



## The Nature of Rape in the Mankweng Policing Areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore the community members' perceptions on the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa, namely: Mentz, Ga-Makanye and Ga-Thoka. The qualitative research approach was followed, coupled with the Q-methodology research design and exploratory research objective. About 30 participants were purposively sampled to form part of the Three (03) Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs), consisting of 10 targeted groups, this was aided by the review of seminal literature studies and theoretical [Differential Risk Model] applications on this subject. The inductive Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) was used as a data analysis method. From the consulted studies and empirical study findings, 03 major factors emerged to explain nature of rape existing in the selected study locations, demarcated as follows; 1) Historical context of rape, which include men that are raised in families with strong patriarchal structures and more likely to become violent and force themselves on women, as they feel superior to them, 2) Social context of rape, entailing gender inequality in South African societies where women possess limited powers and authorities, while men impose notions of masculinity, controlling and perceiving that they own women's sexuality; and 3) Economic context of rape, explaining how poverty and unemployment are cited as some of contributing factors exposing women to socio-economic vulnerability, such as engaging in transactional sex. From the cited studies, 03 study themes emanated from the conducted empirical fieldworks (FGDs), namely: 1) Unlawful high prevalence of rape activities, 2) Rape committed against the will of potential victims, and 3) Rape involving physical intercourse or other forms of sexual penetrations carried out against any potential victim's will. This study recommends that youth in the

selected study locations should be trained and educated to become peer educators to learn more about the nature rape, it is hoped that this can enhance understanding of this phenomenon in their respective communities, while promoting gender equality in an attempt to urgently re-address the 03 existing characteristics of this scourge. Equally, the utilisation of biological evidence against rape cases can be touted as one of modern interventions to offer proper and successful investigation of this crime. This can be enhanced by improving by information exchange gathered through closer collaborations, interactions, intelligence and enforcement practices, while providing better understanding of the nature and extent of this scourge.

**Keywords:** *Community Members; Exploring, Limpopo Province; Mankweng Policing Areas; Nature0020of Rape, South Africa*

## 1. Introduction

Lawyer, Resnick, Bakanic, Burkett and Kilpatrick (2010) define rape as sexual intercourse by a person with another person who is compelled to submit by force against his/her will or by threat of bodily injury, violence, verbal insistence, deception and other various manipulative measures. Rape refers to a type of sexual assault that usually involves sexual intercourse or any other form of sexual penetration that is carried out against an individual without that person's consent (Blondeel, De Vasconcelos, Garcia-Moreno, Stephenson, Temmermn & Toskin, 2018). The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act (No. 32 of 2007) also refers to 'rape' as a physically forced or otherwise coerced sexual penetration, even if it is slight, of the victim's body, including vaginal, vulva, anal, or oral penetration using a penis or other body parts or an object. Brown, Testa, Messman-Moore (2009) mention that rape results when a man having sex with a woman who is unable to consent to or resist sexual intercourse.

The studies conducted by Richter, Mabaso, Ramjith and Norris (2015) and De Vries (2014), confirm that there is high rate of sexual assault and rape of young men in South Africa despite reports that girls are the most affected by rape. Rape is the most serious type of sexual assault (Mudzana, 2016). Furthermore, Mudzana (2016) states that even though rape is a serious crime, the Criminal Justice System (CJS) seems to be failing rape victims/survivors as few cases are reported, with limited prosecutions and convictions. Rape victims may at times be forced through force or threats to agree to the terms of the potential offender, World Health Organisation [WHO] (2002); and the Sexual Offences Act (No. 32 of 2007). Oshiname, Ogunwale and Ajuwon (2013) relate to rape as a crime whereby a person forces another individual to have sex against his or her own will through the use of force, violence, threats, verbal insistence, deception, cultural expectations or economic circumstances

Searles and Berger (1987) (in Cowan, 2000) provide that rape refers to a non-consensual sexual penetration of an adult or child obtained by threat, physical force or when the victim is not capable of giving consent due to mental retardation or mental illness, or intoxication. They further state that there are four different types of rape, namely, acquaintance and date rape, stranger rape and spousal rape, amongst others. However, Cowan (2000) shares that acquaintance rape is the most common type of rape. The sections to be covered herewith include understanding the nature of rape in the Mankweng policing areas, through the lenses of *historical, social and economic contexts of rape*. This will be shared to respond to these 03 hanging questions, based on the problem statement in section 2 of this study: **1)** How the past and current communities perceive rape? **2)** Highlight how the monetary value in exchange for sexual pleasures influence rape incidences? ; and **3)** What is the nature and extent of rape, based on associated effects on potential victims and community at large?

