

Violent crimes



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Violent crimes as a phenomenon have been accompanying the history of humanity. They have been described in various written sources from Egyptian, Babylonian to Bible. Nobody has an answer to what causes violent crime, but a multitude of theories exist, ranging from criminological to biological. Violence and violent crimes permeate nearly every part of our life.

Rape is one of those crimes that particularly interest society because they are disturbing, unusual and enchaining people's emotions and thinking.

Today rape is a serious problem affecting millions of people throughout the world. It is driven by many factors from social to cultural. Rape as a violent crime is now recognized as a threat to development, peace and security; a violation of human rights; a crime under international law. This project will introduce rape as a crime using common definition, statistics and academic literature. Secondly will use feminist theories and explain 'the rape', providing theories strengths and weaknesses.

Thirdly will identify different penal sanctions for the offence and will discuss their effectiveness. Rape has been a common event through history. It has been in films, art, literature and even theatre. Rape was in early civilizations when men showed their domination, power and claim of ownership on women by abducting and forcibly raping them.

In middle ages it was common to abduct and rape rich women (heiress stealing) to force them into marriage. In 19 century when societies and economy developed forcible rape was forbidden by law (Siegel, 2009). There are a lot of definitions of rape both legally and within legends of different cultures and stereotypes. Rape by common laws (latin rapere – to take by

force) is defined as penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth by the penis or by an object used by the attacker without the consent of the victim (Bacik, Maunsell ; Gogan, 1998).

In common sense rape is a forcible, non-voluntary sexual intercourse that male performs against a woman he does not know (Siegel, 2009). Historically legal definitions of rape were very limited and narrow describing rape as forced sex done by a stranger, exclusively by a man against a woman who was not his wife. Today as laws are more global rape is gender neutral and involves not only ‘ men raping women’ but also dating partners, spouses, homosexuals, old and young and men as victims too (Vito, Maahs ; Holmes, 2007). There are a lot of myths about rape.

One of the most pervasive and damaging myths about raping is that rape is actually a sexual act. This myth is reinforced by stereotypes about male sexuality stating that men cannot control themselves if they are aroused. But rape is not a sexual act. Read about early symptoms of a biological attack may appear the same as common illnesses It is a forcible, violent act which uses sexual intercourse as a weapon. Rape is aggressive event with a huge desire to humiliate and show power over the victim (Easteal, 1992). It is not a spontaneous act, committed by abnormal or psychopathic stranger and provoked by female (Gadd ; Jefferson, 2007). Studies show that in most cases rape is premeditated and offenders known as ‘ normal’ men often interact with victims for a period of time wanting to know them better and only then committing a crime (Flowers, 1987).

Rapes are classified into – gang rapes, acquaintance rapes (date rapes), marital rapes, stranger rapes and statutory rapes. Gang rape is when more than one offender (multiple offenders) participates in rape of a single victim or multiple victims. These rapes are very violent and are more likely to be completed than individual rapes (Siegel, 2009). Acquaintance rape is a forced sexual intimacy with a person that victim actually knows or has romantic relationships but it doesn't include spouses. Offenders can be neighbors, relatives, classmates, colleagues or casual dates (Karmen, 2010). In these types of rapes drugs and alcohol are used to minimize victim's ability to resist and to 'mess up' with victim's memory of rape (Sexual Assault Services, 2010).

Stranger rape is the unwanted, brutal sexual intercourse where the victim and the offender have no prior relationship (Siegel, 2009). Marital rape can be defined as forced penetration or non-voluntary intimacy obtained by force and violence, when wife/husband is unable to say no (unable to consent) (Kiffe, 2010). The last one – statutory rape is a term used to describe sexual relations between adult and underage person. Different jurisdictions use many different statutory terms such as “sexual assault,” “rape of a child,” “corruption of a minor,” “carnal knowledge of a minor,” “unlawful carnal knowledge.

” These rapes differ from forcible rapes because no physical force or threat is used to subdue a person. It is illegal because a minor is legally incapable of giving an agreement to the act (Nair & Anand, 2010). What causes rape?

There are many explanations to this question and they can be grouped into few categories: evolutionary – biological factors, male socialization,

psychological abnormality, social learning and sexual motivation (Siegel, 2009). Evolutionary – biological explanation focuses on the male sexual drive and suggests that rape is instinctual, developed over the ages in species where male is more aggressive, more sexually assertive and eager to mate. It is believed that in primitive time male raped women to have many children and spread genes (Thornhill & Palmer, 2000). It is believed that male still have these instincts and their sexual urge corresponds to unconscious need to spread genes as wide as they can.

