out that black women aroused sexual attraction; and by the 19th century, had come to play a prominent role in the white male psyche as a “metaphor for Africa, the dark and unknown continent, waiting to be penetrated, conquered and spoiled” (1997:49).

The major contribution of the feminist theory to the study of the causes of rape is that it has forced people to see rape in a larger social, economic and political perspective, within a broader understanding of sex stratification and oppression of women (Hall, 1988). By linking rape with causal factors on the macro-level, feminists have broadened our understanding of the reasons for rape. However, this theory puts too much emphasis on male domination of social, political and economic affairs as the primary factor in rape. It does not recognise that the society is not only male-dominated but also, in the case of South Africa, white male-dominated. It is sex-and colour-stratified. Not all men are powerful in the society. In South Africa white men are more powerful than black men; moreover, white women are also more powerful than black men. There is no uniformity in differentiation, stratification and socialization (Williams and Holmes, 1981). The proponents of this theory assume that rape benefits all men, but rape can be disadvantageous to some men. Men may rape to obtain power over other males and may also rape in the spirit of revenge on other men.

Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1983:85) point out that “they (men) seize and abuse females who are property of husbands, fathers and brothers or who belong to men of intensely hated racial, national or religious groups”. Rape during war is a classic confirmation that rape is an act in which some men show their power to other men (Vogelman, 1990)

Another weakness of the feminist perspective is that it totally disregards the fact or the possibility that sexual gratification may be a motive for rape. Men commit rape for all kinds of reasons, sometime with a greater sexual motivation than at other times. Vogelmann (1990) asserts that men may rape for sexual gratification and those rapists that seek to gain sex when raping a woman are less physically violent than others. But the feminist theory does not explain the fact that men may get pleasure out of sexual intercourse. This is not to argue that domination may not be a factor behind the act of rape itself but this may reflect the tactical aspects of rape rather than the motive behind the act itself (Ellis, 1989). Feminists assume that human beings are totally the product of their environment. They eliminate the fact that variations in male and female sexual behaviour may be based in biology. Feminists do not recognise that sex exists in and through the body. As Leone et al (1994:18) argue “sexual desire and arousal cannot be fully translated in verbal terms. This is where men and women misunderstand each other”.

Because the feminist theory emphasises male domination as the major cause of rape, one would assume that women who are socially, economically and politically privileged are more vulnerable to rape than lower class women. However, it is not only a certain class of women, namely the middle class, who are raped. All women are susceptible to rape regardless of class. Nevertheless, it is the poorer and politically less powerful women who are most vulnerable to rape. Vogelmann (1990) says that rapists have a tendency to exploit situations in

which women are exposed to attack. This may mean that raping women who are economically underprivileged are the most likely victims. Several studies have associated high rates of rape among lower class people with poverty, unemployment and economic inequality (Amir, 1971, Kazt and Mazur, 1979 in Baron and Straus, 1989, Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1983).

The poor unemployed man who is often without status and authority may express his frustration in rape. However, why should lower class women be more vulnerable to rape? Why will a man want to control and dominate someone who is already powerless? The argument that rape is used as an instrument of oppression and that it maintains the status quo is thus questionable.

The proponents of the feminist theory view gender as the most important social division and regard men as being naturally and irredeemably aggressive. This view treats women "as if they are a single homogenous group, devoid of class and racial inequalities, reduced to mere instances of male power" (Mama, 1997:59). However, the theory does not explain the differences among men whose attitudes and behaviour would otherwise identify them as likely to commit rape. All men live under various patriarchal societies but not all men rape.

The desire for feminist women to break out of traditional sex roles may frustrate and anger men and hence increase the number of rapes (Ellis, 1989; Baron and Straus, 1989). "More threatened male egos may mean more rapes" (Baron and Straus, 1989:6). Groth's study (in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993) reveals that men may rape to compensate for feelings of insecurity and inadequacy. Thus, the need to express strength, control, authority and power

may be reflected in rape and sexual equality may increase the number of rapes. Russell (1975:268) supports this by pointing out that “women who reject traditional notions of femininity are probably more likely to find themselves in rape situations in which the rapist is a stranger. When rapists are armed, notions of femininity probably have little significance” .

Williams and Holmes (1981:10-11) assert that feminists may contribute to an increase in the rates of rape in the following ways:

- Changes in female behaviour - increased mobility away from traditional male “protection”, greater freedom in behaviour, dress and activity.
- Increased reporting of rape because of the educational and supportive functions of the anti-rape movement.
- Reactionary rape by males who see liberated females as “asking for it” or are rejected by potential sex partners.

Although the above aspects may be true, feminism may also lead to a decrease in the incidence of rape. Assuming that feminism results or will result in greater equality, men may adopt different attitudes towards women in societies where both men and women are equal and this may contribute towards the reduction of rape rates. Russell, (cited in Vogelman 1990:104), points out that men would not commit rape in a society which regards its masculinity to be:

- Loving and concerned;
- Attentive to the wishes of others;
- Detest domination, oppression, exploitation and violence;
- See women as human beings;

- Value personality and character more than physical attributes,
- Cherish long term relationships rather than “one night stands.”

Sanday (in Baron and Straus, 1989, Burchell and Milton; 1997:208) in her study of several tribal societies throughout the world found that rape is infrequent in societies where there is mutual respect and appreciation for the contribution of women in the society and where power is equally distributed. In all of the approximately one hundred societies, she found out that the incidence of rape was very high in societies where women had low status and little decision-making power.

One of the achievements of feminists is that of changing the public view of rape victims and mobilising public support in favour of more active prosecution of men who commit rape. Feminists have brought changes in laws pertaining to rape and this may result in harsh punishments for rapists. Severe sentences may lead to a reduction in rape cases. According to Leone et al (1994) feminism has changed traditional morals and this has caused some men to detest rape. Women were traditionally regarded as men's property but because of feminism some men no longer think and act as if they own women. Because feminists have promoted new morality in society, rape is now regarded as an offence against the dignity of women in some societies.

### **2.1.3 The Social Learning Theory Of Rape**

The social learning theory sees social situational factors as mostly responsible for learning. Cultural influences and experiential factors mediated by attitudes, sex role scripts and other processes which are associated with aggression and sexuality in the minds of men are accountable for rape (Ellis, 1989). This theory asserts that rape is part of learned aggressive behaviour towards females. This kind of behaviour is learned by imitating rape scenes and other acts of violence towards females which men may observe in real life or on television, by associating sexuality with violence as portrayed in violent pornographic and horror movies which make viewers insensitive to the pain, fear and humiliation of sexual aggression and the perpetuation of rape myths such as “a woman’s no may mean yes (Allison and Wrightsman, 1993, Ellis; 1989).

Social learning theory regards rape as a result of cultural traditions and individual experiences which combine to push men towards different kinds of aggressive behaviour directed towards women. Mackellar (1980:274) argues that rape is “embedded in our cultural norms as a result of the clash between masculine and feminine mystiques” . Dating norms socialize men to be assertive and women to be resistant but passive and non-aggressive. Toner (1982:67) asserts that:

Our social and sexual expectation of men and women form an elaborate rape trap. Women must attract, yet they must resist them (men). For their resistance to be regarded as genuine, they must fight. But how, when they have also been encouraged to suppress aggression? If they are not inspired by some mystical strength with which to ward off unwelcome advances, they must submit. If they submit, they stand a poor chance of proving they were raped .

The argument is that societal concepts of femininity and masculinity encourage men to rape women. Competitiveness, dominance, toughness, strength, power, force and aggression are

qualities that are regarded as masculine in society and as a result rape can be viewed as acting out these qualities. Women, on the other hand, are supposed to be submissive, passive, weak, kind, compassionate, patient, accepting and dependent. These qualities also make women more vulnerable to rape (Russell, 1984, Mackellar; 1975, Fawcett et al; 1996).

Studies reveal that negative attitudes towards women are associated with men who believe in traditional sex roles, and that men who have been involved in sexually aggressive behaviour believe in rape myths (Koss, et al, 1985, Lisak and Roth, 1988, Malamuth, 1986, Muehlenhard and Linton, 1987, Rapaport and Burkhard, 1984 cited in Allison and Wrightsman, 1993). Freize (in Laurer, 1992:228) in her study of wife rape reveals that 78 percent of the victims believed they were raped because of the "husband's belief that such an action served to prove his manhood". Ray Wyre (cited in Taylor and Steward, 1991:172), famous in Britain for his treatment programmes for rapists, states that:

Counselling of male sex offenders continually brings home the parallels between their attitudes and those of people who count themselves ordinary members of society ... The popular perception of males as hunters or aggressors and women as prey or sexually subservient and wanting to be overpowered helps reinforce the complacency of the offender (rapist).

Diana Scully's (in Lees, 1996) study of 114 convicted rapists in the United States shows that rape is caused by "compulsive masculinity, which can be viewed as a form of normal deviance acquired through socialization in a culture that places tremendous importance on masculinity and male traits" (1996:221). Godenzi (in Lees, 1996) found in her study that men cannot say that they are guilty of rape or responsible for rape because "real" men do not admit that, unless rape is used to assert male domination or is justified as the result of the women's provocation.

Social learning theorists recognise how pornography can contribute to rape. Baron and Straus (1989:7) point out that pornography “sexually objectifies women, eroticizes violence, and fosters male dominance” . It is argued that men exposed to sexual violence that is portrayed in pornography are more likely to model the observed behaviour. Pornography, the argument continues, transmits the message that rape is sexually satisfying, it is not morally wrong to rape, and that even “nice” men commit rape. This may lessen a man’s inhibitions based on fear of being caught and can also inhibit the conscience (Allison and Wrightson, 1993, Russell, 1984). A considerable number of experiments (Donnerstein, Donnerstein and Linz, Check and Guloin, Zillman and Bryant in Laurer, 1992) further indicate that men who watch sexually violent movies are more likely to commit rape. Linzi’s study (in Laurer, 1992) also shows that pornography makes men less sensitive towards rape victims. All of these studies demonstrate conclusively that pornography encourages the continuing sexual violence against women.

The social learning theory is similar to the feminist theory in that they both see rape as a result of cultural learning. They both identify aspects of modern Western culture that stimulate men to exploit women sexually as factors responsible for rape. Both theories reject the notion that non-learning extracultural variables may be responsible for differences in male inclinations to rape, although the feminist theory seems to be more definite than the social learning theory in this respect. The differences in these two theories are the following: while the feminist theory puts more emphasis on social, political and economic domination of men as largely responsible for rape, the social learning theory sees rape as resulting from the joint influences of cultural traditions and interpersonal aggression and sexuality. The feminist theory tends to be more insistent upon regarding rape as a non-sexual act than the social learning theory. Although both the feminist and the social learning theories see exposure to

pornography as contributing to rape, they explain this in different ways. The feminist theory accounts for the effect of pornography this in terms of the resultant degradation of women and erosion of their socio-economic power, while social learning theory explains it in terms of modelling, the sex-violence linkage, rape myths and desensitisation effects (Ellis, 1989).

The main criticism of the social learning theory is that it does not look at the personality of the rapist. It also plays down genetic differences between men and women which may be influential in shaping one's behaviour. Childhood experiences may have an impact on one's behaviour later in life but does not necessarily determine adult personality. As Connell (1987) argues, this theory do not recognise the complexities of the person. According to Connell (1987:194)

A homogeneous or consensual model of gender identity loses the ability to account for creativity and resistance. Its homogeneous picture of the core misses or marginalizes that mixing of elements of gender which classical psychoanalysis referred to as normal bisexuality and which even scalar conceptions of personality have now acknowledged as important (androgyny etc.) .

Some men detest rape because they strongly believe it is immoral, cruel, savage and merciless behaviour. According to Vogelmann (1990) some men may commit rape to compensate for their demasculinisation while others do not rape, perhaps because of a greater ability to self-reflect, a stronger superego or increased fear of legal consequences.

The social learning theory inaccurately assumes that cultural traditions may always influence a person's behaviour. Just because society expects men to be "masculine" and women to be "feminine" does not necessarily mean that this holds true in real life. There is a considerable number of women who "deviate from this pattern, just as there are many men who have managed not to become victims of their sexual socialization" (Russell, 1984:120).

Homosexuals and feminists are examples of such people. People do not act in certain ways just because they have been taught to do so. The view that the social environment may totally control a man's social behaviour "questions the individual dignity and worth as well as his freedom to make choices of his own conduct" (Brown, 1976:31). The proponents of this theory play down one's ability to make rational decisions with regard to one's behaviour.

Moreover, the social learning theory assumes that socialization is smooth and successful at all times. In today's world socialization has lost its power, influence and strength. This is reflected in the high rates of premarital sex and pregnancy and extramarital affairs, to mention but a few, in societies where these are or were once taboo. Socialization levels have declined to a great extent in modern societies (Connell, 1987). There is no consensus and homogeneity among and within the agencies of socialization. What children learn from their peers or at school usually conflicts with what they are taught at home or in church. As Vogelmann (1990:53) argues "...people are never perfectly or identically socialised, so that deviation from - and even transgressions of - sex and other roles always occur. We do not respond to socialization as computers do to programming. Thus the effects of socialization are not fixed or even predictable".

The social learning theory assumes that people choose to maintain the existing cultural traditions. As Alant (1990:75) points out "...in the socialization process itself people can exercise their capacity for self-consciousness in constituting their life worlds. ...ascribed patterns of meaning pertaining to gender, which are culturally transmitted, need not be merely internalised and absorbed by the individual". The theory excludes the element of power in

gender relations and the element of resistance to power and social pressure. This theory does not account for change as dialectic originating within gender relations themselves. As Connell (1987:196) argues social learning theory must be able to

... reckon with social contradiction and contradiction within personality. It must be able to reckon with power and its effects without turning people into automata. It must be able to recognise different levels in personality...it must be historical, both in the sense of seeing the person in terms of trajectory through time and situations, and in recognizing the constant historical reconfiguration of the social forces impinging on personal growth (p-196).

Aggressive behaviour may depend on the personality of the individual, the social context in which it is observed, the observer's level of cognitive development and the observer's previous experience. Observed behaviour does not necessarily result in imitation. Imitation may be linked to rewarding the performance of the learner and not the model. People may be selective in what they imitate, they may imitate behaviour only that is interesting to them. Thus, not all men who are exposed to violent pornography commit rape. Some men are able to control any aggressive impulse incited by pornography. Although high rates of rape in those countries where liberalisation of pornography has occurred do indicate a relationship between pornography and rape, this does not necessarily account for the increasing incidence of rape per capita in South Africa, as the incidence is lower in some countries where pornographic material has been freely available for a long time (Vogelman, 1990).

Despite the connection between exposure to pornography and the tendency to rape that has been indicated by some studies (Leonard and Taylor, 1983, Zillmann and Bryant, 1983 in Ellis, 1989) it is argued that pornography may not change people's personalities. As Mackellar (1980:30) argues "a law-abiding, non-neurotic person will not become a criminal from seeing the enactment of a crime on the screen. If the desire to rape is already there

however, a film can teach criminal techniques to those interested in learning them” . Some studies have revealed that rapists are in fact generally exposed to less pornography than non-rapists (Groth, 1979). The British Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship, 1979, the Frazer Committee on Pornography and Prostitution in Canada, 1985 and the 1970 Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography found that there is no relationship between exposure to pornography and sex crimes (Baron and Straus, 1989). Baron and Straus (1989) argue that most studies on pornography and rape consist of experimental studies in the laboratory and as a result the external validity of these studies is not known. The social learning theory also does not explain why some men are more attracted to pornography than others, or why some men who are exposed to violent pornography do not commit rape, or even have attitudes favourable to rape (Ellis, 1989).

#### **2.1.4 The Synthesized Theory**

According to Ellis (1989) the synthesized theory assumes that rape is caused by a combination of social learning and biological variables. This theory assumes that rape is sexually motivated, and as all sexual behaviour is likely to be, is caused by the sex drive and the unlearned drive to possess and control one or more sex partners. As far as sexual behaviour is concerned, males and females are usually extremely possessive toward one another. However, there seem to be differences in how males and females are likely to express their drive to possess and control and in the specific tactics they use. Males use their status and authority as tactics to compete with one another to obtain possession and control over particular females. This theory argues that the sex drive and the drive to possess and control are largely controlled by the primitive brain functions that are minimally influenced by learning.