## 2. Problem Statement

There have certainly been a substantial number of research articles written on sexual assault and rape (Mudzana, 2016). However, these studies have not covered the entire field of possible topics for scholarly research, Mudzana (2016). The studies in question have rather centred their focus on the reactions of the victim towards rape, police and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs’) interventions, the nature of the offence, treatment of the offender and treatment of the victim (Ghanotakis, Bruins, Peacock, Redpath & Swart, 2007). Therefore, not much research has been done in the previous studies on perceptions of community members on the nature of rape in their communities. Rape is a type of crime that affects every community member. It is therefore essential for people to be more informed about rape and be better prepared to respond to it; hence, the researchers saw it important to engage with the community members about the topic under investigation. Moreover, South Africa is among the countries with the highest rape incidents, with a total number of 206144 reported cases over the past 5 years, Crime Statistics South Africa [Crime Stats SA] (2019), Limpopo Province with a record of 10 087 reported rape cases and Mankweng with a total of 552 reported rape cases for the past five years (Crime Stats SA, 2019).

Table 1. Reported rape cases at police station level - From 2014/01/01 to 2019/12/31: Mankweng policing areas

Crime category	Rape scenes	Number of reported cases
Rape	Ga Makanye; Ga Thoka and Mamaakela	184
	Mentz; Malesa and Segoreng	173
	Nobody; Sekgapeng, Ngwanalaka, Matsiokwana, Mafeane, Moshate, Ramathope, Moruleng Extension, Morongoa Park and Nchichane	168
	Nobody Mothapo, Thakgalang, Madikoto and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)	84
	Viking; Thabakgone, Mahlanhle, Komaneng, Sahara, Mongwaneng, Monywaneng, Thune, Ga Kgole, Mamphaka, Moshate and Kgwara	71
	Mankweng Zone A; B, C	71
		<b>Total: 751</b>

Source: Mankweng South African Police Service [SAPS] (2019)

Table 1 illustrates the number of reported rape cases in Mankweng area from the year 2014 to 2019. However, not all areas have been included in table 1, as other areas are regarded as ‘mini rural-areas’ although they fall under Capricorn District Municipality in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Given the statistics in table 1, it would be of utmost importance to propose innovative new strategies to address the nature of rape in the selected study locations and dismantle existing intentions and conspiracy of this crime stemming from community members perceptions. In contrary, the Five (05) years’ [2017-2022] projections of rape in the Mankweng policing areas paint a ghastly picture about this crime, as illustrated in table 2.

Table 2. October to December 2021\_2022: Mankweng, Limpopo Province

Crime category	October to December 2017_18	October to December 2018_19	October to December 2019_20	October to December 2020_21	October to December 2021_22	Count Difference	% Change
Rape	47	50	37	69	35	-34	-49,3%

Source: SAPS (2021/2022)

From table 2, it can be deduced that the available reported rape statistics massively increased drastically in the 2018/2019 [50] and 2020/2021 [60], with recorded major decreases in the 2019/2020 [37] and 2021/2022 [35]. The count difference from 2017-2022 was at -34, with a significant change of -49.3%. Overall, the reported cases of this crime has been unstable over the last Five (05) years' reporting periods in the selected Mankweng policing areas. Therefore, rape reported cases are still problematic. Thus, the researchers opted for the selected study locations. Essentially, it is envisaged that the findings of this study can be probable transferred to other areas facing this crime problem in the Limpopo Province.

### 3. Methodology

This qualitative study employed the Q-methodology research design. The research approach was employed to presents the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas, illustrations on how the selected participants perceives and gives meaning to this crime were sought. According to Bezuidenhout (2011), qualitative research approach enhances participants' understandings to get an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and possible factors controlling individuals' specific behaviour. This can enable selected participants to share their respective thoughts, attitudes, behaviour, value systems, feelings, opinions, perceptions, experiences, motivations, and concerns about the nature of this crime in the selected study locations. Rhoades and Brown (2019) highlight that the research design, refers to a unique, flexible methodology for exploring people's opinions, perspectives and attitudes on this subject. Moreover, van Exel and de Graaf (2005) also share that the adopted research design (Q-methodology) refers to the systematic study of participant's viewpoints, often used to explore perspectives of participants who represent different stances on a specific issue (Nature of rape in this regard).