In other words more sexually aggressive men will have a reproductive edge over more passive men (Siegel, 2009). According to researchers like Diana Russel rape is a function of male socialization. She states that some men have been taught from early age to be aggressive, forceful, tough and dominating especially towards women. These men believe that women want to be dominated and violent act proves that they have qualities regarded as masculine.

Rusell believes that men are socialized to be aggressors, who can separate their sexual needs from needs of love, affection and respect and expect to be sexually active with many women. For these types of men rape can bolt their self image and masculine identity (Siegel, 2009). Another view about causes of rape is that rapists suffer from psychopathic illnesses, antisocial personality characteristics or have other mental pathologies. There is evidence that men with mental disorders or psychopathic strikes have sadistic feelings (brutal rape) towards women/men and there is a bigger possibility of them committing a rape (Quinsey, 2009). For example person with narcissistic personality disorder is likely to commit a rape because he is

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fixated with himself, excluding others and have an egoistic and ruthless pursuit of gratification, domination and huge ambition (McDonnell & Vaknin, 2004).

Social learning perspective suggests that offenders learn sexual aggression through direct association or interaction with others who engage in certain kinds of behaviour or express norms, values, and attitudes supportive of sexual violence. There is evidence that about 45 percent of rapists were sexually victimized as adolescents. Moreover imitation can be linked to rape crimes too. Imitation refers to the engagement in behaviour after the direct or indirect (media, films) observation of similar behaviour by others (Akers & Jensen, 2009).

Watching how women get beaten, raped and humiliated can be a trigger to imitate the same situation. For example the case where boy raped 10 years old girl after watching TV coverage of the case in which a woman was similarly raped (Siegel, 2009). Although most criminologist don't believe that rape is sexually motivated but most of rape statistics reveal that rapists choose young, approximately the same age, attractive victims. Moreover data show that young rapists are more violent but older rapists tend to harm their victims more, implying that young offenders seek sexual gratification in sexual intercourse while older offenders rape for motives like power, control and dominance (Siegel, 2007). Rape is a frequent crime. The true extent of rape is unknown, though available data suggest that one in four women can experience sexual violence by people they know in their lifetime.

Estimations of the number of women raped in the UK every year range from 47, 000 to 100, 000. According to data in UK in 2008 – 2009 3% of adults had experienced at least one form of “ serious sexual assault” since the age of 16. This included 5 % of women experiencing at least one form of “ serious sexual assault” and 1 % of men (MacLeod, Kinver, Page ; Iliasov, 2009). More than half – 56 % of adults had experienced at least one form of ‘ serious sexual assault’ were assaulted by their partner.

Nine in ten – 90% said the offender(s) was male and 8 % said the offender(s) was female. In 2009 – 20010 9 % of adults had experienced at least one form of ‘ serious sexual assault’ since the age of 16. This included 15% of women and 3% of men. Data shows that sexual offences recorded by the police increased between 2008/09 and 2009/10 by 6%. Within this category, there was a 7% increase in most ‘ serious sexual crime’ since 2008/09 and a 2% increase in ‘ Other sexual offences’ over the same period. It is worth to mention that crude statistics of crimes known to the police can provide an uncertain indication of what is really happening because they are governed by the proportion of incidents actually reported but rape cases are very often not reported (Flatley et al.

2010). Rape is a serious crime that causes harm economically, physically and emotionally. It is described as ‘ the beginning of a nightmare’ (Easteal, 1992). According to NBSACS (New Britain Sexual Assault Crisis Services) rape costs about 127 billion per year, 87, 000 per rape, this includes medical expenses, wage losses and quality of life losses (Gromisch, 2009). The impact of rape to victim can be categorized to emotional, physical and behavioural. Emotional harm is linked to depression, fear, anxiety, lack of

trust, withdrawn, shame, self – blame (greater for acquaintance rape victims), guilt, humiliation and betrayal (for marital rape) (Easteal, 1992).

One of the most harmful emotional outcomes of rape is post – traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which causes victims emotional numbness, detachment, selective amnesia, avoiding certain situations and places, lack of interest in activities, concentration problems and irritability (Wasco, 2003). Data shows that about 3. 8 million adult women have PTSD related to rape. In addition, 211, 000 women develop PTSD every year.

As a result of this disorder, rape victims are 13. 4 times more likely to have alcohol related problems, and 26 times more likely to have drug using problems. In addition, rape victims with PTSD are nine times more likely to attempt suicide (Gromisch, 2009). Physical harm is linked to headaches, muscle tension, gastro – intestinal upset, genitourinary complaints, pregnancy, disease, injuries.