According to this theory, while the motivation for rape is almost completely the result of unlearned drives, that is, the sex drive and the drive to possess and control, the existing techniques involved in committing rape are to a great extent learned. Experiential learning is seen as playing a major role in the motivations for rape; this could happen while interacting with members of the opposite sex and would require at least occasional reinforcement. Attitudinal and modelling factors are seen as playing, at most, only a secondary role in the causes of rape and then only in the case of young or comparatively inexperienced males who are still searching for effective ways to satisfy their sex drive and the drive to possess and control sex partners. This theory assumes that many attitudes and beliefs in favour of rape such as "a woman's no may mean yes" are to a certain extent true. Some women do say no to sex when they actually want to have sexual intercourse (Muehlehard and Hollabauh, 1988, Loren and Weeks, 1986 cited in Ellis, 1989).

The synthesised theory states that, as a result of natural selection, males have a stronger sex drive than females and hence are more likely to direct their drive to possess and control toward numerous sex partners. Females, on the other hand, have naturally developed tendencies to resist sexual intercourse with males who seem not to be committed to the female and any offspring she may bear. This theory sees the differences in tendencies to rape and resist rape as both favoured by natural selection. Different forms of sexual behaviour have evolved in males and females as a result of lower parental certainty of males and the lower parental investment that males make in each offspring relative to females. In this way, rape is another method used by men to compete over sexual access and this serves reproductive fitness (Ellis, 1989).

This theory recognises the important role that genetic and environmental factors play in rape. However, the theory emphasises that the only way genetic and environmental factors may shape any kind of behaviour is by influencing brain functioning. The brain is seen as directly controlling all learned or unlearned behaviour, and any results that genetics or the environment may have upon behaviour must be mediated through the brain. If so, the brains of rapists, at least during the time they are planning and committing their crime, must be functioning in ways that are different to the brains of other persons. At the level of brain functioning, different tendencies to rape result from exposing the brain to high levels of androgens. This tends to produce strong sex drives and strong tendencies to attempt to possess and control numerous sex partners. It also helps to reduce sensitivity to any adverse consequences of one's actions. Sex differences in the brain functioning patterns account for the high rates of rape crimes in males and its absence in females. The synthesised theory thus assumes that much of the differences among men with regard to the tendency to rape can be explained in terms of the variability in the brain functioning (Ellis, 1989).

The synthesised theory contains important elements of the feminist, social learning and the evolutionary theories and as a result it seems to offer the best explanation for rape. However, it contains elements of racism. This theory postulates that variations in rape rates between different racial groups are determined by racial differences in behaviours that are r/k selected (Ellis, 1989). An r-selected approach to reproduction "emphasizes producing large numbers of offspring with little parental effort made to ensure survival of any one of the offspring after the offspring have been discharged from what tends to be a short gestation period ... K-selection emphasizes producing very few offspring, while committing great time and energy to gestation and offspring nurturing and care ..." (Daly and Wilson, Rushton, Ellis in Ellis, 1989:69). Blacks are considered to be more r-selected than whites and, as forceful sex is

typical of r-selected organisms, the incidence of rape is expected to be higher among blacks than whites. It is asserted that the genes that increase tendencies to rape are concentrated in poor racial groups and for this reason also blacks are regarded as more likely to commit rape than white people. However, rape is not only a problem among poor black societies. Moreover, blacks from low-income urban areas and those from remote rural areas have vastly different behavioural patterns. Baron and Straus (1989) point out that the rate of rape in America is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Such variations warn against homogenising the experience of black people.

The fact that the rates of reported rapes among blacks are higher than those among whites cannot be denied. Russell (1984) says that a Government Commission report has stated that in America 70 percent of rapists are black, while Mackeller (1975) puts the proportion as high as 90 percent. However, the difference is not related to genetic factors as the synthesised theory argues. As Vogelmann (1990) states "rape is common among all race groups. Racial genetics cannot account for rape. They do not explain why some black men rape and others do not. For one coloured man to rape and another not to, feelings of powerlessness, exploitation and racial subjugation must act in concert with other sexual psychological and 'masculine' variables" (p:118). Several studies (Amir, Macdonald, Curtis in Rada, 1978) have indicated that the incidence of rape is higher among blacks because of factors such as high rates of unemployment and poverty (these factors are discussed in more in detail in section 2.2). According to Lees (1996) men commit rape for all kinds of reasons but this does not mean that rape is biological. Rape is not natural. Furthermore, considering the probability of rape among people as biologically determined seems to ignore other important

factors which are beyond biological explanation. As human beings are influenced by things such as personal values, rape may be determined by what a person thinks rather than what is biologically so. Biology may dictate what is possible but does not necessarily determine our sexual decisions.

### 2.1.5 Summary

In summary, the various theories regarding the causes of rape all have their strengths and weaknesses. The social learning theory is useful in terms of explaining that social behaviour can be learned, but not why certain people have preferences to behave in particular ways. Thus, it does not account for the fact that some men who have been socialized to be assertive do not rape or have attitudes favourable to rape. Society is not homogeneous with a high degree of integration, and as a result there is much variation in social behaviour. People are not just learners. They acquire far more knowledge than they actually put into practice.. Even among those who have learned cultural expectations in similar social contexts it is impossible to predict an individual's behaviour from group behaviour. The assertion that men are socialized to be dominant and aggressive while women are socialised to be submissive and passive is a gross generalization and may no longer be true in some societies. Social learning theory neglects the fact that people have power to choose to behave in certain ways. People do not necessarily imitate behaviour that they have observed. The theory ignores personality, which may very well account for the variations in male tendencies to rape.. If aggressive behaviour is learned, as this theory argues, how is this possible for? Where does the motivation to learn come from? Where does the capacity come from? The social learning theory does not offer an explanation for these questions.

The argument of the feminist theory that in rape men's motivation is to dominate women who are, relatively speaking, powerless in society is accepted. Men may rape to degrade their victims. However, the feminists' assumption that people are totally the product of their environment is rejected. Although some feminists argue that all men are potential rapists, it cannot be denied that there are many who do not rape. The patriarchal social system does not offer an adequate explanation for which men rape. Some men may still rape women even in societies where both men and women are equal. The fact that sexual gratification may motivate some men to rape women is denied by feminists. Although it is probable that there can be sexually violent behaviour with little or no levels of sexual excitement, this does not rule out the fact that some men may rape to satisfy their sexual desires.

The evolutionary theory of rape is outdated. To merely provide an evolutionary perspective for rape says little about the contemporary reasons for rape. This theory states that because a woman produces so few eggs, her behaviour will be different from that of a man; who produces a great deal of sperm, and this accounts for the differences in the sexual behaviour of men and women. This is a biologicistic argument which cannot be sustained in the light of comparative analysis across cultures. There is no proven link between sperm count and desire for sexual activity. Furthermore, the evolutionary theory does not account for the fact that men rape young children and old women, who are incapable of falling pregnant.

The synthesized theory offers the best explanation for rape. The theory postulates that rape is a result of a combination of several factors, which include social learning and biological variables. Genetic, evolutionary, neurological and hormonal variables may contribute to rape. However, the assertion that racial differences in the tendency to rape are genetically based is questionable. There are many of factors, such as culture and poverty, which may account for

the high rates of rape among some poor black societies. As mentioned earlier, biology may dictate what is possible but does not necessarily determine our sexual decisions. The tendency to rape may be determined more by the rapist's mind processes. The synthesised theory does not recognise that sometimes rape may result from tactics designed to satisfy still other desires, such as to feel loved or to feel like a man.

There are two main weaknesses in all these theories. Firstly, they do not explain why some men do not rape. The majority of perpetrators are men but certainly not all men rape. Secondly, they focus exclusively on gender and as a result ignore the components of the society which contribute to rape. These theories do not indicate who are those men who rape and also who are the women who are raped. Are all the men (and women) the same when it comes to rape? In South Africa it is inadequate to look only at gender when explaining gender relations. Rape is related to gender and also to considerations of race and class. Women and men in this country are not a single homogeneous group, devoid of class and racial inequalities. Although all women are susceptible to rape regardless of race or class, some are more susceptible than others. This point is further discussed in the next section.

## **2.2 Rape, Race, and Social Inequality**

South Africa is a highly stratified society in terms of class, race and gender. As Eagle and Vogelmann (1991) argue, gender relations in this country cannot be separated from race and class structures. It needs to be mentioned that gender makes all women the primary targets of rape; however, this does not mean that all women are similarly vulnerable. Since rape is a crime of opportunity, lower class women and/or women whose opportunity for social power is restricted by race, language and resources are much more likely to be targets of sexual violence than women whose access to social power gives them a safer relation to male power.

Ross (1993:109) argues that “while many groups can be raped certain groups of women face a greater risk when other discriminatory factors like race, class .. are taken into account” . Katz and Mazur (cited in Russell, 1984) reveal that “all researchers who presented data on the race of the rape victim agreed that black women are far more vulnerable to rape than white women ... most researchers agreed that rape victims come predominantly from the lower socio-economic classes” (1984:82). Scully (1990:148) also supports this by pointing out that “while women as a class have less power and social status than men as a class, black and other women of colour are relatively more disadvantaged... because they are subordinated by race and sex” . Williams and Holmes (1981) point out that the incidence of rape is highest amongst black females. They state that black females are raped by both black and white males and this is due to the system of racial-sexual stratification.

In South Africa black women are three times more vulnerable to rape than white women (Rape Crisis, 1994). Vogelman (1990) asserts that a woman’s value in South Africa is decided by her class and race. The rape of a black working class woman by a black male of the same class may not be viewed with alarm by the white middle class which holds power in the country. Black females are victimized by both white and black males. If black women are raped by white males, it is claimed that they ‘asked for it’ or were unpaid prostitutes. If, on the other hand, they are raped by black males, police and other public officials react as if this is typical behaviour among black people.

In 1988-89 the reported rates of rape in the country were 58.60 per 100,000 for blacks and 16.45 per 100,000 for whites. These figures show that the rape rates for black women were three and a half times higher than those for white women (Russell, 1991). The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NICRO) has reported that 95

percent of reported rape victims in the whole country in 1991 were black.. In Johannesburg in 1992, out of every 10 000 women per population group almost 62 black, 10 coloured, five white and three Asian women reported being raped to the police (Dr. Martin, n.d). Dr. Martin who was the medical officer of health studied 584 medicolegal clinic cases in Johannesburg in 1992 and reported that 71.2 percent of the victims were black and 16.1 percent were white. He points out that the 1991 population census recorded that there were 194,965 white women and 67,204 black women in Johannesburg. These figures indicate that rape rates for blacks in Johannesburg were four and half times more than those for whites. It is worth noting that these figures are much lower than the real number of women who are raped every year because not all rapes are reported to the South African police.

Mohr (in Vogelmann, 1990) states that 75 percent of rapists are from poor background and Amir that 82 percent of rapists are black, MacDonald points out that among 253 rapists there were five times the expected number of blacks, and Mackeller says that 90 percent of all reported rapes are committed by black men (in Vogelmann, 1990).

In South Africa only a small percentage of rapes are interracial. Amir (cited in Vogelmann, 1990) reveals that 93 percent of all rapes are intra-racial while Vogelmann (1990) reports that in the case of South Africa it is estimated that 95 to 98 percent of rapes are intra-racial. All the rapists in Vogelmann's (1990) study had raped women from their own racial group. Vogelmann argues that it is easier for a coloured man to rape a coloured woman because of her more vulnerable economic and social position, than a white woman. Dr Martin (n.d) suggests further that rape rates are higher among blacks because there are cultural differences as far as social communication is concerned. He points out that black women talk to people in the street and also accept lifts from strangers. This may be a result of lack of education or

awareness in respect of the dangers of this kind of behaviour in the city environment. Furthermore, black women spend more time commuting via taxis and trains and walking on the streets alone at night, which makes them more vulnerable to rape. Rape is a crime of opportunity, hence the susceptibility of women to rape differs in inverse relation to their resources. For example, women whose first language is English and have “high educational qualifications” are taken more seriously by the law than other women. The relationship between poverty and racism in South Africa means that the “opportunity” for rape occurs more frequently for some women than for others (Rape Crisis, 1994).

Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1983) argue that the incidence of rape, like that of many other violent crimes, is higher among the poor. They assert that the “impoverishment of the working class and the widening of the gap between rich and poor, which is the bottom line of current federal policies, will lead to worse living conditions for the poor and a continued high incident of sexual violence” (cited in Russell, 1984:94). Other studies (Amir, 1971, Curtis, 1975, Rabkin, 1979 cited in Baron and Straus, 1989) reveal that unemployment and economic inequality may have a negative impact on the incidence of rape. Rapists are more likely to come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Netter (in Baron and Straus, 1989) argue that resentment and hostility that are generated by economic inequality may account for rape. He says “ because the ‘good provider role’ has historically been an integral component of the masculine identity, circumstances which make it difficult to fulfil that role, such as unemployment, poverty and economic inequality, could produce a climate of antagonism and resentment, some of which are directed against women” (1989:188).

The rapists interviewed by Vogelmann (1990) had experienced a number of life factors which may have intensified frustration and for that reason the potential for aggression. They were all unemployed or experienced estrangement in their work place and their housing was inadequate. The rate of unemployment in South Africa is very high. Eagle and Vogelmann (1991) asserts that the emasculation of unemployment is expected to result in assertions of power in relation to women given the fact that men are socialized to be bread winners. Campell (quoted in Eagle and Vogelmann, 1991:214-215) states that

Men's experience of racism and economic deprivation often causes a reactionary backlash within the family - to the detriment of women -rather than opening up the space for resistance to race and class oppression... The commitment of working-class township fathers to the traditional role of father as ultimate authority in the family must be seen within the context of the contradiction between their position in the workplace and their childhood socialization within a patriarchal social order. This socialization was saturated with the old-fashioned values of a man as commanding unquestioning obedience from his family and as a proud fearless respected force within the wider community.

As has been mentioned studies by Amir et al (cited in Rada, 1978) indicate that rape rates are higher amongst blacks than among whites. Curtis asserts that there are fewer restraints against sexual expressions of masculinity as opposed to economic expressions of masculinity among poor black men. Rapists have been found to have low educational qualifications and occupy low status jobs. According to Mackellar (1975) blacks are the most frustrated people in America and this is caused by factors such as unemployment. He argues that "unable to prove himself in his work, the black man is often without status or authority. He resorts to showing his manhood through a sexuality that becomes hyperaggressive in range" (1975:72). He continues by pointing out that sexual aggressiveness is part of the subculture of low class blacks. A young black man may achieve status through sexual aggressiveness. American black culture is associated with aggressiveness and sexuality and these are linked with elements of survival. Vogelmann (1990) asserts that in South Africa unemployment is often

viewed as a personal failing rather than as an imperfection in the economic system. He points out that in this country, where black and coloured workers suffer poor working conditions and low wages, lack of satisfaction with work is probably greater. Passivity and powerlessness contradict “appropriate” masculine feelings. Therefore, a man who experiences frustration at work is likely to be aggressive and this may be directed against women.

Wolfgang and Ferrant (in Russell, 1984) argue that the subculture of violence among blacks is caused by poverty, unemployment and lack of options imposed by white people. Mackellar (1975:72-73) argues that:

Blacks raised in the hard life of the ghetto learn that they can get what they want only by seizing it. Violence is the rule in the game for survival. Women are fair prey, to obtain a woman one subdues her ...unable to prove himself in his work, the black man is often without status or authority. He resorts to showing his manhood through sexuality that becomes hyperaggressive in range. He expresses his festering range in the black family, the economic dispossession of the male weights heavily (Mackellar, 1975:72-73).

Brownmiller (1975) states that racial discrimination has not allowed black men to fulfil their need, as man, to dominate, and as a result they resort to rape. According to Vogelman (1990) frustrations, feelings of anger and powerlessness are due to poor conditions within working class communities. Violence is perceived as a symbol of strength and power in those communities and also as a means of regaining human dignity.