The adopted research design and approach was supported by the exploratory research objective. This research objective is used as the problem that guided this study is under researched nor limited studies are directed toward this subject in the selected study locations (Creswell, Kassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2011). Importantly, this research objective determines best methods of data collection, including informal qualitative approaches, such as the applications of FGDs in this study allowing researchers to explore the perceptions and opinions of the selected participants on the nature of rape in the selected study locations (Shields & Rangarjan, 2013).

Furthermore, the basic idea of collecting data in any research study is to gather information to address the guiding objective (Polit & Beck, 2008). The researchers continued to gather, examined and interpreted available data, while making decisions about how to proceed with this study based on discoveries stemming from the FGDs, consisting of 30:10 participants, which were purposively selected. These authors (De Vos, *et al.* 2005; Kingry, *et al.* 1990; and Morgan, 1997) (In Maluleke, 2014) reach consensus that the FGDs refers to the carefully planned discussions, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest [Nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas] in a permissive, non-threatening environment and this data collecting tool can be efficiently used to collect data through group interactions on a specific topic determined the researchers [Nature of rape to this end].

For data analysis, the inductive TCA focuses was employed to identify and classify thematic patterns from the collected qualitative data, Braun and Clarke (2006). This is defined as concepts that

cannot be only observed, but inducted to determine and detect the subject's effects on selected observable participants [Nature of rape in this course] (Salkind, 2010). This method utilises the process of abstraction to reduce and group data so that researchers can answer the study questions using concepts, categories or themes. After a unit of analysis has been chosen, the researcher(s) goes through the data to identify open codes, which are then combined with other open codes that include similar content to form 'sub-concepts, categories and themes,' (Kynge, 2020). Therefore, the researchers used this data analysis method to analyse 03 identified study themes, while guided by the Six (6) phases of classification, namely; **1) Familiarisation with data, 2) Generating codes, 3) Identifying themes, 4) Reviewing themes, 5) Defining themes; and 6) Report writing** [Article writing in this regard].

#### ***4. Review of Literature on Nature of Rape Incidences***

According to Mills (2010), studies in a global context have shown that the prevalence of rape were high in different countries. On average, between Two percent (2%) and Twenty percent (20%) of people report the experience of forced penetrative sex over the course of their lifetime in developing countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Rwanda (Richter, Mabaso, Ramjith & Norris: 2015; Mukanangana, Moyo, Zyouche & Rusinga: 2014; and Van Decraen, Micheelsen, Herbots, Van-Rossem & Temmerman, 2012). Notably, developed countries, such as Denmark, Canada and United America; people continue to have high rates of rape even though it is better when compared to that of developing countries. The mentioned international developed countries have an average of 2.9% rape prevalence rates (Skinner & Taylor, 2009; and Vopni, 2006). Young adults have a higher chance of being victims of sexual assault than women in other age groups (Mudzana, 2016; De Vries, 2014). This indicates that sexual assaults are less common in developed countries than in developing countries (Davies, Austen & Rogers, 2011). Males are more likely to perpetuate sexual aggression than females (Reyes & Foshee, 2013).

Mills (2010) purports that both in developing and developed countries, two thirds to three quarters of rape are perpetuated by an acquaintance or by a relative, while only a third is caused by a stranger. In South Africa, most rape cases are perpetuated by someone known to the victim (Mathews, Abrahams & Jewkes, 2013). Evidence can be derived from the statistics outlined in chapter one of this study that rape is not a rare experience in peoples' lives. It is actually common yet the number of reported rape cases by women in Africa is low (Mudzana, 2016). However, research continues to indicate that rape cases are underreported everywhere in the world and not only in South Africa (Mukanangana *et al.* 2014; and Van Decraen *et al.* 2012). In South Africa, the nature and extent of rape can be understood in South Africa's social, economic, political and historical context (Mills, 2009).

##### ***4.1 Historical Context of Rape***

South Africa before independence, had a substantial male population who were engaged in a military context where black men were absorbed into the liberation struggle (De Vries, 2014). They were, furthermore, taught violent behaviour as a legitimate means of resolving conflict, a culture of masculinity as being tough, aggressive, brutal and competitive was also promoted. This is how a culture of violence in men was initiated. The dehumanisation imposed by the apartheid system as well as the levels of force used, on one hand to enforce the policies and, on the other to resist them. (Rape Crisis, 2015) suggest that every person in South Africa, the entire nation, was affected by apartheid in one way or another.