Some black men may rape white women as an act of revenge or expression of hostility toward white people. Slabbert (1983) reports that research surveys reveal that hatred and anger by black males against a system of racial discrimination may be expressed through rape of white women but also black women. Williams and Holmes (1981) assert that in a sexually

and racially stratified society, high rates of rape are predictable. They point out that rape does not only represent a key element of social control working to maintain the status quo, but also the anger and violence caused by such a system of unequal power. They continue by pointing out that

...whites stripped black males of all identity and withheld from them access to the usual means of masculine achievement - a stable job and economic success. The result is that black males competed with the only means available - their sex - and compensated for their lack of job stability and economic success by being hedonistic sexual beings... Ironically, the one area in which the black male can compete successfully with the white male is in bed. Carried to its ultimate meaning, sex with a white woman becomes a political act. Whether the black male seeks voluntary sex or engages in the act of rape may simply reflect the degree of his anger, his need to express personal "revolution" (1981:33)

Russell (1984) in her study reports that black men rape white women because they were thirsting for revenge for the white men's rape of "their" black women. One of the rapists she interviewed said he raped because "rape was an insurrectionary act. It delighted me that I was defying and trampling upon the white man's law, upon his system of values, and that I was defiling his women - and this point, I believe, was the most satisfying to me because I was very resentful over the historical fact that the white man used the black women, I felt I was getting revenge"(1984:141-142).

Notwithstanding the above statements, generalizations cannot be made about poor black people. The incidence of rape differs from society to society. It seems reasonable that groups within the society could also differ. This is the case in all other racial groups. Rape rates are lower among poor blacks in the rural areas than among poor blacks in the urban areas. The majority of rapists are not necessarily black. As Vogelmann (1990) argues, most researchers analyse rape only on the basis of reported cases. Black men are easier to arrest and convict because they are discriminated against and do not have power in the society. This has meant

that black men have had to take all the blame for the high rates of rape. Furthermore, researchers such as Amir did their studies in predominantly black neighbourhoods. The high rates of rape in these communities may be only a reflection of the population studied.

The race or the socio-economic background of a rapist is not necessarily a reasonable basis for making generalizations about the types of men who commit rape. Daniel Smitheyman (in Lees, 1996) advertised for rapists to volunteer for confidential interviews and 50 men volunteered. The majority of his subjects had degrees and 84 percent had completed high school in comparison to two percent of convicted rapists. He concluded that rapists are evenly spread throughout the population; however, there might be variations in the kinds of rapes committed by men in various social groups. Stranger rapes are more likely to be reported than rape by intimates and the former seem to be more common among the working class. Rape is likely to be just as prevalent among the middle class as the working class, which may be a result of greater access that middle-class men have to women due to their economic advantages. Lees (1996) reports that studies of convicted rapists in the United States reveal that race and class are significant variables in differentiating rapists. The lower the social class, the higher the probability that the offender will be reported and convicted.

Goch (n.d) argues that racial oppression and class exploitation alone cannot account for rape. All the men in her study were similar in terms of racial and class subordination; nevertheless, there were no significant differences between rapists and other subjects on a scale which reflected their satisfaction with all aspects of life. She continued by pointing out that “for one coloured man to rape and another not to, feelings of powerlessness, exploitation and racial subjugation must act in concert with other sexist, sexual and “masculine” variables” (p:12).

Russell (1984) asserts that black women who have been raped by white men are not willing to talk about it. These women see rape as a form of racism and sexism meant to humiliate and degrade them and as a result this makes it difficult for black rape victims to report rape committed by a white man. This is supported by Lees (1996) who reports that recent research reveals that class differences appear to be connected with prevalence of reporting instead of the actual incidence of rape.

There also appear to be variations in tolerance levels within different social class groups. The higher the level of tolerance, the less likely that women would define the experience of sexual violence as rape. Mooney (in Lees, 1996) in her study of family violence reports that middle class women are the least likely to report domestic violence to outside agencies. This adds to the myth that domestic violence is predominantly a problem for lower class people. Lafree (in Lees, 1996) asserts that it is the less frequent types of rape that are more likely to result in conviction. Interracial rape, especially involving black males and white females, is more likely to be reported although they are rarer than intraracial rapes. Interracial rapes are taken more seriously by the police and courts as a result of racism. Lower class blacks are more likely to be seen by the court as the kind of men most likely to have raped and as a result are more likely to be convicted and labelled "rapists". Vogelman (1990) argues that working class women may also not report rape if the offender is from the middle class. The victims may think that the courts will not believe them or will be sympathetic to the perpetrator because of the perceived social power of the middle class rapists. Clark and Lewis (cited in Vogelman, 1990) state that the judicial process seems to find it difficult to believe that a middle class man would want to rape a lower class woman. David postulates that "it seems, in fact, that men of the capitalist class and their middle class partners are immune to prosecution because they commit their sexual assaults with the same unchallenged

authority that legitimises their daily assaults on the labour and dignity of working people” (quoted in Vogelman, 1990:113). This tells us more about the willingness of women to report rape and their expectations as to how they will be treated if they do report it than about the actual patterns of rape. It is worth noting that in South Africa the occurrence of white men raping black women is low. This may be due to white men’s perception of black women as inferior or less human. Vogelman (1990) says sexual intercourse with a black woman, whether forced or not, for white man may be viewed as socially embarrassing for a white man.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, I acknowledge the important contribution made by the different theories of rape which have been discussed. The weaknesses and strengths of these perspectives indicate that there are multiple reasons for rape and that rape is a very complex social behaviour. Its causes may be found in all spheres of life, social, economic, political, cultural, and at individual levels. As I have mentioned, there is no single causal factor for rape. For some rapes only one or a few of the factors discussed in this chapter may be present, for others all may be present. This is due to the fact that motives for rape differ and may depend on circumstances and relationships between the offender and the victim. For example, a husband may rape his wife because he thinks he has a right to have sexual intercourse with her whenever he wants to. No matter how it is explained, rape is one of the most savage crimes.

No theory or research has yet fully understood the range of masculine difference within a culture. Even where a context like South Africa is very tolerant of sexual violence and promotes masculinity as an identity full of antipathy towards women, there are still men who

do not express violence towards women through rape. There are also some men who have shown the willingness to fight against sexual violence against women. There is a need to study the perceptions and activities of these men.

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## **CHAPTER 3: PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Sexual violence against women has traditionally been defined as a “women’s issue”. This idea is partly based on the fact that the overwhelming majority of the victims of men’s sexual violence are women (Russell, 1984). Furthermore, the people who first started to publicly define the need and begin to work so as to ensure that rape victims get help were women (Funk, 1993). Even today women are still in the forefront in urging society to see rape as a personal trauma and also as a crime of violence. The majority of people who participate in rape prevention movements in this country are still women; however, this situation is beginning to change.

### **3.1 Examples Of How Violence Against Women Is Being Addressed In South Africa**

Since 1994 there has been much hope that the democratically elected government would bring equality. As Lee and Klipin (1997) point out, the responsibility for crime prevention and all aspects of the control of crime in a democratic state is ultimately in the hands of the government as a whole. The government is also responsible for defining crime.

The South African government has made a clear commitment to building gender equality and to removing all forms of discrimination against women. This is reflected mainly in the constitution and in the human rights conventions to which the country has pledged itself, the most remarkable of which as far as women’s rights are concerned is the Beijing Platform of Action (Rape Crisis, 1997). Rape Crisis (1997) reports that most government departments have committed themselves to drastic changes which would protect women and children from violence, and the resolutions of The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women have been adopted. Violence against women, including rape,

is one of the crucial areas of concern as regards the rights and freedom of women in South Africa. According to Scharf and Arty (1996) one of the things planned to address the way in which the criminal justice system deals with rape victims is the Wynberg Sexual Offences Court and its related services, such as South African Police Services (SAPS), Health Services and the Provisional Department of Welfare. These authors assert that “the government is committed to a wide range of measures to end formal inequality between women and men and to take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men” (1996:14).

The Department of Justice has made itself responsible for the amendment of laws that discriminate against women, and has also resolved to improve women’s access to legal assistance, to take combined measures to prevent and end violence against women and to facilitate the arraignment of perpetrators of violence (Report on the National Conference of Commitments, cited in Human Rights Watch, 1997). From November 1996 to March 12, 1997, the National Department of Justice organised a campaign on the prevention of violence against women. The campaign included a number of workshops for staff working in the Justice Department, so as to make personnel sensitive to the issues and involve them in seeking solutions. The Department also ran a public education campaign, distributing leaflets on the issues associated with violence against women (Campaign on Prevention of Violence Against Women, notes for a speech given by the Deputy Minister of justice, in Human Rights Watch, 1997).

Human Rights Watch (1997) also reports that SAPS has developed a victim support program, with the purpose of training police officers to provide support to survivors of crime, coordinating support services with NGOs and other government departments, setting up “comfort rooms” at police stations or victim support centres, and establishing a referral system and resource directory. In November, 1995 the government went into a nation-wide partnership with the private and public sectors in order to fight violence against women. The National Network on Violence against Women was established, with the purpose of bringing together various government departments and the non-governmental sector. There are also a number of local initiatives, which include the establishment of rape reporting centres, and these are linked with national initiatives and policy changes.

### **3.1.1 The Commission on Gender Equality**

The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) is an independent statutory body which is concerned about creating a society which is free of all forms of discrimination including gender discrimination (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>). To achieve its goal CGE is fighting for change in the society through revealing gender discrimination in laws, policies and practices, struggling for changes in gender stereotypes and sexist attitudes, and instilling respect for the rights of women as human rights. CGE mainly targets women living in the rural areas, on farms and in domestic employment. The functions of CGE include the following:

- Monitoring and evaluating the policies and practices of government, the private sector and other organisations to ensure that they promote gender equality;
- Public education and information;
- Reviewing existing and upcoming legislation from a gender perspective;
- Investigating inequality;

- Commissioning research and making recommendations to parliament or other authorities;
- Investigating complaints on any-gender related issue;
- Monitoring/ reporting on compliance with international conventions (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

### 3.1.2 Rape Crisis Centres

Rape Crisis (Cape Town) was founded in 1976. It provides necessary services such as counselling for rape and sexual assault victims and it also provides people with training on sexual assault. The objectives of this organisation are the following:

- To reflect the diversity of communities with which we work;
- To provide an accessible service;
- To influence policy and legislation;
- To work in networks and partnerships (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

The Public Awareness and Training Department of the Rape Crisis runs internal training courses at the Rape Crisis Centres in Observatory, Heideveld and Khayelitsha, to train volunteer members as counsellors and public speakers. External training entails many activities, ranging from the provision of short courses and workshops for community-based organisations, to training of criminal justice and legal personnel who deal directly with the victims of sexual violence. Rape Crisis works with other organisations which deal with issues on violence against women, such as Illitha Labantu, RAPCAN, Joint Forum on Policing and the Task Team, Trauma Center for the Victims of Violence and Torture and the Human Rights Committee. This organisation has also played a major part in the Attorney-

General's Rape Forum. For the first time in the history of South Africa a programme was developed to help rape victims who were involved in the criminal justice system to prepare them to testify at trial. The organisation was also instrumental in the establishment of Network Empowering Women Against Violence (NEWAVE), which is a network composed of various organisations in the Western Cape that are concerned with addressing violence against women (Rape Crisis, 1997).

### **3.1.3 Western Cape Network On Violence Against Women**

The Western Cape Network on Violence against Women is part of the South African National Network on Violence against women. Both urban and rural areas are represented in this network. It aims at working against all forms of oppression and violence against women (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>). The history of the Western Cape Network on Violence against Women is as follows: In 1989 a grouping of various organisations called Coordinated Action for Battered Women (CABW) was established. CABW concentrated on direct services such as counselling and legal aid to abused women, education and training for service providers, media, shelters, courts and police. The Salvation Army's Carehaven was dedicated as a shelter. CABW was represented at the first National Conference on Women Abuse in South Africa which took place at UNISA in 1994, and also helped in initiating the National Network representing all the provinces. In 1995 CABW expanded to include all organisations concerned with addressing violence against women such as sexual abuse, incest and rape and its name was changed to NEWAVE (Network Empowering Women Against Violence, Western Cape). In November 1995 it hosted a National Conference on Violence against Women. During 1997 it changed its name from NEWAVE to Western Cape Network

on Violence against Women. Focus groups have been formed by the network, which deal with issues such as sharing of information or media, shelters, policy legislation and outreach (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

#### **3.1.4 Nisaa Institute for Women Development**

The Nisaa Institute for Women Development was established by a group of women activists in 1994. It is a community-based organisation which deals with women abuse and women's issues. The aims of the organisation are to:

- Encourage women to gain control and autonomy over their lives in ways that they seem appropriate;
  - Provide refuge for women survivors of violence and their children when their lives are endangered by interpersonal violence;
  - Establish organisational links and mechanisms that enable the use of community, municipal, national and international resources for women's emancipation;
  - Lobby for appropriate legislation and resources to protect and maintain the dignity of survivors of violence;
  - Raise awareness of violence against women through education and training
- (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

Nisaa Institute for Women Development provides shelter and emergency accommodation for 20 abused women and their children, counselling for women and their children, weekly house meetings and group sessions support services, public education and awareness media presentations, education and awareness campaigns, workshops and talks from grassroots to professional levels (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

### **3.1.5 Masimanyane Women's Support Centre**

Since 1996 Masimanyane Women's Support Centre has been involved with violence against women in the Eastern Cape. The Centre offers support services to victims and survivors of rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, incest, battery and child abuse. The Masimanyane Centre also provides legal support services training programmes and runs public education and community outreach programmes in schools, churches and other community structures. Furthermore, the centre is also concerned with advocacy and lobbying activities as well as networking locally, nationally and internationally. In June, 1997 Masimanyane designed a two year research project which addresses violence against women and pays attention to how the police and justice departments tackle cases of offences against women in the Eastern Cape region (<http://www.womensnet.org.za>).

### **3.1.6 Ilitha Labantu**

Ilitha Labantu is a community-based organisation based in Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Philippi. This organisation is committed to ending violence against women and children. Its aims and objectives include:

- Providing women and children in Cape Town with immediate access to support and counselling;
- Providing education services for communities around dealing with violence against women and children;
- Running a training programme for women to address their specific needs and to empower them to participate in the process of individual and community development;

- Imparting both practical and theoretical skills through training courses, including:
  - analytical skills that assist trainees in understanding and interpreting gender issues and the socio-political context of violence;
  - counselling skills that equip trainees with the knowledge and confidence to help survivors of violence;
  - workshop and training skills that enable trainees to do training courses and workshops themselves;
  - communication and leadership skills that develop capacity of trainees to participate in public education and raising awareness;
- Establishing a permanent counselling and training centre (Ilitha Labantu, 1998).

The examples given above of the organisations involved in the fight against rape in the country indicate that most of these projects are only concerned about matters such as provision of support services for the victims of violence and raising awareness in the community around the issues of violence against women. None of these projects seem to be including the role of men as the main focus of their work or men working as participants in the fight against sexual violence against women.

### 3.2 Male Anti-Rape Activists

Despite the fact that the majority of persistent offenders in cases of sexual violence are men, women have always been the ones to take the leadership in understanding and challenging rape, and in caring for rape victims. There has been no attempt to distinguish men who rape

from those who do not. The result is a society in which all women live in fear of rape, where women do not trust men, and where all men are seen as potential rapists. This is true in the sense that:

... when some men rape, and when 80% of those who are raped know the man who attacked them, it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish men who are safe from men who are dangerous, men who can be trusted from men who can't, men who will rape from men who won't. The result is a society with its guard up, where relationships with men are approached with fear and mistrust, where intimacy is limited by the constant threat of violence, and where all men are labelled "potential rapists" (<http://www.mrpp.org>).

Rape is a choice men make to get power; therefore, rape is a men's issue. As Beneke (1982) argues, rape must be seen as a men's problem and one that is due to the way men regard women. According to Funk (1993:3) "Rape says much more about men than it ever has about women. Rape is a louder statement about masculinity than it is about femininity. Consider - what does it say about women that nearly one in two (sic) will be sexually victimised - and the rest of us have nothing to say about the issue?". It is men who commit rape and men who jointly have the ability to bring rape to an end. For rape to stop, men's behaviour and attitudes towards women must change. This can only be achieved through men if they can all play a vital role in challenging rape and all its causes. As long as some men continue to sexually abuse women and/or as long as men who do not rape do not challenge rapists, rape will still continue. "For as long as non-rapists remain silent, they allow one man to rape on behalf of other men. For as long as men refuse to march against men who rape, and as long as they fail to take a principled stand by protesting, picketing and challenging their species they shall be seen as complicit in the act of rape" (South Africa Now, 5 May, 1997:25). A member of the Human Rights Commission, Rhoda Kadalie, asserts that men have an extremely essential role to play, more essential than even the criminal justice system, in fighting the abuse of women and children (ibid.). It is essential

that men take responsibility and be part of the solution of this social problem (Msizi and Zanda, 1995). Furthermore, most women think that finding solutions to end all forms of violence in South Africa is more likely to produce the intended results if the energies of both men and women are employed. Men are more likely to persuade other men to act more humanely towards their fellow beings, women. South African men have an opportunity to reverse history of sexual violence against women in this country and this can happen as long as they are determined to see that it happens.