South Africa gained its independence in 1994. Despite a peaceful change from apartheid to the democratic country that it is now, unfortunately Gender-Based Violence (GBV) including rape cases, continues to rise. This is partly attributed to the joint legacies of colonisation and apartheid. These legacies coupled with an intersection of patriarchal traditions based on religious and cultural customs has taught women and children of all races and classes to be subordinate to violence even in sexual relationships (Jewkes, 2002). The researchers' think that sexual violence has been attributed as a product

of South Africa's transition; the popular focus on post-apartheid crime figures is probably misleading. It is likely that the increases in rape cases was due to increased reporting, or better record keeping rather than actual increases in the crime of rape.

#### *4.2 The Social Context of Rape*

Most men are fixed in gender norms whereby they have traditional perceptions of masculinity, which results in gender inequality. Due to this gender inequality in South African societies, women have limited power and authority while men impose notions of masculinity, controlling and perceiving that they own women's sexuality. This controlling power of men is also somewhat strengthened by women's economic dependence on men. De Vries (2014) states that a man might be the sole provider of a woman in such that, a woman is forced to have sex with him so that he keeps on providing. Due to a man providing for the woman's basic needs, a woman may have no other way out of the relationship, leading to tolerance and acceptance of rape. This in turn, makes young females more vulnerable to rape because they find it difficult to protect themselves from sexual exploitation (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Thus, the experiences of rape in South African societies at this stage have become a norm (Mudzana, 2016).

The effect of gender inequality is partly illustrated in a study by Jewkes, Dunkle, Nduna and Shai (2010) where the findings indicate that a higher proportion of the women who participated in the study they were affected by Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and reported violence because of gender inequity. However, the risk of incidence of HIV/AIDS was not associated with their partners and strangers. According to Mills (2009), there is high tolerance of rape and acceptance of rape myths in South African society. These myths are used to justify coerced sex and are at times accepted in the legal discourse (Mudzana, 2016). Moreover, McMahon (2010) proposes that rape myths were originally defined by Burt (1980) as "prejudicial, stereotypical, or false beliefs about rape victims and rapists" and later in Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) as "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false and yet widely persistently held that serve to deny or justify male sexual aggression against women."

The indicated myths seem to still be accepted in South African communities and other countries around the world. While gender has shown to play a significant role in rape, age has also shown to be an emerging factor that contributes to rape. Mallet and Herbe (2011) state that fourteen to nineteen year old boys and girls adhere to a culture of accepting rape myths. For example, discourse in South African communities is dominated by the myth that a rape is not really a rape unless if it involves force and violence. These effects include, but are not limited to, the police who are prone to believing that women can easily lie about rape (Mudzana, 2016). Some claims have suggested that the relation between the rape victim and the perpetrator affects the willingness of the police to investigate the rape case.

The community and police hold the belief that, if a woman has consented to sex before, she is likely to consent again to another sexual act with the same person; if there are no signs of violence, it is unlikely that rape has occurred; the rape victim should be passive; the victim should put up the most resistance because some say no when they actually mean yes to sex, and that rape is acceptable in some situations (Mallet & Herbe, 2011). Young females can accept gifts from men because they cannot afford them, thus some men find it acceptable to have sex with a girl even if it is by force when a girl accepts a gift from them (Mills 2009). However, this is rape and women remain silent about it.

This is an indication that rape myths influence the way rape cases are dealt, with, which may result in the decision of rape victims whether to report or not (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). This influence is exerted firstly by the community and then by various role players in the criminal justice system, including the trial stage such as the judges, magistrates, prosecutors, medical assistants, police, perpetrators and the victims (Reddi, 2006). Mills (2009) presents evidence that dominant societal values that reinforce gender specific roles are prevalent among adolescents. These gender specific roles have

been normalised both in and outside of relationships, for example, to such an extent in communities that adolescents, both males and females do not see some of the sexual acts, like rape, as a crime.

The consulted studies, such as the study of Gravelin, Biernat, Bucher (2019) reveal that most women hold a belief of being raped by a stranger as “real” rape unlike if raped by an acquaintance. Most women do not view acquaintance rape as a crime. Adolescents perceive that rape is only a crime when it is committed by strangers (Abrahams, Jewkes & Mathews, 2013). According to Jewkes and Abrahams (2002), South African women’s vulnerability to sexual violence (Including rape), is compounded by secondary traumatised and victim blaming because of the extent to which rape is normalised in the country. Since it is a rape-prone country with women having limited power and authority, men exert their masculinity, and they take advantage of the high levels of acceptance of GBV as normal. This results in a continuous cycle of sexual abuse.