For the first time in South African history men are claiming to fight for making rape illegitimate. Men are now beginning to speak about the issue of rape and are showing some willingness to confront the oppressive and self-destructive behaviour of some of their gender. Msizi and Zanda (1995) report that some of the South African men of today are attending courses on gender relations and learning that male superiority is not useful in practice if males want harmonious relationships with females. Some men in this country are changing and seem to be searching for new values. Male anti-rape activists are challenging other men to end sexual violence against women. These men seem to be concerned about the lives and well-being of women.

It needs to be mentioned that it is very unusual for men to have the courage to challenge other men given the fact that rape gives all men power over all women. Activists want to change men's position and this undermines men's position in the society. These men appear to be willing to give up one of the main pillars of their social power. According to feminist theory rape is connected to the power relationship between men and women, which, as Lipman Blumen (cited in Scully, 1990:49) points out, "is at the very core of our social fabric and forms the blueprint for all other power relationships". Hanner and Maynard (ibid.) state that

recent feminist research indicates that there is a complex social structure where oppression, inequality and power work along socially constructed gender lines. The argument continues that in this social system violence is used to control women. The proponents of feminist theory have argued that because sexual violence maintains male dominance, it benefits all men, not just those who actually commit rape. Men compete with women in many different ways. They compete at both personal and professional levels and the threats to women give men advantages. Men tolerate sexual violence against women because they benefit from it. This is certainly true of some men. However, few men appear to consciously tolerate violence against women because they are aware of the benefits. As Beneke (1982:171) correctly points out "it is only from a competitive or antagonistic view of women that men can ultimately claim benefits" . Therefore, one needs to ask why it is that some men seem to be prepared to give up this traditional route towards access to power.

Current engagement of some South African men with the anti-rape movement was demonstrated on 22 November, 1997 when men stood up and marched against the abuse of women and children. The march to "stop all violence against women and children in South Africa" was the first of its kind in South African history and in fact in the whole continent. About 2000 men attended the National Men's March in Pretoria (The Sunday Independent, 23 November 1997). This demonstration sent a bold message that violence against women was socially unacceptable. The men who were present at the demonstration pointed out that they "wanted to tell the nation as men, the main perpetrators of violence against women and children, that we are prepared to make a public stand against it" (The Sunday Independent, 23 November 1997:3). President Mandela announced the march as an historic occasion, pointing out that it was the first time in South Africa that the voice of men who treated women with respect had been heard. The President stated that "as long as we take the view

that these are problems for women alone to solve, we cannot expect to reverse the high incidence of rape and abuse... From today, those men who inflict violence on others will know they are isolated and cannot count on other men to help them" (Cape Argus, 23 November, 1997:2). Interventions such as these have practical lessons for the determination of the stand some men will take on sexual violence against women. The march presented a vision of men as loving and caring human beings. According to Naidoo the march was of critical importance in the history of this country in the sense that it put the issues of sexual violence against women on men's national agenda and it also raised awareness that men have to take responsibility for their behaviour (Naidoo, 1997:95). He says: "the presence at the march of several senior ministers and President Mandela's speech itself constituted a stern recognition from the Government of the need to see men as part of the solution to the incriminating sexual violence and child abuse levels - this in a society which is based on a culture of non-racialism, gender equality, and thus respect" (1997:96). The march definitely helped to highlight violence against women. However, one asks oneself whether the march will lead to change in the level of violence against women in the South African society. This remains to be seen.

The "5 in 6 Project" in Athlone, Cape Town is an example of how some men are addressing violence against women in this country. The project was founded in 1994 by Catholic Welfare and Development. It is concerned about getting men involved and finding solutions to issues such as rape, domestic violence and child abuse. It also assists in implementing and sustaining the solutions. "The project is about having passion for men and men's issues. About talking to them, listening to them, and having the guts to confront them. It is about finding solutions with men in order to help the community they live in" (The 5 in 6 Project, n.d:3). The project believes that if some men are involved in issues concerning violence

against women, the solutions to this problem will be taken to these men's communities and this may eliminate the problem. In Alexandra, Gauteng, at the organisation called Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention Training Project (ADAPT), previously abusive men are learning how to respect women. A group of these men meet every week to discuss their problems. A member of ADAPT asserts that "I've become aware of my aggressive and abusive tendencies ...99.9% of perpetrators are men and we need to be part of the solution" (Mail & Guardian, November 21 to 27, 1997 in <http://www.org.co.za>). Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) is an example of a non-governmental organisation (NGO), which has begun to perceive the need to supply men with gender awareness training. This project is concerned with sustainable development, gender reform and also with working together with men to identify new ways of being a man in the new South Africa (Agenda, no. 37, 1998:7). These men are an excellent example of mobilisation and education on violence against women and gender equality in general. "For a man to acknowledge and reject all the different ways he has learned to regard women as less than human is an act of courage and an act of love" (Beneke, 1982:33).

However, it is worth pointing out that I do not assume that male anti-rape activists may not commit rape or may not use their position to receive praise from women and at the same time enjoy the benefits of rape. As Funk (1993: 27) argues

We use the term rape to paint ourselves as “good” men who would not rape and then argue that we deserve the praise and support of women - basically because we don’t do something horrible to them. Whether or not all men rape, all men use rape to stay “up” over women... Here’s an example of how all men benefit from rape culture: Remembering the statistics on the ways that women adjust their lives as a result of the threat of rape how do women run for public office? You may say that these two ideas are not related, but how are you supposed to run for office when it’s unsafe to go out at night? We who claim that we are against rape use that false dichotomy (the “bad” men who rape and the “good” men who don’t) to paint ourselves as the “allies” of women and continue to keep getting ourselves elected to office to maintain access to women’s bodies, and to continue to receive women’s praise. After all, “they need us.”

### **3.3 Research Question**

Even though male anti-rape activists have identified not raping worth fighting for, sociological and feminist literature on the causes of rape is poor in identifying why some men agree to “give up” their route to power and advocate that others do too. Men are seen as a problem as far as the causes of rape are concerned, but there are some men who have shown the willingness to fight rape. The literature does not say why some men fight rape as a cause. Are all the men the same when it comes to rape? There is not enough information about differences among men.

In the view of the gap in the literature mentioned above, the research questions to be addressed in this thesis can be formulated:

1. Why do some men have chosen to work as anti-rape activists?
2. What ideas these men have about the nature of rape, its causes, and the way in which activism should combat rape.

## CHAPTER 4:     **METHODOLOGY**

The research was a small-scale exploratory study in which the aim was to provide knowledge about why some men have chosen to fight against rape. Qualitative methods were chosen because they are practical in collecting information about personal experiences. Qualitative research methods, unlike quantitative techniques, “capture aspects of the social world for which it is difficult to develop precise measures expressed as numbers” (Neuman, 1994: 318). Although this technique may raise the question of bias, it provides a sense of “immediacy, direct conduct and intimate knowledge” (ibid).

The study is based on information obtained from 12 male anti-rape activists from Cape Town. These men were chosen because they were among the first in South Africa to show publicly their willingness to fight against sexual violence against women. Hence it was useful to talk to them and discover their ideas about rape and why they have chosen to fight against rape. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews. The main purpose of this technique is to get as much information as possible, especially where little is known about the phenomenon being studied. In the case of this study, little is known about why some men have chosen to fight against rape and there is little or no technical literature on this topic in South Africa. The main advantage of face to face interviews is the high response rate and that the interviewer can ask questions and at the same time observe whatever reactions, be it facial or other forms of non-verbal communication, the interviewee might make. This method also enables one to clarify questions which the respondents do not understand and to probe the responses. As a result ambiguity is eliminated and the validity of the data is enhanced.

However, this method of data collection is highly subjective and as a result there is always the danger of bias. Many of factors can have an effect on the subjects' responses. Some of these factors are given below:

Eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out answers that support his preconceived notions are but few of the factors that may contribute to biasing of data obtained from interview ... (Borg quoted in Bell, 1993: 95).

The problem of bias cannot be avoided completely. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that as a woman I might have had an effect on the responses from the subjects. It makes little difference whether the researcher is a male or female when the topic is neutral but in this case the topic dealt with gender-sensitive issues. However, I did not get the impression during the interviews that the respondents were saying anything just to please me or were not being honest in the way they were answering the questions. I attempted to remain objective in my dealings with respondents, and did not solicit information from them which only supported my personal prejudices.

The interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Nine of the respondents were interviewed in their offices while three were interviewed at my home. All the interviews were held in English.

Initial contacts with the male anti-rape activists were made through the 5 in 6 Project (see section 3.2) with subsequent informants recruited through snowball sampling. This technique involves the location of one or more informants and requesting them to supply names of other people who would be likely participants in the research. This technique of interviewee selection was used because I was dealing with a relatively small number of men, who were

more likely to be in contact with one another. Furthermore, this technique was helpful in my study, where respondents were difficult to find. Therefore, this was the best method of gaining access to the subjects for the kind of information gathered in this study.

My method of analysing the data was to re-arrange it in terms of the main themes in the interview schedule (see Appendix 1).

#### **4.1 Limitations of the study**

The external validity of the study was limited by the small number of male anti-rape activists who were interviewed. I was faced with the problem of identifying these men and as a result the sample size remained small. The absence of academic research on men who are fighting against rape meant that there were no previous studies from which to learn and this may have increased the probability of interpretative errors.

Statistical sampling methods were not used to select the respondents. The sample was obtained using the non-probabilistic and convenient method, snowball sampling. This study cannot therefore generate conclusions that can be generalised because of the non-probabilistic nature of the sample and the small number of the respondents. My interview sample has a strong bias. It is possible that I only recruited an exclusive network of male anti-rape activists and that I left out some other activists who were unknown to my informants.

The fact that my study was limited to Cape Town led to a racial skew. This meant that activists in Gauteng where most of the African anti-rape male activists are located could not be interviewed. This racial skew may exist anyway, but I had no way of adequately analysing the interaction of race and class from the data collected.

Because of these limitations the study should be seen as exploratory research, in which the aim was to provide some knowledge about male anti-rape activists. It will serve to highlight areas of importance and other questions relating to men who are fighting against rape. It is anticipated that the study will generate recommendations and questions which will lay the foundation for further research.

#### **4.2 Fieldwork Experience**

The collection of data was the most difficult part of the research. It was very difficult to find the subjects mainly because there are very few male anti-rape activists in Cape Town. Four persons declined to talk to me saying that they were very busy, or that they were not involved in the fight against rape even though I had been informed by other respondents that these people were also involved. Fixing appointments with the respondents was time-consuming and not easy because of their busy schedules. Two appointments had to be cancelled because they were not kept at the arranged times, and the subjects were not willing to reschedule them.

The study also involved a great deal of travel around Cape Town. I was always very early for my interviews mainly because I was using public transport and I was not sure how reliable it was. I was not familiar with most of the places the interviews were going to be conducted so I had to have enough time to look for the places where the interviews were going to take place.

Some of the respondents were very helpful and gave me plenty of information. They were even willing to be contacted again if I needed any kind of further help. Others, on the other hand, did not say much and seemed not to be interested in the study. Some of the respondents

did not have time for me although they had agreed to talk me. At times I had to wait for a long time to continue the interview because the respondent had a phone call during the interview. This gave me the impression that some of the subjects did not take my study very seriously, or that the study was not important to them at all.

Some examples of my experiences which I wrote in my journal are the following:

*"I had an interview with a certain gentleman this week, and I had to wait for 30 minutes before we could start because he was busy. During the interview he kept on looking at his watch. I could see that he had no time for me.*

*Another person I interviewed on Wednesday was 25 minutes late. Before I could even say anything he told me that he had to be somewhere else by 3.00pm and the time was 2.25pm.*

*I had a very bad day today. It all started in the taxi. A certain gentleman spoke to me in Xhosa and I told him that I do not speak that language. He then told everyone in the taxi that I am black yet I do not speak Xhosa. Everyone in the taxi started discussing me. When they were tired of talking about me the man sitting next to me asked me to kiss him. I told him no, he persisted and even asked me to go out with him. Everyone in the taxi was laughing, even the women. Two other men, including the driver also asked me to go out with them. This offensive talk continued until I got off. I was supposed to interview a certain male anti-rape activist 11.30am. He was not in when I arrived at 11.20am and I was told to wait for him in one of the offices. At 12.00pm he came to me and said he would be with me in a minute. I waited till 1.00pm. I then decided to go to the receptionist and ask her whether Mr X remembered that I was still waiting for him. She told that 'he has left.... I am sure he forgot that you were waiting for him'. I went back to my place with tears in my eyes.*

*Today was the most horrible day as far as my data collection is concerned. On my way from the interview I was nearly shot in the taxi. I did not know what was wrong because everyone was speaking in Xhosa or Afrikaans. I do not speak these languages. I was sitting right next to the driver and there was this man pointing a gun at the driver, and everyone was screaming and I was literally crying. I thought we were going to have a terrible accident or this man was going to shoot us. There was also a woman in the taxi and she was pointing a gun and shouting at the gunman. After this experience I was emotionally and physically exhausted. I did not want to continue with this research any more. It took me a week to recover, and finally I decided to go back and collect my data.*

*I went to interview another male anti-rape activist. It was raining very hard that day. I spent some time looking for the place, found it, only to find that the person was not there. I phoned him and he told me he was sorry he had to attend to something else. He promised to phone me, but he did not. I phoned him 5 times afterwards, always leaving a message each time on his cell phone, but he never returned my calls".*

### **4.3 Definition of Concepts**

This is a study of male anti-rape activists, that is those who are against rape and are actively committed to the prevention of rape. The Advanced Learners Dictionary defines activism as a policy of taking direct and militant action to achieve a political or social goal and an activist as a person who takes or supports vigorous action especially for a political cause. Activists are people who fight for certain things through campaigns, lobbying, advocacy, marching and others. Anti-rape means opposed to forced intercourse.

### **4.4 Significance of the Study**

My decision to conduct research on men who are fighting against rape arose largely from the fact that although some South African men have identified not raping worth fighting for, no report on research conducted on this topic has been published. The focus of most studies on rape has been driven by women but now men are also involved. In addition, rape has become a human rights issue, which raises complex questions about the leadership of initiatives aimed at preventing rape. Studies which have researched men have concentrated on the rapists (Vogelman, 1990; Vogelmann, 1991; Scully, 1993). The focus has been on what drives the male rapists. Studies of activism have argued that most activism, whether at State or Non-governmental Organisation level, has been led by women. By focusing on men who actively participate in a group which is against rape, I hope to fill the gap which has been left by other research.

Furthermore, sociological and feminist literature is poor in distinguishing which men rape, which men do not rape and which men fight against rape. By interviewing male anti-rape activists who publicly declare that they are against rape, I hope to deepen our understanding

of masculinity in this arena. This study would therefore at the same time fill the gap by making information on male anti-rape activists available with a view to further research.

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## Chapter 5: Analysis of Data and Interpretation

In this chapter the results of interviews with 12 male anti-rape activists from Cape Town are described, interpreted and their implications are discussed. The results are presented thematically. The following themes are going to be discussed in this chapter:

1. Background characteristics of the respondents.
2. Male anti-rape activists ideas about rape as a form of sexual violence against women.
3. Why the subjects have chosen to fight against rape.
4. Does being a man raise issues.
5. What the respondents think should be done to prevent rape.

### 5.1 Background Characteristics of the Subjects

**Table 1: Age of Respondents**

Age	No. of Subjects
30 - 39	8
40 - 49	2
50 - 59	2

According to Table 1 above, most of the men (8) were in their thirties at the time of the interview. The youngest man was aged 30 and the oldest was 57 years old. The mean age was 38.4 years and the median age was 36 years.

**Table 2: Religion and Marital status**

	Married	Divorced/separated	Live Together	Never Married	Total
None	2	1	1	2	6
Anglican	2	—	—	1	3
Roman Catholic	1	—	—	2	3
Total	5	1	1	5	12

The religious affiliation of the men was also determined: half of the men were Christians who belonged to either the Roman Catholic Church (3) or the Anglican Church (3). The other half reported not having any religious affiliation. Five of the subjects were married, another five had never married, one man had never married but lived with his girlfriend and one man was divorced/separated.

**Table 3: Educational Qualifications and Race<sup>1</sup>**

	White	Coloured	Chinese	Black (African)	Total
University	6	2	—	3	11
College	—	—	1	—	1
Total	6	2	1	3	12

The above table shows that the majority of the men (11) had obtained a University qualification. Only one man had a College diploma. Racially, according to the respondents self-definitions, six of the men were White, two were Coloured, three were Black and one was Chinese.

<sup>1</sup>This refers to respondents' self-definitions. According to my own observations two of the respondents who described themselves as Black were Coloured.

**Table 4: Occupation and Income Per Month**

Occupation	R3000-3999	R4000-4999	R5000 +	Refused to Answer	Unknown
Priest	1	—	—	—	—
Psychiatrist	—	—	1	—	—
Film maker	—	—	—	1	—
Trade unionist	—	1	—	—	—
Community worker	—	1	—	—	—
Therapist/Consultant	—	—	—	—	1
Project co-ordinator	1	—	—	—	—
Community psychologist	—	—	1	—	—
Broadcaster/Family mediator	—	—	1	—	—
Administrator/Manager of NGO	—	—	1	—	—
Equal opportunity officer, human resource	—	—	1	—	—
Director of Institute of Social Development	—	—	1	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 4 above indicates that most (11) of the men were professionals . One man was self-employed. Six men earned more than R5000 per month, two earned between R4000 – R4999, and another two earned between R3000 - R3999 per month. One man said that he did not know how much he earned per month because he did not have a steady income and another man refused to disclose his monthly income.

The data on the demographics of the respondents reveal that these men who are activists against rape are unusual. They are all of mature age (above 30), they all have tertiary degrees and they are all middle class taking into account their occupations and their monthly salaries. Six of them have never been married. Only one respondent is Black although two of the Coloured informants identified themselves as Black. It may be part of their idealism that they want this label. The group is not representative of the South African male population

and it is also not representative of male anti-rape activists. The average man in this country is Black, under 30 years, married, does not have tertiary educational qualifications and is employed as a wage labourer. In contrast, the men in this study are not only middle class but have tertiary qualifications, which is rare in South Africa. All of them are professionals and, as people in their kind of jobs are likely to be White because of the legacy of apartheid, it is not surprising that most of them are White. Half of the subjects identified themselves as being religious, but only one of these, **Subject 2**, drew on his religious background during the interview. Thus, although most of them said they are not special as men and they are involved in the fight against rape because it is the right thing to do, they are in fact not typical of South African men. Their demographic details indicate the type of man we can look to in the fight against rape.

## 5.2 Understanding of Rape

### 5.2.1 Defining Rape

The men defined rape in many different ways; however they generally agreed that rape is a form of sexual violation. **Subject 5** said that rape is:

*When one person forcibly has any kind of sexual anything towards another person. Sexual anything could be anything, it does not have to be sexual intercourse, it can be using.. sometimes I have heard of people using objects and I have heard of men getting raped by women, I have heard of kids getting raped by adults. Rape is definitely forced sex... Anything related to sex that is forced, the main issue is force.*

Half of the respondents saw rape as a form of sexual violence that is directed against women only. One definition holds that “rape is really imposing one self upon women against their will in a violent way as part of men’s abuse of women. Objects can also be used.. not necessarily vagina and penis” (**Subject 2**). **Subject 5** said that before he defined rape it is

very important to point out that he does not use the words sexual violence against women when he talks about rape instead he uses the words “*male terrorism*”. His argument was that he believed that men probably coined the words “*sexual violence*” to use against women. By using these words, he argues, the focus is still on women, but the focus should be on the actions of men. He continues by asserting that “*it’s (the use of words “sexual violence” against women) a linguistic intimidation... so if I use the words crime against the poor, focus is still on the poor, the crime should be the shame of the rich. Linguistically we need to readjust our thinking*”. According to him, rape refers to uninvited aggressive violent action against another human being, particularly women, and it involves a display of sexual prowess or power.

All the respondents argued that there is no typical rapist. Their argument was that every man has the potential to rape and that a rapist is not necessarily someone who is otherwise violent or a criminal; all types of people could commit rape. One of them said, “*a person who rapes could be someone who is respected in the community, an honourable person, it could be a young person or an old person, an employed or unemployed person, a black or a white person. All the people we know around us*” (**Subject 2**). The men stated that most of the rapists are known by their victims. Three men went further to point out that typically rapists are people who want to show that they have power over women and who have serious problems about themselves such as deep levels of disrespect for themselves and consequently other people.

The study indicates that most of the respondents had a fair knowledge about what constitutes rape. They generally defined rape as forced sexual intercourse; however some of their definitions were very narrow. Six men out of 12 saw rape as a sexual crime which can only

be committed against a woman by a man. This gender-specific definition may imply that according to them a woman cannot rape a man, that a man cannot rape another man or that a woman cannot rape another woman. This limitation is also reflected in the South African legal definition of rape which excludes forced sexual intercourse by a woman on a man, and a man on another man. However, one should not exclude the fact that these respondents may have defined rape in gender-specific terms due to the fact that the overwhelming number of cases of rape victims are females and the perpetrators are almost all men. On the other hand, half of the men saw rape as a crime which does not necessarily happen between a male and a female, and a vagina and a penis. By including the use of objects by rapists in their definition these men also turned attention to the other coercive and life-threatening experiences of rape. It is encouraging that these men viewed rape not only as a sexual crime but also as a crime of violence, which is experienced by the majority of rape victims. As Brownmiller (1975) correctly points out, vaginal penetration by the penis may be less abhorrent for the victim of rape than some forms of attack.

The definition of rape given by the respondents is however completely decontextualised. Any definition must deal with the appropriate context but this is not clearly defined by the informants. It was not clear whether they were talking about rape in the context of people who are lovers or rape by a stranger. None of the subjects talked about rape in marriage and none of them said that some women are much more vulnerable to rape. The men in this study continually talked about all women, but none of them mentioned any socio-economic or racial differences among women.. This makes them radical feminists like Brownmiller and other early white United States or United Kingdom women theorists or activists who viewed women "as if they are a single homogenous group, devoid of class and racial inequalities, reduced to mere instances of male power" (Mama, 1997:59). This shows that

the respondents are out of touch with more sophisticated analysis of differences in women's vulnerability to rape. According to Rape Crisis (1994) gender makes all women potential rape victims, but not all women are similarly vulnerable. As discussed in section 2.2, studies have shown that in South Africa lower class women and/or black women are much more likely to be targets of rape (Eagle and Vogelmann, 1991; Vogelmann, 1990).

### 5.2.2 Why Men Rape

**Table 5: Men's Views on the Causes of Rape**

Cause	No. of men mentioning this
Power: acting out control over women	12
To reinforce women's powerlessness	12
To re-establish women's powerlessness	12
Because patriarchy exists	4
Because black patriarchy has been undermined by apartheid	1
Because patriarchy has been disempowered by apartheid	1
Because patriarchy has been disempowered by women's liberated achievements	2
Low male self-esteem	1
Part of culture of violence (the legacy of apartheid)	5
Natural desire to rape	1
Sexual dysfunction	2
Poor role models	2
Abusive relationships with mothers and sisters	2
Bad relations with daughters	2
Bad relations with women at work	2
Because women do not stand together	1
Pornography	2
Media portrayals of women as objects	2
Socialisation to treat women badly	1
Poverty	1
Lack of empathy on the side of the rapist	1

In this study, men expressed various views of causes of rape as reported in Table 5 above. The main reason given by all the men was that rape is concerned mainly with power. They said that rape is a way of acting out control, acting out power against women and children

who are not as powerful as men are in society. It was argued that because of the power that South African men have in this country, they generally tend to see and to treat women as objects. **Subject 1** elaborated on this point by revealing that:

*Some of the work I have been doing in the past six months or so has been looking at what rape actually produces in terms of gender relations and it seems that what it does, in terms of heterosexual men, is that it tends to fix a woman in a specific way or role. It seeks to attribute a particular identity that is sexualised or an identity of an object in terms of the social position... a man who rapes or commits rape looks at bringing the world into shape so that the shape of the world has specifically women in the role that confirms to his sense of himself in terms of him occupying central position which is quite self-centred. Rape seems to be a way that men try to bring women into his world so that she fits in with how he sees the world and how and what he defines it. So rape is specifically about power.*

**Subject 12** restated the previous view well when he said:

*For me, fundamentally, rape is part of the whole process of how we deal with power, the position of men and women in the society... is about power and one asserting dominance over the other. It's about power and control of others. The position of women is very clear, they are completely, to a larger extent, voiceless, and they are powerless. Women are caught in a situation where men control their lives, their domestic lives, their property lives, their public lives, their political lives and their social lives to still a large extent.*

Four men argued that patriarchy provides the context for rape. **Subject 7** asserted that patriarchal society is deeply sexist and in some ways it has devalued women. The whole patriarchal system, the argument continues, tends to value men. One only needs to look at the extent to which decision-making positions of status and wealth in society are held by men. **Subject 10** went further to argue that in South Africa we have a patriarchal culture and in that context there is a traditional belief that the rule of men is absolute, proper and acceptable, and that women and children must follow accordingly. He continued to state that what has happened under apartheid is that these traditional ideas have been destroyed largely because men, particularly black men, have not been able to control their economic and social circumstances fully. Other forces have controlled these. He said, "what to my mind has

*happened is that relationships have been skewed so that when he (a black man) is disempowered, the only place he can affect the semblance of power is with women and children.”* He pointed out that disempowerment as opposed to being in control of one’s life and circumstances have created a deep kind of moral and spiritual schism among men. This means that a man may act out his frustrations and aggressions on women and children. He concluded by suggesting that *“we have a disproportionate number of cases here that I think can be related to our history, to the kind of disrupted social conditions that we had to live in.”*

Two men saw the liberation of women as one of the causes of rape. One of them pointed out that developments as far as empowerment of women is concerned might fit into one of the reasons why men rape; that is, some men think that they are being challenged by the rise of women in South African society (*Subject 7*). He said that the empowerment of women might be leading to an increase in the incidence of rape in the sense that men who are feeling threatened or disempowered may strike back through sexual violence. The other subject added that more and more women are getting into the labour market and some of them hold positions of power and status and head up their households while, on the other hand, their husbands are not working (*Subject 9*). This raises issues of power relations in the sense that where there is a woman bringing money into the home a man may feel totally disempowered. And as a result he may deal with this by beating his wife or may force her to have sex with him. *Subject 6* mentioned that insecurity of males is demonstrated and displayed in different ways and rape is one of these ways. He said *“rape has to do with power, control and oppression and it’s normally people with low self-esteem, who do not have much control... it could be most probably socio-economic but again it’s low self-esteem that would involve*

*somebody having the inability of coming to terms with themselves, their own power, and wanting to impose it on others, mostly the weaker people. It is not unusual for them to impose their strength on the weaker members of the society.”*

Five men reported that rape is part and parcel of a culture of violence in the society. It was argued that we live in a violent society where violence is useful and it can get people things. Two of these men said that in this country it is “okay to rape” in the sense that rape is never challenged in any way and that everyone is silent about it. In this way the South African society has allowed rape to continue unabated. **Subject 10** gave some examples which according to him, suggested that the committing of rape is acceptable for some men. This is what he had to say:

*... in terms of the work I have been doing a couple of years, I have seen a situation, in this country in particular, that suggests that large numbers of men are simply unaware of rape as an issue, as an act of violence, as an act of aggression or even violation. They regard it as something somehow normal and obviously this is not surprising in an environment where we have gone through one of the most barbaric and dehumanising experiences that people could possibly have. The effects of apartheid have psychologically left deep scars on people so that they have not been able to correctly place how they are to relate to each other. So there are a lot of things that are becoming acceptable that would be pathologically defined in other places. For example, we talked to men who felt that violating little girls, virgins, was acceptable as one cure for AIDS or as a preventative measure. This is a bad idea but it is commonly acceptable here. We talk to young school boys who are involved in gang rapes in schools and basically there were no values, codes or basis for them to understand why that was inappropriate, they simply did not understand that was not right because we have moved so far out of basic kinds of human relations that virtually anything goes. So it is very difficult to talk about what's typical because there isn't a typical profile for a person who would do this, because the types of incidences of rape are very broad. In every community, across class, economic, racial, ethnic and language barriers, this phenomenon exists here in levels that probably do not exist anywhere else. So at the end of the day its about people's values and their values, have been shaped by a kind of brutalisation under apartheid.*

Other causes mentioned were natural desire to rape (**Subject 12**) and sexual dysfunctionality (**Subjects 5** and **7**). Men with sexual problems may rape women. Poor role modelling, unhealthy and abusive relationships that men had with their mothers and sisters when they were young (men abused by their mothers or sisters) and bad relationships men have with women at work and their daughters, which shape their beliefs about women, were stated as some of the reasons why men commit rape (**Subjects 2** and **9**). That women do not support each other in the fight against rape was mentioned as one of the factors contributing to rape by **Subject 5**. He asserted that “*women especially older women .. do not support the younger women. So they are doing nothing about it. They also grow up knowing it (rape) is wrong but they do not necessarily do anything. I think that's strange*”. The way men are socialised in South African society was mentioned by **Subject 12** as one of the reasons why men rape. His argument was that every day men are indoctrinated by perceptual ideologies and frameworks, ways of doing things, ways of behaving and ways of thinking. He said men are taught on a daily basis how to treat women and are also raised to treat women badly. Pornography and the media which display women as sex objects were seen as factors in rape by **Subjects 2** and **5**. Poverty (**Subject 12**) and lack of empathy by the rapist (**Subject 1**) were also mentioned as other causes of rape.

The informants were all aware that there is no typical rapist, that all types of people could rape. There was no clear explanation among the respondents about factors contributing to rape, as they generally felt that men rape mainly because of the need to control and dominate women. Power was seen by these men as the main motivating factor behind the act of rape. The men viewed rape as part of the general oppression of women by men in patriarchal society. This is a feminist position. According to proponents of the feminist theory, rape should be regarded as one of the tactics that men employ to exercise their power (Ellis, 1989;

Baron and Straus, 1989). Rape is a crime against women which represents a violation of freedom, sexual objectification, male dominance and force (Williams and Holmes, 1981). The respondents' idea that rape is not necessarily a crime that is motivated by sexual desires but by the need to control and dominate women drives us to broaden our understanding of the causes of rape and also to pay significant attention to the need to empower women in the South African society. What the informants think indicates that, as long as men control the socio-economic structures and women continue to be handicapped in respect to acquiring desirable resources on which the continuation of male power relies, rape will continue to be used by men as a tool to maintain the status quo. Men may change their attitudes towards women in communities where both men and women are equal. However, women's emancipation may also contribute to rape as some of the subjects indicated. As Baron and Straus (1989:6) argue "more threatened male egos may mean more rapes".

The data also reveal that some of the respondents believe that rape is one of the legacies of apartheid. Rape was seen by some of the respondents as part of the culture of violence in South African society which arose due to apartheid, the system in which people were treated in the most dehumanising ways. However, although the opportunity for rape may be a legacy of apartheid, we cannot blame the political structure for rape. Rape is also widespread in countries such as Britain where there have been no "apartheid" structures as in South Africa. Moreover, it is not clear how apartheid has encouraged rape or how it changed the opportunity for rape. Even though the "New" South Africa is now four years old, it is doubtful whether the new democracy has shifted these opportunities. South Africa still tops the world charts in incidence of rape. However, one wonders what it means to call rape a

“legacy of apartheid”. Is that a metaphor? Are these men trying to tell us that rape is a horror like apartheid? Does this make it easier for people to fight against rape in the way that many people have fought apartheid?

Some of the respondents have a number of theories about culture and men. According to them violence against women in this country is common to the extent that some men believe that it is acceptable to rape. As previously stated violence against women is so prevalent and tolerated in South Africa that Eagle and Vogelmann (1991) describe it as “endemic”. The fact that some men see rape as something which is normal indicates a violent culture in which the dignity of women is not respected. This is due to the fact that, although sexual violence against women is one of the major problems in this country, it has never been condemned in the strongest terms. Rape is never challenged enough and society has created a wall of silence around this issue.