It is now more than a decade since democracy, and there is evidence that rape myths are still being upheld in the South African communities. For example, Abrahams, Jewkes and Mathews (2013), share that approximately 84.3% of women raped by their intimate partners were found to have high levels of depressive symptoms compared the lower levels of depressive symptoms of women who were raped by strangers. Other concerning issues include the norms and values that girls are taught when they grow up. Women are taught how they should dress, how they should talk and respect men as well as which places to be with a man. Should these set rules by the community be broken, especially by a female adolescent, which might lead to the girl being raped, the community will then pass sinister remarks. These remarks could include, how she enjoyed the rape, questions such as what she was doing at that place and how she deserved it because she broke the rules. However, these comments have an impact on the victim. This is because of the way people were brought up (Anderson, Simpson-Taylor & Herrmann, 2004).

Carrow (1980) states that the stigma of rape is difficult to break especially when it is passed from one generation to another. The literature gathered illustrates that children grow up in homes where rape has somehow been normalised because most women do not report it to the police and the man thinks he is entitled to the woman’s body because he is seen as the provider and feels like he is superior to the woman. It furthermore shows that, through associations with people who normalise such behaviour, children tend to think that it is normal to rape. This result in committing rape for fun and no longer seeing it as a crime or breaking the law (Safta, 2018). These incidents still continue in South African communities and are further explained by the traditional definition of rape where the perpetrator who is a stranger is the one who commits rape (Hattingh, 2011). The victim becomes confused in the situation where rape is not committed by a stranger but an intimate partner. This confuses the victim as to whether to or not to report the incident of rape.

Auster and Leone (2001) note that different types of rape are viewed differently in the same community or even family. Van Decraen *et al.* (2012) state that some societal values, such as tolerance of the use of alcohol, forced sex, little open communication on sexual matters between adults and children and between partners, and tolerance of multiple partners, may predispose adolescents to rape. As a result, many adolescents struggle with making sense of whether rape has occurred or not when they apply the narrow societal standards of real rape (Mudzana, 2016). However, despite all beliefs society holds, some people believe that rape is acceptable in some situations, and this accounts for them being the potential offenders of rape.

The Sexual Offences Act (No. 32 of 2007) in South Africa set out new norms for consent that differ from dominant social norms that rely on rape myths and stereotypes. This Act provides a definition of the concept of rape, not only based on the penetration of a women’s vagina by a man’s penis, it recognises a number of penetrative acts as well as recognising the definition of consent as an agreement, voluntarily given and un-coerced (Mills, 2009). Although most myths are not accepted by empirical research, they, have the power to influence the attitudes of role players in the reporting of rape such as

magistrates and judges in the criminal justice system, prosecutors, complainants and the police. Furthermore, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community in South Africa continues to face discrimination and victimisation on a daily basis. Corrective rape perpetrators claim their motivation is to turn the victim into a heterosexual. Rape is now often used to punish and oppress those who seem to not conform to societal rules and gender roles, which include sexual orientation (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002).

#### *4.3 The Economic Context of Rape*

Poverty and unemployment are some of the factors that expose mostly black women to socio-economic vulnerability, such as engaging in transactional sex (Jewkes, 2002). This author (Jewkes, 2002) further mentions that when people engage in transactional sex, they are likely to be raped and are afraid to seek help. The legacies of colonisation and apartheid have resulted in poverty and unemployment which in turn had, and still have, a great impact on adolescents, particularly black adolescents because they are the most socio-economically vulnerable as their parents are the most likely to be unemployed or in have menial jobs. As such, they cannot afford to live in high security areas where rape is less likely to occur.

Most African who often commit rape or those who are raped live in townships or rural areas where there are not many economic activities to occupy their time and the security is not high as in the suburbs and cities (Pemmegger & Godehart, 2007). This results in black people, mostly females being vulnerable to rape both within relationships and in public areas. However, despite the high rate of rape the country faces, the culture of silence continues in this socio-economically vulnerable group. Men claiming ownership of women, because they financially depend on them, further drive this crime. Thus, women find it very difficult to protect themselves from sexual exploitation, such as rape and hence they often tolerate abuse (Mudzana, 2016).

### **5. The Theoretical Framework Applications**

#### *5.1 Differential Risk Model*

The Ten (10) categories of Differential Risk Model guided this study, to clearly explore influencing risks of criminal victimisations concerning rape incidences in the selected Mankweng policing areas.