Much of what some of the men in this study have said seems to apply to black men, although they do not directly state this. There seems to be a suggestion that there is a connection between race and rape. Statements such as “... *what has happened under apartheid... particularly black men have not been able to control their economic and social circumstances fully... so when he is disempowered, the only place he can affect the semblance of power is with women and children*” clearly indicate that according to this man, most of the rapists in South Africa are black and hence rape may be a black men’s issue or problem. However, rape is common in all race groups.

There are broader areas of consensus between the subjects' views about the causes of rape and those in the literature, which is mostly written by feminist women. The literature reveals that the main cause of rape is the desire for power, men wanting to control and dominate women. The men in this study also saw power as the main motivating factor behind the act of rape. Other areas of agreement are that rape is a result of patriarchy, and that the way men are socialised contributes to rape. The respondents mentioned a very important element as far as the causes of rape are concerned: that women contribute to rape in the sense that they do not support each other in the fight against rape. The literature is silent on this. Instead it blames all men, even those who have never raped and also those who are involved in the fight against sexual violence against women. It is important to note that some women as well as some men support rape myths. Rape victims are not normally supported by all women in this country. It would be very useful if all women were to come together and condemn rape in the strongest terms and also work hand in hand in its prevention. This may be a clear message to men that all women detest rape and this may have an effect on their attitudes towards rape.

### **5.2.3 What Prevents Some Men From Raping**

The literature on rape does not distinguish men who are rapists from those who are not. Most writers concentrate on perpetrators and the literature is silent about factors or experiences in a man's life which determine his choice not to rape. Thus, it was important in this study to get some male

opinions about what prevents some men from committing rape. The opinions of the respondents are summarised in Table 6.

**Table 6: Respondents’ Opinions on the Reasons Why Some Men do not Rape**

Reason given	No. of men mentioning this
Respect for women	11
Fear of being caught	4
Fear of jail	4
Fear of the the law	4
Community sanctions	1
Upbringing of a person	1
Good role models	1
Stable family life	1
Good relationships with women	2
Good conflict management	1
Being able to determine what is wrong or right	3
Integrated social values and norms	3
Belief in faith and culture	3
Moral ethics	3
Sexual confidence	1
Positive fantasies	1
Gender equality	1
Good sex education	1

Eleven men said that respect for women generally prevents some men from committing rape. According to them, men who do not rape are concerned about the safety and security of other human beings and also believe in the rights of other people. The general feeling was that men who view women with respect, who are conscious of the need to respect the self and the other, would not violate other people, and therefore would refrain from and/or agitate against

rape. **Subject 9** asserted that when we talk about why some men do not rape, it comes back to being conscious about whether one has consent and whether one is getting involved in trying to violate someone just because he is feeling disempowered. He said "... where I really care about someone I would want to treat them in a very respectable way because I care and love them. I wouldn't do anything to hurt them... It's about knowing that you will not cross that line.. It's about issues of intimacy and caring and that's crucial and caring is about a number of issues, is not about the way you feel... it's about mutual respect."

**Subject 10** had this to say about the reasons why some men do not commit rape:

*... being aware of themselves, having some respect for themselves, understanding who he is, his place in the world. I do not think people would rape if they had strong sense of themselves, respect themselves, love themselves and if they have these they will find it easy to love and respect other people and if you don't you won't, that's fundamental. So we start with our little boys, young men, teaching them to have respect for themselves, to respect their sisters, to value them not for any other reason except that it is the only natural thing to do for you. We have to start here.*

Four men stated that fear of being caught, fear of jail and fear of the law prevents some men from raping. One of them said that men would not rape if they were parts of communities where there would be stringent community sanctions if they did rape and who have reference groups that would come out strongly against rape. However, **Subject 7** contradicts this by pointing out that even men who belong to such communities are too often involved in rape. He said:

*I do not understand how that happens but it must be a factor if you are part of the community that does in fact sanction rape in a very serious way and that does sanction sexual harassment and violence, that must help to prevent men from raping but it does not exclude the possibility, all it can do is reduce the likelihood. But as far as... the fact that it is a serious crime, whether that prevents men from raping I doubt that. I do not know because in any case what men are pretty aware of is that the chances of getting away with rape are very good... such a small proportion of rapists ever get to jail even if charges are laid. As we know the proportion that*

*actually end up in court leave alone convicted at the end of the day is so small. So compared to many crimes the chances of a person getting away with it are very good. I doubt that the risk of consequences plays a huge role. For example, if they were to introduce the death penalty I am sure that would have absolutely no effect on the incidence of rape. It may, however, have a negligible effect if anything because the conventional wisdom is that people could get away with it everywhere, anywhere, all the time and what will happen of course is that even if something like the death penalty was reintroduced and applied to rape, there would always be sufficient doubt that people who are convicted of raping would actually be sentenced to death... the proportion of rapists who get life sentences is very small.*

Other reasons mentioned for why some men do not rape were the upbringing of a person in a healthy environment, good role models in the family and stable family life, and parental involvement in the upbringing of a child (**Subject 2**). The same respondent said that a man who has good relationships with women and also one who knows how to resolve and manage conflicts would not rape. **Subjects 1, 4 and 10** mentioned the following as factors which prevent some men from committing rape: being able to determine what is wrong or right, integrated social values and norms, belief in faith and culture and moral ethics. **Subjects 3 and 7** said that empathy, sensitivity, concern about the safety and security of other human beings and responsibility for one's own actions are some of the reasons why some men do not rape. **Subject 5** said that sexual confidence and positive fantasies prevent some men from raping. He stated that:

*Another reason that prevents men from raping is fantasies. If they have positive fantasies, they fantasise about their partners all day, their wives, and do not fantasise about the girl next door that they want to rape. I think also sexual confidence. I think a lot of men do not have sexual confidence... like at the moment we have men's clinics because the men's clinics deal with impotency, men cannot get erections and all that kind of stuff... a man who cannot get an erection will get it when he goes out and rapes a woman because it is like a rash.*

He also stated that gender equality prevents men from raping in the sense that men who believe that they are not superior to other people would not want to dominate and control others because they do not feel insecure. **Subject 2** mentioned good sex education as one of the factors in some men's choice not to rape. He said that there are a lot of misconceptions about sex and women, and that if men are taught about this they may not rape.

The data indicate that most of the informants believed that men who genuinely respect women would not rape. However, this statement is ambiguous. It was not clear whether according to the respondents respect is a religious or a conservative idea, or a human rights issue. The men in this study were confused about this. Traditionally, respect for women does not go together with power sharing.

Some of the men also pointed out that harsh punishments may influence a man's choice not to rape. However, one respondent disagreed saying that "*you cannot legalise people's conscience*". If men fear the consequences of rape they may think twice before they commit such a crime. This forces us to see the crucial role that society in general and the legal justice system in particular can play in preventing sexual violence against women in this country. The interaction between the law and the social order is so close that most women feel that the law is in favour of men. South African women believe that they are disadvantaged in legal procedures dealing with their lives and experiences. The fact that sexual violence against women is not taken seriously by the legal system shows that the system is inefficient and inequitable and that it has helped to perpetuate rape. The legal system should also be blamed because it is supposed to reproduce social order, and define and constitute that order (Freeman in Jagwanth *et al*, 1994: 174). Men should be told that rape is wrong and therefore no one should commit it. This raises the need for men to see the significance of doing something about gender relations in this country.

The upbringing of children in a healthy social environment was also seen by some of the respondents as important in men's choice not to rape, in the sense that children learn from an early age what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in society. They are taught appropriate social behaviour and men who have learned this are concerned about the safety

and security of other people and for this reason would not commit rape. None of the informants said that the reason why some men do not rape is because of political commitment or engagement in an anti-rape movement like theirs. Furthermore, although 6 out of 12 men in this study are Christians, they did not mention religious beliefs as one of the factors which determine a man's choice not to rape.

### 5.3 Activism and Reasons for Choice of Focus

It is worth noting that all of the respondents were not only concerned about rape but they were also activists against violence against women in general, such as domestic violence. Four of them were also political activists and two were activists against any form of violence.

The men in this study had some connections with the following activist groups:

**Table 7: Activists Groups with which the Respondents had Connections**

Activist Group	No. of respondents
NICRO	5
Mosaic	1
Rape Crisis	4
5 in 6 Project	2
New Age Men's group	1
Gender Advocacy Program	1
Men's group in Mitchell's Plain	1
Research and Action for Prevention of Child Abuse Network (RAPCAN)	2
Western Cape Network against Violence against Women	6

The jobs of some of the men also involved them in fighting rape. However, it is to be noted that Table 7 does not include groups which employ some of the informants, but only those with which they have an association.

All the men gave several reasons for their engagement in the fight against rape. Eight men said that they had decided to fight against rape because the incidence of sexual violence against women is so endemic in this country that it is impossible for one not to be aware of it and, as men, they felt that they had to do something about it. The most disturbing thing for them was the fact that most of the perpetrators of rape were men and the victims were always women and, this being the case, men never talk, address meetings or take a stand on this issue, they just avoid it. **Subject 7** stated that:

*One thing that has particularly concerned me about the issue of sexual violence against women is that, at least until very recently, it has worried me a great deal that there have been so few men who have taken a public stand on the issue. That has begun to change I understand but given that the huge bulk of the problem does relate to men assaulting women... the fact that there are so few men visibly opposed and taking the issue seriously always concerned me a great deal. As a man that has been an extra motivating factor in relation to this particular issue of sexual violence*

**Subject 5** said that he felt as a man that if he did not do anything about rape, if he did not say anything about rape, then he was keeping silent and that his silence was as good as an agreement. He said “ *It is like a white person in apartheid years, if they did nothing... it meant they agreed...I am not afraid to challenge other men about their general ideas.*”

Four men saw their involvement in the fight against sexual violence against women as part of wider issues such as political and human rights issues. They regarded their engagement as part and parcel of the continued struggle for equity and justice in the post-apartheid South Africa. **Subject 11** pointed out that he had always been fighting to democratise South African society and “*I stand here today and see where we have come from. But for me it’s very worrying that we have come so far but one of the most serious things like rape and*

violence against women are not changing. We fought for our new government but we are still subjugating other people, women. To me we cannot really be free until we can address one of the key issues and that is violence against women and rape, that's why I have taken this stand."

**Subject 10** pointed out that:

*I have always been interested on how one develops a sense of himself in this respect and the kind of placing himself in the world in such a way that one does not violate other people. That obviously comes out of historically extraordinary political circumstances in this country which is what bothers me the most, we simply did not deal with it (rape). We had a particular focus around apartheid without looking at the social or human relations, which were the psychological effects of that kind of beggarism that was perpetuated against the majority of the population in this country. We never addressed it and we are still not addressing it for that matter, we are simply going on with it. People need more than this, they need goals, they need objectives, they need to see themselves going somewhere, and they need social support of something greater, bigger and better. If they can't see that then we see the kind of schism that we are seeing in this country at the moment, particularly our men who in so many respects are doing it.*

*I have relationships with women, mothers, sisters and daughters. The fact of the matter is that they are frightened in an environment which says this stuff is okay and it happens with a level of frequency that it does. Its just in my best interest to try to do everything I can to educate, to motivate men to look at themselves, to work at these relationships. I can never be secure in an environment that has such rampant kind of disregard for people. I suppose it's (rape) so serious right now I do not see how anybody could not be engaged to some kind of level even if it's about having a discussion with the guy next door or whoever. We are all threatened, all of the people in our lives, women and children in our lives. That's why to me it's so basic, it is the same kind of issues as why did we struggle against apartheid, why did we struggle to shift social relations, power relations between whites and blacks... everybody still needs to be engaged in that particular kind of struggle. In my mind issues on gender, issues of violence against women and children are absolutely no different right now in some respects and are more critical. I do not see how you can stand on the sidelines. If I did, I might but I do not see how we can.*

These men pointed out that rape is part of the overall activism in the field of violence and human rights. They considered rape as a critical human rights issue, a critical issue of violence, a gross violation of a person's rights. They believed that men and women should

be treated equally; moreover women should feel free to walk in the streets in this country and not be afraid. This is a woman's fundamental right that should be protected and not violated, and their dignity should be honoured. **Subject 4** said that rape is a very important aspect of a violent society that needs to be addressed, and awareness must be raised about it. He stated that women talk about rape all the time but the people who need to hear the message are men because they are the ones who mainly commit rape.

Four men said that they were concerned about rape because it is fundamental to many things. **Subject 12** reported that rape is fundamental in the sense that even if the poor are given food and are provided with shelter, and even if unemployed people are given jobs, they would still rape. He pointed out that rape cuts across society, issues of race, class and nationality. The general feeling among these men was that rape affected them directly in the sense that people they know are likely to be raped. Therefore, they wanted to improve the quality of life by fighting rape. They reported that they had been moved by the experiences of some of their female friends who were victims of rape, and for this reason they thought it was important to take a stand on this issue. **Subject 4** said *"as a son, as a brother, as a father and as a man I feel responsible for creating an environment through culture in which men take greater responsibility for their worlds in perpetuating violence and rape in our society"*.

**Subject 10** asserted that:

*It's (rape) epidemic so on that basis we all have to do what we can do, again its not really a matter of just choice, I do not think we have a choice at this stage, we are absolutely required to do whatever we can around this issue. For me it's non-negotiable, as long as I have women folks who are at risk and if they are at risk I am directly at risk and that's true for every man walking around, period.*

Two men said that they feel terrible if other people's dignity has been infringed and when other people are not able to enjoy respect. They stated that anything violent against another person is just completely anathema to their deepest values. This was one of the reasons why they felt strongly about rape. **Subject 1** reported that:

*As a man I believe that I also have something to say in terms of speaking to so called brothers about behaviours that are degrading to women and subjugating of women. Not only because the subjugating degrades women but also because they are intensely subjugating and degrading of men... I feel ashamed and embarrassed about what other men are doing in the name of men. I feel that as a man I have to speak to other men about their behaviour.*

Two men said that their involvement was a result of their sexual experiences. **Subject 9** revealed that he was sexually abused and raped by a good friend of his family when he was young. **Subject 12** said that he had found himself in situations where he felt that he had been raped or allowed himself to be abused and every time when he emerged from such situations he felt very bad. He said:

*I haven't quite experienced a violent rape where I was violently pinned down by a stranger or whatever, often it was just people I knew, someone I trust, that I did not give my consent to, but on the one hand just to get out of situations the quickest way is to just also say nothing and just let it be over and done with as quickly as possible and I think a lot of women find themselves in that position... For me it is because of personal reasons.*

**Subject 2** mentioned his religious beliefs as one of the main reasons that he became an activist against rape. He said that he believed that his involvement was part of his calling. He argued that it is part of Christianity to stand up against violence of all forms. He pointed out that:

*In the 1970's the political situation in this country, the oppressiveness of the state... my belief is that the gospel was the answer to that situation and therefore violence against women is simply another political issue. It is another form of oppression of women. It is not just a personal thing but a societal problem. It is a social problem*

*that needs to be addressed; it has to deal with changing of value systems and mindsets of people. A lot of what the church has been doing is to change the*

*mindsets of people in the light of scripture, judging actions or us in terms of the commandment to love one another. Loving one another involves to be loved, to be cared for and protected in our community. The gospel can change rape rates in the sense that I think we act our beliefs, we believe certain things and we act them out. I feel that the church has an answer to this societal problem.*

Two men said that they became involved so as to show the world that there were good men who do not rape. **Subject 9** stated that in many forums and articles women are doing a great deal of “*male bashing, saying males this and males that*” but no one at any stage had asked men who do not rape how they would challenge other men. **Subject 5** reported that rape was not seen as a men’s issue and as a result women did not want men to become involved in gender issues. He asserted that some women are even hostile to men who are working on sexual violence against women. He revealed that “... *I walk into meetings where there are no men present and it’s like ah here is a man, ah you know all men are rapists...*”. These two men felt that men had been ignored for a very long time in the fight against violence against women and as a result they wanted to show that some men are not bad, they do care deeply about things such as rape.

Other reasons included exposure to an understanding of feminism (**Subject 7**), influences of parents, especially the mother (**Subjects 6 and 11**) and influence of a girlfriend who is also engaged in the fight against rape (**Subject 11**). **Subject 8** mentioned job opportunity as the main reason for his involvement. He said he just wanted to do community work and the only job he could get involved issues on gender violence.