##### *5.1.1 Opportunities*

The researchers submits that a large body of scholars have analysed ‘opportunity’ as one of the elements that contributes to personal victimisation. According to Fattah (2000), criminal victimisation does not happen by chance but depends on the availability of the opportunities presented by the victim, and the environment for the perpetrator. Felson (1993) reveals that the offenders’ targeting strategy is largely opportunistic, in that potential targets are selected on the basis that they meet certain criteria of attractiveness, but that specific targets are exchangeable. Felson (1993) highlights that sometimes this criminal victimisation [Rape in this regard] may not happen under any premeditation, but because an opportunities presented to potential perpetrators for this crime to occur. This category can better be used to explain why rape occurs in selected Mankweng policing areas. In order for rape crime to occur, potential victims must present an appealing opportunity for personal gain to the potential offender. This may be so because the potential victim is in an open space alone or has gadgets or goods that might be beneficial to the potential offender.

### 5.1.2 Risk Factors

To have a better understanding of the risk factors to victimisation, Schreck, Miller and Gibson (2003) mention the Routine Activities Theory and Lifestyle/Exposure Theory. They note that the category of risk factors considers three elements. Firstly, is the proximity and exposure to the criminal offender, secondly, is the degree of self-protection or the presence of guardianship and thirdly, the target's attractiveness. Fattah (2000) (in Peacock, 2013) states that there are a number of factors that increase victim vulnerability. These factors include socio-demographic factors such as the area of residence, the absence of guardianship and location. These are possible risk factors of violent victimisation. However, Brennan, Moore and Shepherd (2010) perceive the situational factors, such as weapon use and victim intoxication more far more successful than the socio-demographic factors in determining the likelihood of personal victimisation, selected Mankweng policing areas included.

### 5.1.3 Motivated Offenders

According to Cohen and Land (1987), for criminal victimisation to occur, there needs to be a motivated offender. This potential perpetrator will cause criminal victimisation. Fattah (2000) states that motivated offenders are most likely to be found in less densely populated areas, in areas where there is a relatively high percentage of middle-aged and older residents. Motivated offenders can also refer to the people that have the intention of raping. This is usually done in rural areas where the potential offenders know that the police station is further away, they will not be caught, and if the potential victim decided to call the police, they would take time to respond to the reported rape crime, therefore, the selected Mankweng policing areas conform to this submission.

### 5.1.4 Exposure

Fattah (2000) shares that there is a level and degree of exposure which varies according to socio-demographic variables such as age and gender, which often determine an individual's lifestyle. Fattah (2000) states that the people who attend social activities in public spaces and consume alcohol put themselves at greater exposure to potential offenders because they are in close contact with a large number of unknown, anonymous people. Exposure in this study refers to young women participating in nightlife activities in public places. It also refers to households headed by single mothers, exposing their children to often known perpetrators (Rosenberg, 2006).

### 5.1.5 Associations

Association is one of the models used to explain criminal behaviour whose origin is rooted in Sutherland's theory of the Differential Association Model. According to Sutherland, this category implies that the risk of being victimised is mostly seen in individuals who are in close personal, social or professional contact with potential offenders (Cinini, 2015). The Differential Association Model is as important in victimology as it is in Criminology. Peacock (2013) states that the individuals who are in close contact with other people in a professional, personal or even social settings with potential offenders run a greater risk of being victimised than those that are not in any contact with potential offenders, the native residents of selected Mankweng policing areas included.

### 5.1.6 Dangerous Times and Places

According to Peacock (2013), the risk of victimisation is greater at night and in the early hours of the morning, over weekends, in public areas, in streets and is lesser to those that stay in their private spaces at those times. This submission can also be related to the selected Mankweng policing areas.

### 5.1.7 Dangerous Behaviour

Dangerous behaviour would be explained for both the potential victim and potential offender. Peacock (2013) explains that for potential offenders it is explained by when they are raised in a particularly bad situation and are now at an increased risk for criminal behaviour in both their juvenile and adult years should they not get any counselling. For individuals to become potential victims, they often displaying dangerous behaviours like attending social activities late at night, consuming alcohol and interacting with strangers can best explain it and the selected Mankweng policing areas are no exception in this regard.

### 5.1.8 High-risk Activities

According to Peacock (2013), jobs such as being a police official, security guards, bank tellers, doctors and nurses expose people to personal victimisation because these officials are in close contact with different people that they do not know on a daily basis. Peacock (2013) further explains that sex workers are also prone or put themselves at a greater risk of being personally victimised because of their engagement in high-risk activities. This confirmation is also often witnessed in the selected Mankweng policing areas.

### 5.1.9 Defensive/ Avoidance Behaviour

Fattah (2000) states that individual attitudes also contribute to their personal victimisation. People who are law abiding would try by any means to avoid trouble and take precautions in every activity or behaviour they engage in, unlike those that like exploring regardless of whether they get into trouble with law officials or not. This illustration is not immune to the selected Mankweng policing areas.

### 5.1.10 Structural / Cultural Process

Fattah (2000) mentions that there is a positive correlation between powerlessness deprivation and the frequency of criminal victimisation. A study by Jewkes *et al.* (2016) highlight the effects of gender inequality. In this study, it indicates that women are seen as what Struve (1990) terms, “chattel property”, where men have ownership over their wives and parents have ownership over their children. This means that parents have total ownership and can do or impose whatever they want onto their wives and children. The stated reasons are also proves reality in the selected Mankweng policing areas.

## 6. Study Findings and Discussions

The 30 participants’ responses were gathered to solicit their perceptions on the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas, South Africa, while considering the introduction, problem statement, reviewed literature studies and theoretical application in this study. Therefore, the findings of this study are discussed based on the objective of this study [*To explore the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas of Limpopo Province, South Africa*]. The triangulations between the empirical findings, available studies on this subject, and the 10 categories of the Differential Risk Model were offered to support the collected verbatim expressions of the selected participants.

The referencing method for the conducted FGDs in this study comprised a numerical sequence, and an example of this notation is as follows: The name of the identified study location, type of the conducted interview and the related FGDs’ number, in reference to the Three (03) conducted discussions. This was done to ensure that the conducted FGDs with the selected participants explore their perceptions and experiences on the nature of rape in the study location. The researchers indicated the credibility of this study by revealing the techniques used for data collection (I.e. literature studies) and FGDs. Therefore, the reviewed literature studies and conducted FGDs presented the true and accurate picture of what was claimed by the cited authors and participants’ responses to provide the researchers with credible

data. To this course, this study has focused mainly on exploring the community’s perceptions on the nature of rape in selected Mankweng policing areas. The gender distributions of the selected participants are shown in table 3, followed by how the collected data was transcribed to offer relevant discussions thereof.

Table 3. Gender distribution of participants

Gender	Females	Males	Total
Mentz (FGDs 1)	5	5	10
Ga-Makanye (FGDs 2)	8	2	10
Ga-Thoka (FGDs 3)	3	7	10
<b>Total</b>	16	14	30

Source: Researchers illustrations (2021)

### 6.1 Process Followed for Transcribing Data

According to De Vos, Delpont, Fouché and Strydom (2011), qualitative research is more about experiencing a specific topic or idea instead of finding objective, concrete or specific answers. Qualitative research focuses on culture, groups and individuals. Qualitative research is measured by interviews, FGDs, open-ended questionnaires, and direct and indirect observations. All this can make data more difficult to record and copy compared to quantitative data (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researchers was more focused on exploring the community’s perceptions on the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas. The conducted FGDs were recorded using audio recording (Smartphone), captured and preserved accordingly.

The FGDs conducted created important data, however, the data was unstructured and needed to be sorted and organised before the researchers could make sense of it. The collected data was then transcribed, by creating text-based versions of the original audios recordings. This was done to help researchers to make patterns or themes easier to find, and to make the data easier to analyse. It also helped them to preserve the accuracy and integrity of the data and to focus on observation and participants instead of note taking. After data transcriptions in a text format, the researchers read the transcriptions to conceptualise and analyse the data to conduct an inductive analysis. From there, the researchers found it much easier to connect or link the data collected and write it down in the form of a study. The researchers allowed the discussion to develop naturally, however, some participants dominated more than the others did. The researchers also received the warmest welcome from all participants from the different areas. The following questions were asked during the FGDs (The motivations for framing this question is given herewith):

- **What is the nature of rape in Mankweng?** This question was intended to begin discussions on a positive note and get participants to think about rape in general in South Africa.

### 6.2 The Resulting Study Findings

In this section presents the primary findings. For the most part, the findings were similar across all FGDs, regardless of the selected areas of residence.

#### 6.2.1 Nature of Rape

The researchers started asking the participants to discuss their own understanding on the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas. In order of prevalence, their responsive identified 03 study themes can be grouped as follows:

1. Unlawful high prevalence of rape activities.
2. Rape committed against the will of potential victims.
3. Rape involving physical intercourse or other forms of sexual penetrations carried out against any victim's will.