One feature of the social circumstances of these men is that for several of them activism is a paid job, whereas for most people activism involves voluntary work. Very few, 5 out of 12, of the respondents talk to their neighbours about issues of rape. None of them is working at the Rape Crisis Centre. Most of them have come to the prevention of rape via their jobs in the sense that they either acquired their beliefs as a result of their jobs or chose their jobs because of their beliefs. One respondent said that *"... I work within an organisation which tries to work towards the prevention of sexual violence against women ... That's how I channel my anger of violation of human rights and try to do something constructive about it..."*. It can be argued therefore that the men in this study are special because for many of them the fight against rape is part and parcel of their paid work.

The men in this study became activists against rape for various reasons some of which were personal while others were general. Eight men were deeply concerned about the level of sexual violence against women in this country, relating it to the fact that, although most of the rapists are men, men have not yet taken a stand on this issue. As a result they felt that as men they had to do something about the behaviour of other men. Rape is a men's issue hence men have to be in the forefront in the fight against sexual violence against women. As Beneke (1982) points out, rape must be seen as a problem of men and it must be realised that men can work together to bring an end to this problem. It is very encouraging to hear from these men that they see rape as their own problem which they feel they really have to deal with. Statements such as *" it has worried me a great deal that there have been so few men who have taken a public stand on this issue ... given that the huge bulk of the problem does relate to men assaulting women"* show that some men are beginning to think that there can only be change if they play a crucial role in challenging rape and other men. Some of these men were even aware of the fact that if men remain silent about rape they may be perceived

as condoning what other men are doing. *“For as long as non-rapists remain silent, they allow one man to rape on behalf of other men... as long as they fail to take a principled stand by protesting, picketing and challenging their species they shall be seen as complicit in the act of rape”* (South Africa Now, 5 May, 1997: 25).

Four men saw their engagement in the fight against rape as part of their involvement in the broader human rights issues. Rape is a human rights issue in the sense that it is every women’s right to choose who she has sex with and no one has the right to violate this. Women cannot be free in the society as long as they cannot do as they please because of the fear of rape. It is inspiring to see that some men see rape as a human rights issue and that we cannot really be free in this country as long as some members of our society are still being violated. The fight against rape, as these men see it, is one of the key issues in the struggle for equity and justice in the new democratic South Africa.

Some of these men were also aware that rape is a problem that not only directly affects women but affects men too. Rape affects men directly, even those men who do not rape or who do not have attitudes which are supportive of sexual violence against women, in the sense that men cannot have a decent quality of life if people they love and care about are at risk of being raped. Rape affects men directly in the sense that they are afraid to see their wives and daughters walking around in the streets alone at night

What has also been learned from the respondents is that they do not think like most women who are engaged in rape prevention. Only two out of 12 have had experiences similar to those of women who are rape victims. Their involvement was a result of their sexual

experiences. For these two activists, women are not the only rape victims. It is true that most feminist activism began from identification as victims but the men in this study are identifying as potential “offenders”. Most of the informants are becoming involved in the fight against sexual violence against women for political reasons. These men claim that they are engaged in this fight because it is the “right thing to do”. They are approaching rape prevention through a non-feminist viewpoint. None of them mentioned patriarchy as the main reason for his involvement but they talked about things such as the culture of violence and apartheid. However, some of them said that they got involved because they wanted to be “different” men. These men are involved in the anti-rape crusade as part of something else, whereas women regard it as the whole process of fighting against sexual violence against women. The men in this study seem to be passionate about humanity and not about patriarchy per se.

#### **5.4 How Being A Man Raises Issues**

##### **5.4.1 Men As Rapists**

Eight of the respondents said that men in particular have to care about rape because sexual violence against women is a men’s issue. It is a male problem taking into account the fact that the majority of sexual offenders are men and for this reason men have to take more responsibility in the prevention of rape. They also mentioned that if all men cared about sexual violence against women the rates of rape would not be as high as they are at the moment and that possibly there would be no rapists at all in South Africa. Two of these men pointed out that rape is a men’s issue in the sense that it is in men’s favour that rape is allowed to continue and all men have vested interest in any violence. That is, men rape

because they want to maintain their powerful positions in the society. **Subject 5** went further by pointing out that men must be deeply concerned about rape because it affects them directly. He said:

*It (rape) is one of those things that affects you even if you are a so called good man ... it's a violent issue, one party stronger than the other so it affects you in this way... it is a serious embarrassment... For example, if there is a serial rapist in Gugulethu other women are not going to feel safe in the streets, other men also are going to worry about their wives and their daughters walking around the streets alone, so it's going to affect them as well. And the men all of a sudden do not allow their kids to go out at night because of the rapist. It also shows that men and women are in an unequal partnership because he might be afraid but he does not know how to show*

*his fear but in fact what he is really afraid of is that she is still his piece of property, his piece of meat, so if someone else gets it then it affects him. So the whole negative circle continues and continues.*

#### **5.4.2 Men As Full Citizens**

The respondents also mentioned that men could not live in the society as empowered human beings if rape continued to be so common. It was stated that it is in the interest of everyone that men take a stand on this issue. **Subject 4** stated that:

*Rape is a crime of war. It is one of the most serious crimes that exists in international law in terms of human rights dispensation. If society practises violence to resolve its problems, if men are continually asserting their power to violence against the body of women, what kind of society are we living in? What happens to the fabric of our society?*

The general feeling was that if the society is racked by violence children grow up as victims of sexual violence and become perpetrators. If there is no intervention in the children's lives they grow up believing that women are victims or men have to be perpetrators of rape.

#### **5.4.3 Men As Fathers**

**Subject 2** said that a man is a father figure in the family and if he is a rapist his children may believe that this is how one has to behave or this is what it means to be a man.

#### 5.4.4 Gender

Four out of the twelve respondents in this study said that they did not think that men in particular have to care about rape more than women. They said that rape is a crime that relates to fundamental values and everybody, whether a man or a woman, should fight against violence in all forms.

#### 5.4.5 Are Male Anti-Rape Activists Different From Other Men?

In response to the question that as it is unusual for a man to choose to fight against rape, did they consider themselves unusual, four men said that they were different from other men. According to two of the respondents what made them special as men was the influence of their mothers who taught them to think differently from other men. **Subject 6** said:

*I know I am an unusual man. I think is my mother who made me special as a man. I am very feminine... My mother had very strong values. She used to say to me do not touch a woman unless you are going to marry her, that kind of thing, do not consider sexual activity with a woman unless you are prepared to marry her, that's hard! She used to say to my sisters if you want to marry a guy see first how he treats his mother and his sisters and then you will know how he is going to treat you. I am the person I am because of the woman in my life. There isn't much to learn from men for me. I find them boring; I find them for the most part mediocre. The things that interest men do not interest me because I search for quality in life and I am not going to stand for two hours discussing bonking another woman, hi you got a nice ass, I do not have time for that. I do not have time for machismo. I do not take any jokes that put women down.*

**Subject 7** mentioned his commitment to community values while **Subject 2** said that it is God who made him special as a man. He pointed out that in his reflections, his prayer life, and when he looked at the world through God's eyes he realised that there were things which were terribly wrong and he felt that he had to do something about them.

Eight respondents, on the other hand, did not see themselves as special in any way. They stated that there are many men who share the same sentiments, who are opposed to rape, but they are not taking action because they do not know how to fight against rape, they never think that other people will listen to them, they never realise that they have vested interest in stopping and preventing rape, and they are not being mobilised. The general feeling was that rape embarrasses many men but they are not doing anything about it because there is very little way for them to become involved; there are no avenues for men, especially for an ordinary man in the street. They pointed out that there are many men who have never raped or even thought about committing rape but the society has not created an environment where men can come out and be supportive of a campaign against rape. Their main argument was that heterosexual society is of such a nature that men taking this stand would get all kinds of reactions. **Subject 5** said that, as a man, if you change your whole attitude towards women, other men in the community are also going to see you a bit differently, and this is not easy for most men who want to take the opportunity to take a stand on this issue. He said some men he knew who have changed their attitude have lost their friends and are called all sorts of names by other men. **Subject 10** asserted that:

*You see the most basic way for any man to think about this is to think about his daughter, to think about his mother, sister, to think about himself if he were to be violated in this manner. Any man who is provoked to think along those lines will immediately begin to shift his consciousness in another direction. The problem is that most of us are walking around not thinking that much about stuff. So I do not think I am unusual. I may have some unusual resources at my disposal because again I work in the media so this means my activism could take on the form of making film about it, a radio program about it, .. or writing a book about it.. I think most men are probably deeply concerned about it but don't exactly know what to do and that's my job to try and show them some ways to do something about it. I do not think all men are interested in rape but I think they all have a vested interest in being interested. We all have a vested interest, that is every single of us without exception have a primary interest in ensuring that we do everything we can to stop it. Now whether or not they are all interested in it I won't say that because I do not think they are all thinking about it, because they have not been provoked to think about it, largely they have not been forced to think about it.*

*Also its an unfortunate fact that this issue is categorised as a women's issue if you look at activities, if you look at organisations out there trying to heighten awareness around issues of violence against women and rape. These organisations are basically women organisations, women based organisations are not necessarily engaged directly with challenging men because there are no men in these organisations. The outreach is typically not to me, they have kept it as a kind of women's thing and it's not a women's thing, it's a people's thing and men must absolutely be at the very forefront of challenging shifts, of changing perspectives, of creating new paradigms in terms of how we think about it and the activists have to be out there actively dealing with men and that's one of the big problems, I have seen it, I have seen these organisations, I have seen that there are people who are women and they're not directly going for outreach to men and that is a major problem and it requires a major shift. Women see rape all the time and I think probably most men do not. That's why so few men are fighting against rape. The question is, do they have a voice, do they have a platform, and on what basis do they express their contempt for these brutal acts...?*

*In my mind it's impossible to imagine that most men are in favour of rape. What I think is that most men are ignorant about rape, about the relationships, the power relationships, about the impact of rape, about what it means. Whether they are in favour of it I do not know but I do not think so. I think we have just people almost like sleep walking. For instance we tolerated hundreds of years of oppression, of brutality, of rape on a psychological and spiritual and emotional level in this country at the hands of colonisation, over 50 year period in the hands of the apartheid system. With rape people would say men are in favour of it but I do not think so. The real shame of it is that people feel disempowered, they feel they do not have a voice, they feel there is nothing that they may necessarily do on a personal level to affect change. Again when people have been programmed to accept gross violations of themselves it does not mean that they are absolutely willing accomplices but what it does mean is that they may not know what the means are to shift their circumstances and that's largely what is happening... Again it's about pushing as far as we can to provoke folks to think differently and no campaign on a broad enough level has or is yet in place to do that and I think that's really the problem.*

**Subject 5**, on the other hand, did not agree with the argument that there is no way that men can become involved in fighting against rape. He argued that there are several avenues for men who are embarrassed about rape: for example, there are men's groups such as male church groups, male burial societies and the civics. He believed that men can get together and challenge rapists or they can individually talk to men they know who have committed rape. The main concern for him was that rape does not seem to be on the agenda of most men, who prefer to talk about sports or politics. Most men, according to him, do not become involved because they see it as a feminine thing to be involved in gender issues. The other

reason he mentioned was that men do not want to become involved because they are afraid that, if they do, things will change a little bit and men do not like change; they are very afraid to empower women.

*Subject 8* said that men do support a non-violent society, but they never raise the issue because they have priorities at the moment. He said men's involvement is a question of priorities. *Subject 7* said that when we look at the question of why relatively few men make a particular stand and come out publicly against rape we have to take into consideration the extent to which people generally are declaring themselves publicly on a range of issues. He asserted that there are very few issues having social context that empowers people as individuals to make strong stands. He said that men do take the matter into their own hands in the sense that they do beat up rapists and sometimes kill men who have committed rape in their communities. He pointed out that such direct action or strict activism around rape does happen within some communities. He ended by saying that it is possible that more men are involved in that way, but this is not evident because they are not exposing themselves politically.

#### **5.4.6 Male Anti-Rape Activists As Opposed To Female Anti-Rape Activists**

In this study most respondents (8) felt that a man as opposed to a woman could play a very significant role in changing other men's attitudes towards rape. They said that it was critically important that men should be addressed by other men on this issue because they are more likely to listen if the message is coming very strongly from other men. Most of the respondents felt that men were more powerful than women as anti-rape activists. Men can therefore influence other men more than women can. The respondents felt that men generally respond more to other men due to the fact that men dominate our social structure. The

argument continues that men have all the power in the society whereas women are powerless and, as a result, if a man speaks to another man they understand each other best because they speak the same language. **Subject 4** said “ *I think you have to be one in order to be more convincing and persuasive*”. According to them men are dismissive of women and this is because of the whole set of attitudes, traditions and cultures in the way both men and women relate to each other. **Subject 1** puts this best when he says:

*It (being a man) allows me to put one foot in the kind of the way I was raised, in the sense that, as a man, I was raised probably exactly in the same ways as the perpetrators of rape or violence against women, in a culture that favours men and takes men's ways of being for granted. As a man I think I had that experience of being raised in that culture and I think I have that sense of communality with other men... It helps because it is harder for a perpetrator of rape to dismiss a counter point coming from another man than it would be for him hearing it from a woman. If he hears it coming from a woman it is very easy for them to lapse into this position of saying that the woman is a feminist or whatever and dismiss the whole thing... I think it can be very powerful for a man to confront another man about his behaviour.*

Three respondents, on the other hand, said that being a man does not necessarily help in the fight against sexual violence against women. **Subject 10** said that women have particular opportunities that men do not have and vice versa and one is not necessarily better than the other. He stated that the fight against rape is about both men and women working together. **Subject 3** said that it does not matter whether one is a man or a woman because rapists generally lack empathy . That is, rapists are not compassionate. **Subject 8** said that he does not know whether being a man helps in the fight against rape.

Most of the respondents think that women are absolutely powerless in South African society. However, even though this is the case none of the respondents said that men have to lose power in order for rape to end. A statement such as “*It (being a man) helps because it is*

*harder for a perpetrator of rape to dismiss a counter point coming from another man than it would be for him hearing it from a woman”* is saying that it is useful for a man to fight rape because men have power. This statement is not in accordance with the belief that men need to lose some of their power to transform social relations. This raises the question of whether any man is prepared to engage on what it will take to prevent rape, which is men having less power. The men in this study do not seem to be looking at those issues at all. This shows how difficult it is for people in power to relinquish that power.

The study also suggests the need for women’s organisations to work with men directly in the prevention of rape. As *Subject 10* argued, women-based organisations are not involved with challenging men directly because there are no men who participate in their projects. He said “.. *it’s an unfortunate fact that this issue is categorised as a women’s issue if you look .. at organisations out there... The outreach is typically not for me, they have kept it as a kind of women’s thing..*”. This suggests that it is harder for men, especially ordinary men, to become involved in the fight against rape because women dominate the activism. If these men wanted to join an activists’ group, this would not be possible because there is nowhere in South Africa where a man can phone and say that he wants to become involved. Therefore, the men in this study are becoming involved through faith, politics or because it is part of their jobs. These men are special because they see rape prevention as part of their jobs.

According to Marciano (1981) men are not willing to accept equality with women or may find this difficult because they lack group membership where they get positive signs and/or personal satisfaction from living in equality with women. One of the men in this study even pointed out that being a male anti-rape activist leads to ostracism and another said that some women are hostile to men who are fighting against rape. This suggests that some women do

not trust these men. Marciano (1981: 148) says *“men who do believe in norms of equality often find themselves isolated because first, women mistrust them in their commitments or their motives, and second, other men mistrust them for their “lack of manliness” or for their potential influence for their lives”*. This indicates that there is a gap in activism and it also raises the question of whose responsibility it is to fill this gap. Furthermore, it raises the need for male anti-rape activists to be encouraged and supported by women. Since there is no male peer support, male anti-rape activists must be incorporated into women’s organisations in order for them to receive the necessary recognition. Women, in their fight against sexual violence against women, can be useful by distinguishing those men who are changing from those who are not.

### **5.5 Preventative Strategies**

Another area of interest was to find out what these men were doing to fight against rape. Most of the men in this study used various preventative strategies. Five men mentioned talking to as many men as possible about rape, the need to respect women, their dignity and self-worth, and appropriate male behaviour as one of the ways they are trying to prevent rape. They discuss these kinds of issues with their male friends, colleagues and any man they happen to be in contact with. They also encourage other men to speak out against rape and advise them on what they can also do about sexual violence against women. **Subject 5** said *“I talk to men all the time, in the bus, parties, work, etc”*. **Subject 10** reported that *“I do raise the issue (of rape) where and whenever I can. I do actively promote the idea of folks doing something about it as much as I can. I talk every day about all the issues that I am concerned about, all the time”*.

Three respondents work within organisations that deal with sexual violence against women as one of their main areas of concern. Their organisations try to work towards the prevention of rape in a number of different ways, such as offering services like counselling for rape victims and educational programs. **Subject 4** said:

*... I work within an organisation which tries to work towards the prevention of sexual violence against women in a number of different ways. That's how I channel my anger of violation of human rights and try to do something constructive about it... We offer counselling services, curative support services to victims of violence etc...*

**Subject 5** is working on a project that is about getting men involved on issues such as rape and domestic violence. In this project they target factories, the civic arena and governmental departments and ask men to talk about community problems, particularly problems related to gender issues, and also to help in finding a solution to those problems. He stated that:

*This program has a strategy... Our strategy is that we look for good men in the society and ask them to get involved to help us find some greater solutions to the problem... We get good men through our campaigns... They (good men) are nominated mostly by women... We get them involved by getting them to dialogue about it (rape) as men for the first time... where they are living...*

Two men said that they provide therapy to rapists. **Subject 1** reported that:

*Taking about therapy, I look specifically at issues of power and what it produces at the individual level and societal level, part of which involves the issue of identity. A person who gets referred to me by probation or the courts.. a large part of the work involves looking at working with what is called the denial, helping a person who is responsible to account for what he has done, looking at how he defines the problem, how he understands it. The work involves inviting the rapist into a position where he can begin to consider the impact of his behaviour. Once he is at that point, seeing himself as responsible, then I look at what it is that supports the rapist to see women in that way and then look at changing and shifting those beliefs, ideas.*

*It's quite a long process, looking at challenging him and finding out all the consequences for him to believe that kind of stereotyped idea, making him to believe that women are.. women who are wearing certain kind of clothing are asking to be raped, what it actually means for him to have that idea that women want to be raped, what is it about a woman saying no to his advances, what would be the consequences for him in engaging in a rapist life style e.g. going to jail, etc. It's not like there is any specific tool that you can use in every situation, it depends on who the person is, what is the relationship between him and the victim, factors concerning his own experiences in life etc. The therapy takes about 6 months. Once the therapy has stopped I sometimes do some follow ups just to hear whether they are doing okay. I do this by contacting probational offices.*

Four men mentioned running workshops in different places on rape issues as one of the ways they are trying to fight against rape. Two other men stated that as part of their awareness-raising campaign they have developed radio programs around issues on sexual violence against women. **Subject 10** reported that he has made some television programs and films around rape. **Subject 4** had this to say:

*We were doing this bill board last year... We were given a free bill board by the Department of Safety and Security in the Western Cape to a group of NGOs and the twenty NGOs decided that the slogan of the bill board will be "real men do not rape" and what we did is that we wanted an athlete, male athletes to be featured in the bill board and posters because again men need to speak to men about the issue and men listen to athletes because they are given greater significance in our society. There was only one athlete in the entire country who was willing to do it, ... all the athletes refused to participate in the campaign. This is very upsetting that it was only one man who was willing to support a campaign publicly against rape. The other thing too was that we were too afraid to ask any people because we do not know who has been a rapist or not because we wanted to create a positive role model for men to follow up, someone who was not involved in rape or violence against women and it was difficult to find. We put up our poster on the highway... The other thing that we are working on is a program advertising campaign at men's toilets, restaurants, bars and sporting facilities and put posters in these places and the slogan we came up with was "the power to stop rape is in your hands".*

Other preventative strategies mentioned included programs of advertising campaigns, keeping the issue on the agenda of political organisations, civic organisations and the community that one belongs to, raising awareness in the church about sexual violence against women, safeguarding women workers who travel by trains, and involvement in the organisation of the men's march against violence against women in Cape Town in 1997.

Two men also revealed that they were working on new programs. *Subject 1* said that he is in the process of starting a domestic violence intervention program and *Subject 3* is working on a project to initiate a program for young sexual offenders.

The men also talked about their successful and unsuccessful moments in their fight against rape. Six men said that every day is an unsuccessful moment if one looks at the alarming rates of rape in this country. Since the problem of sexual violence against women still remains one of the major challenges, these men felt that their struggle is not going too well and that their efforts have not been successful. *Subject 10* said that “ *we have been to places talking to folks and it made no difference, no impact whatsoever, it couldn't shift things at all. If we say in the end we have been anywhere and we see that there is no more rape, there is no more violence against women, so the answer is no...* ” On the other hand, two men said that they do not know whether they have had any successful or unsuccessful moments because they do not have a way of measuring success.

Only four men said that they have had successful moments in their fight against rape. They reported that some of the men they have talked to show some awareness and commitment to promote change and some are also starting to help other men in their communities. **Subject 5** had this to say about his successful moments:

*Yes lots, everything from individual men who get involved who had never been interested in it before to groups of men that have found some sort of solution. Remember I told you a story about Green Park where the girls were getting raped in the trees on the way to school and then the men decided to cut the trees down and made a big path... this is a good example of things that have happened with one of the groups I have been working with... Most of the success is individual men getting involved in the community...*

The success story of **Subject 10** is as follows:

*Yes, in terms of the men we have managed to see, make some shifts. A couple of years ago we did a project with people in Mamelodi, Gauteng. The community and we organised an extraordinary work of beginning to speak up and create a community forum to deal with the issues. This was initiated by women but eventually most of the men in that community joined the process as well. They created a forum in a kind of rapid response team so any time if there were allegations people would go out and investigate things instantly. When it would be proven that there has been a violation, rape or attempted rape, the people themselves would identify the perpetrator and take them in hand themselves and turn them over to the police... What people noticed was that we can turn them to the police and nothing will happen so what folks in Mamelodi did then was to keep the folks locked. They have created a system whereby the community acts when someone has been accused of rape....*

The respondents also gave various suggestions about what they thought should be done to reduce rape. Nine men said that rape needs to be taken seriously by the police and the courts. According to them there is a need for very harsh penalties and tougher laws as a deterrent. They pointed out that some women do not report rape when it occurs because they are aware that rapists can always get away with it, that there is no guarantee that the person who reports the crime will be safe and that men who commit rape know that they will never be caught and as a result they continue raping. The men also felt that better policing in terms of both more

policing and more gender-sensitive policing can have an effect on the incidence of rape in this country. However, two men argued that, even if the police and the courts were to treat rape as a matter of great urgency, this would not have a significant impact on rapists in the sense that this would not change a person who does not want to change his attitudes, way of thinking and his behaviour.

Six men in this study said that the community in general should be more educated about rape and this should start at an early age as far as children are concerned. Parents and teachers should also be involved in this process. According to them appropriate education should include things such as roles of both males and females and misconceptions about those roles and how men should treat and interact with women.

Four respondents said that the society must develop a very strong moral framework and that it should publicly expose rapists and condemn rape in the strongest terms. **Subject 7** stated that we should change our culture and build a culture where the dignity of every individual is respected, and where it is not only unacceptable to rape but also to harass or violate other people in any way, and where there is zero tolerance of any form of violence. **Subject 6** restated the previous point well when he said:

*It (rape) should be like .. like we feel about eating human flesh, you know, the idea of eating human flesh, it should be more abhorrent than that. It should be more disgusting than that. Think about it; I'd like to think that what I look at here in front of me, you, that whatever is inside your skin is yours. I'd like my jurisdiction to end where you decide it ends. If you say stay one metre away from me, don't come any closer, that's it. I should stay two metres away from you, to respect that, but, if I touch you against your will, that's assault. If I touch you, even softly, uninvited, that's not on.. I'd like us to develop as a society, even psychologically, to develop a society where we can train the rapists to react strongly, get sick, almost vomit when they think of the possibility of raping. Give a subliminal treatment to these men who find it necessary to do that..*

Four respondents mentioned men's support as one of the things that would contribute to women feeling safer in their communities. They said that men should call other men to take responsibility in addressing the issue of rape more seriously, that men should also address men who engage in rapist ideology, should champion women's rights, and should support women's organisations, and that organisations should also try to influence men to take part and assist those men who are interested in taking a stand against sexual violence against women. *Subject 10* said that there should be men's projects like the 5 in 6 Project in every community and that those kind of projects should be run by black men, because they are in the majority in this country and therefore the responsibility for disseminating information and motivating people to change is theirs.

Three respondents said that women could play a very significant role in the fight against rape. They must get together in a very strong way and support one another. The men also felt that women's groups need to be more outspoken. *Subject 10* said that women should begin to broaden their scope and engage men directly on the problem of rape, not on the basis of blame or trying to make them feel guilty but rather by showing them the benefits of not raping, sharing with them what it means to be subjected to rape, with rape victims sharing their experiences with the perpetrators. He pointed out that men need to see what women are enduring and they need to be told by women. The man also said that in order for women to feel safer they must first of all decide to feel safer, that they must decide that they are safe and think in a particular way that says they are protected. He argued that people's thoughts and feelings create their circumstances and their reality and that, if women are walking around imagining that every man they meet is a potential rapist, then they increase the chances of being raped in the sense that what one focuses on is what one attracts. He continued by stating that if women want to change men from being rapists, they must focus

on seeing them as people who have the potential to be good because if one has high expectations of people they tend to live up to these expectations.. Thus, women should focus on what they want and not on what they do not want.

Two respondents said that women should have some training in basic self-defence. According to them self-defence is being able to physically protect yourself as well as being aware of your environment, trusting your intuition, going with your feelings about people and situations in places.

*Subject 4* said that rapists should be castrated. Two respondents, on the other hand, argued that castration does not work because it does not mean if a rapist is castrated that it is going to stop him from raping. They pointed out that a man's sexual drive will not necessarily stop if he is castrated and that he can use other objects to rape.

Other preventative and rehabilitative strategies mentioned included putting the fear of God in men, conscientising the mass media about rape and sexuality issues, counselling, therapy, medical interventions, strong programs for offender rehabilitation and more shelters for victims of sexual violence.

Most of the respondents ideas about what should be done to prevent rape are of great importance, but none of them suggested that we must re-educate society. They did not say that we should dismantle patriarchal system in order for women to feel safer in this country. The respondents cannot even imagine what it would be like if the system is ended.

However, the fact that the respondents have started speaking to other men and are also raising awareness around sexual violence against women shows that some South African men are working hard to overcome what the society has taught us about what it means to be a man. When a man genuinely admits that rape is a men's problem he can no longer talk, act and behave in the same way that he was taught. The men interviewed in this study force us to see that in South Africa there is now a new combined force in the struggle for the end of violence against women, which one hopes will eventually lead to liberation for us all. This is a new discovery, that the needs of both men and women can converge.

University of Cape Town

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate why some men have started protesting against rape and what ideas these men have about the nature of rape, its causes, and the way in which activism should combat rape. The findings from the interviews conducted with 12 male anti-rape activists from Cape Town revealed that major the respondents generally see rape as a form of sexual violation and that the main reason why men rape is the desire for power. Their argument was that rape is a way of acting out control, acting out power against women and children who are not as powerful as men in the society are. The findings also indicate that the men in this study think that respect for women generally prevents men from raping.

The results revealed that factors in these men's choice to fight against rape were the high rates of rape in this country, the fact that the overwhelming majority of rapists are men, and the perception of rape as a human rights issue. While these were predominant factors in the men's decision to help to end sexual violence against women, further research should focus on the relative importance of the various factors contributing to men's involvement in the prevention of rape.

The results suggested that some men have started to examine their relationships with women and are also beginning to question the meaning of masculinity. These men have shown their willingness to help women in the fight against rape in South Africa. The process may be slow and the results may not be too evident but still the beginnings of changes can be seen.

The fact that some men have awakened to the need for change in relations between men and women, for abatement in sexual violence against women, and have shown the willingness to seek unfamiliar but humanitarian goals is a major change.

There is an awareness among the respondents that women have been struggling alone against rape for too long and that now it is time for men to join women in this struggle. These men do realise that men can stop rape because

*Rape is a choice men make to use sex as a weapon for power and control. For rape to stop, men who are violent must be empowered to make different choices. All men can play a vital role in this process by challenging rape supporting attitudes and behaviours and raising awareness about the damaging impact of sexual violence. Every time a man's voice joins those of women in speaking out against rape, the world becomes safer for us all (<http://www.mrpp.org>).*

Male anti-rape activists serve as models and can encourage and support other men especially younger men, to change their behaviours and their attitudes towards women. These men have the potential to influence other men to treat women with respect and dignity publicly and privately. South African men have had no experience in sharing with other men about the problem of rape, and thus male anti-rape activists are playing a very significant role by making themselves available to listen and talk to other men about rape. This kind of support system may in the long run enable other men to develop the necessary skills and abilities to join the fight against sexual violence against women in this country.

As acknowledged in section 4.1, this study can only be regarded as an exploratory investigation, and more extensive research on a larger scale should be conducted in order to develop a clearer profile of the motivation and attitudes of male anti-rape activists. Further

research is also required to ascertain why some men would not even consider committing rape, a form of violence in which so many factors, both conflicting and complementary, are implicated.

University of Cape Town

## 6.2 Recommendations

The study has indicated that rape is a major challenge facing both men and women in South Africa. On the basis of the viewpoint of the male anti-rape activists who were interviewed, as well as my own opinions, the following recommendations can be made to help in meeting this challenge:

1. The society should build a consciousness that rape is intolerable and unacceptable.
2. Awareness should be raised about rape as a violation of the victim's human rights and laws should be enforced in terms of the constitutional implications of such infringement of rights.
3. Both men and women should be educated about the causes, consequences and prevention of rape.
4. Widespread education is necessary for both men and women about respect and caring for others and this should start at a very early age.
5. Women's organisations should work with men as participants in the fight against sexual violence against women.
6. The study points to the critical need for peer support among men. Peer pressure is crucial in men's attitudes towards women hence there is a need for strong support groups for men. Projects like the 5 in 6 Project should be established everywhere in the country, to encourage men to join the fight against rape and any other form of violence against women.

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**Appendix 1**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**Introduction**

My name is Motselisi Ntsoelikane. I am a Masters student in Sociology at the University of Cape Town. I am interested in your perceptions to assist with the fulfilment of my degree. More importantly, they will help me and others to understand more about why some men fight against rape. Your participation is therefore valuable and much appreciated. The interview usually takes about one hour. You may remain anonymous if you prefer to do so. Do you have any questions for me about the interview before I start?

**Demographic details**

- 1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. What is your marital status?

Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widower	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced/Separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Live together	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What is your highest educational qualification?

None	
Primary	
Secondary	
High school	
College	
University	
Other(specify)	

7. What is your race?

Black	
Coloured	
White	
Other(specify)	

8(a). Do you belong to a particular religion?

Yes	
No	

8(b) If yes, which one do you belong to?

Christian (specify)	
Moslem	
Hindu	
Other(specify)	

9. What is your income per month?

None	
Less than R1 000	
R1 000 - R1 999	
R2 000 - R2 999	
R3 000 - R3 999	
R4 000 - R4 999	
R5 000+	
Refuse to answer	

10. What is your occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Understanding of rape**

11. What do you understand by rape?
12. How do you describe a typical rapist?
13. What do you think are the causes of rape?
14. In your opinion what is the main cause of rape?
15. Have you ever been tempted to use sexual assault?
16. What prevents some men from raping?

### **Activism and the choice of focus for activism**

17. When did you become an activist against rape?
18. Why did you get into activism?
19. Why do you actively participate in a group which is against rape?

### **How being a man raises issues**

- 20 (a). It is unusual for a man to choose rape to fight against, do you think you are an unusual man?
- 20 (b). If yes, what made you special as a man?
21. Does being a man help your work?

22. Why do you think you as a man as opposed to a woman can change men's attitudes towards rape?

23. Do you think all men should care about rape?

24(a). Do you try to get other men involved in fighting against rape?

24(b). If yes, how?

**Preventive strategies**

25(a). Is there any practical way that you can stop men from raping?

25(b). If yes, have you ever tried this?

26. Have you had any successful moments in male activism against rape?

27. Describe any unsuccessful moments in your fight against rape.

28. Do you have any connections with other activists groups?

29. What do you think could be done to make women feel safer?

30. What advice would you give to men who want to stop raping?

31. In your opinion, what is the one thing that would reduce rape the most?