In providing an understanding to the 03 indicated study themes, some of the expressions shares by the selected participants are quoted in verbatim herewith, supported by the reviewed literature studies and the applied theoretical framework:

*“Rape is a physical force of penetration onto someone. It is so unlikely in the Mentz community to hear of a rape case. I am not saying it does not happen, but it is very rare to hear of it. I really wonder what reasons of those who have been raped be when they decide to not report the case”.*

**(Ga-Thoka, A formal township, FGD 1)**

This expressed views by the participants reads with paragraph 1 of this study, when Blondeel *et al.* (2018) stated that rape is a type of sexual assault that usually involves sexual intercourse or any other form of sexual penetration that is carried out against an individual without that person's consent. The penetration is not only limited to the vagina, but the vulva, anus or oral penetration using a penis or an object or other parts of the body. In support of this definition, Lawyer *et al.* (2010) agreed that rape is a sexual intercourse by a person with another person who is compelled to submit by force against his/her will or by threat of bodily injury, violence, verbal insistence, deception and other various manipulative measures. In support of the shared citations, a male participant from the FGD quickly stepped in to highlight the following in verbatim:

*“It does happen, a lot but because of this community people cannot even step up for themselves because of what people would say. We live in area where people are just failing dismally so to support each other. We cannot hold each other's' hand and look out for each other. If someone comes forth to say she was rape, we are going to be quick to judge that person instead of giving her the support that she needs. Isn't it so?”* **(Ga-Makanye, A rural area outside a formal township, FGD 3)**

This created a heated discussion amongst the participants. The participants also agreed amongst themselves that there are always reasons as why a person does not report a case, and not reporting it gives the perpetrator and others the power to do it again because the perpetrator is going unpunished. This expressed view by the participants reads with paragraph 4.3 of this study, when Jewkes (2002) revealed that there are a number of factors that make women vulnerable or prone to rape. This also reads with Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) in paragraph 2.2.2 of this study, when it was showcased that young females are more vulnerable to rape because they find it difficult to protect themselves from sexual exploitation and might at time not report it due to the stigma attached to a person being raped in the community.

In support of the cited mentioned authors prior, the finding in paragraph 4.3 of this study, Mudzana (2016) highlighted that despite the high rate of rape the country faces, the culture of silence continues in this socio-economically vulnerable group. Men claiming ownership of women, because they financially depend on them, further drive this practice [Rape].

As the researchers asked the participants if they agreed with this assertion, one participant had this to say in verbatim:

*“It is true that alcohol can contribute to rape, because it influences a lot of people's behavior. People would dance in an appropriate manner here in tavern that stimulate men and that results in them being raped. I do not blame women for being rape and taverns and clubs, but they also contribute to them being raped. If only it was possible, I would go to all ladies and ask them to dance and*

*dress in way that will not result in them being raped”.* (Ga-Makanye, A rural area outside a formal township, FGD 3)

This expressed view by the participants reads with paragraph 5 of this study (Theoretical applications section), when Peacock (2013) revealed that displays of dangerous behaviours like consuming alcohol and interacting with strangers in public spaces late at night might explain why individuals are victimised.

## **7. Conclusions and recommendations**

This study concludes that rape has an impact on every community and affects people of all genders, age, and sexual orientation. Anyone in a community can experience rape, by either a stranger or someone that the victim knows or has a certain relationship with such person. This study provided a realisation that most of the people living in the selected Mankweng policing areas were not knowledgeable about rape or were rather ignorant about any information pertaining to rape. They are embarrassed to talk openly about rape and the researchers saw it fit to have the following recommendations to address the nature of rape. Therefore, the recommendations on the nature of rape in the selected Mankweng policing areas rest on the following observations made by the researchers based on the consulted literature studies and the identified study themes.

### *7.1 Empowerment of Women and Other Vulnerable Groups*

The National government and available NGOs should aim at promoting historical, social and economic rape contexts, by empowering [Young] women and vulnerable groups, this can be addressed by introduction financial supports to their projects to encourage them to be independent and be able to make money for themselves and not depend on anyone for money, especially the male figures. This can promote gender equality for them and possible address rape incidences in the selected study locations.

### *7.2 Communal Peer Education for all Interested Parties*

Modifying young people’s behaviour and thoughts can be an early prevention of rape in later years of their lives. Awareness and campaign programmes should be implemented at different schooling levels on a regular basis. These campaigns and programmes should educate young people on rape and what constitutes rape. Young people should be taught about the different types of rapes that exist and all the behaviours that constitute sexual harassment. From the findings, the researchers found that many boys in the Mankweng area would force themselves on girls because they think that the girl is playing ‘hard to get,’ hence, the researchers also recommends that youth should know the type of behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment as this could lead to rape.

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