Behavioural harm is linked to suicidal actions, anorexia, alcohol and drug addiction (drinking, getting high to relieve emotional suffering), isolation (for marital rape), eating disorders, sleeping disorders, effects of phobias and nightmares (Easteal, 1992). These effects that victims have after raping can be short term or long term. They can vary depending upon the brutality of rape, victim’s relationship with offender and victims’ inner strength and support he/she receives (Girelli et al. 1986).

Who are the rapists? Steven Holmes and Ronald Holmes (2002) states that mostly rapists are young (under age of 25) with low socioeconomic status, members of minority groups and have histories of conflicts with women

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especially related to sexuality (Holmes ; Holmes, 2002). Rapist can be ' unselfish' and ' selfish'. Unselfish rapist will show verbal, physical and sexual concern for the victim trying to convince victim to cooperate. Often, rapist will ask " Am I hurting you? " or " Are you cold? " during the rape. These types of rapists are most likely to reveal unnecessary and revealing information about themselves and are inadequate about risk. The selfish rapist is violent and brutal towards the victim.

To him victim is like a doll or mannequin which he uses for self satisfaction. Victims complains, discomfort, pain, tears do not disturb him. Almost any spontaneous comments made by victim will be met by force and threats (Groth, 1979). A number of authors have created typologies of rapists. According to Knight and Prentky (1987) and McKibbin et al.

rapists can be divided to 5 groups: disadvantaged men, power assertive rapists, anger - retaliatory rapists, high mating effort rapists and partner rapists. Disadvantaged men or power reassurance rapists includes men who suffer from extremely low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. They are perceived as less attractive and less desirable men and are motivated to rape if they have no other way of mating (McKibbin et al. 2008). Often these rapists are from single parent home, have low educational level, are quiet, passive loners who usually live with an aggressive and controlling mother/father, have no friends and no girlfriend/boyfriend. These rapists are verbally and sexually ' unselfish' because they do not tend to hurt the victim but trying to increase their self esteem through the control of another person.

Another type of rapists are called power assertive rapists. For these types of rapists expression of virility and personal dominance is the most important thing. Usually they are arrogant, athletic, stylish, loud, work in male dominated place (police) and have a history of domestic problems or multiple divorces. It is common for these types of rapists to use a moderate level of violence (both physical and verbal) committing a brutal attack, without intention to kill. Their motive of rape is control and domination of women or 'weaker sex' proving their masculinity (Holmes ; Holmes, 2002).

Anger-retaliatory rapists are furious with women and using sex as punishment for real or imaginary events. Their anger and hate for women are out of control. Usually this rapist attack women who are older than he is, often somebody who symbolizes somebody else (mother, sister). Their background often includes physical and emotional abuse from one or both parents.

These offenders are very masculine, athletic, have quick temper and rapes usually occur after negative event involving one of the women in their life (Holmes ; Holmes, 2002). They can be called psychotic too. Anger - retaliatory rapists are most dangerous because they use brutal verbal and physical assault (beating with fists, feet, weapons) towards victims which often results to victim's death. Because of built up rage and anger their urge is uncontrollable and main goal is to torture the victim (Holmes & Holmes, 2002). High mating effort rapists have higher sexual experience than other rapists. They are self - cantered, promiscuous, aggressive, dominant, have high self - esteem and are associated with earlier onset of sexual activity.

Their motivation for rape can be mate deprivation (McKibbin et al. 2008).

Final type is partner rapists. This type includes men motivated to rape their partners under conditions of increased sperm competition risk.

Rape is most likely to occur when a long term partner decides to leave the relationship or when a man learns or suspects that his partner is sexually unfaithful. It is established that partner rapes are most common among other types of rapes (McKibbin et al. 2008). Who are the victims of rapes? According to literature on rape almost half of victims are attacked by partners or people they know (friends, colleagues) frequently in victim's own home or home of attacker. Victims range from infants to the elderly.

Anyone, regardless of age, sex, physical appearance, marital status, ethnic, religious or socio-economic background can be victims of rape. In 93% of assaults, the rapist and victim are of the same race (Meyer, 2000). The likelihood of becoming a victim of rape is greater for nonwhites than whites. According to Amnesty International non-white women are three and a half times more likely to suffer from rape than white women. Marital status, race, childhood abuse and money can also indicate likely victimization.

Poor women are more vulnerable to rape than middle class women. People with disabilities also have increased vulnerability to rape, because they are seen as easy targets. Although most victims of rape are women but males can suffer rape too (Neumann, 2010). Teenage boys are more likely to be victimized than older males with victims averaging 17 years old. Male victims are more likely to be raped in gang rapes.

They face a greater risk of being injured physically and their injuries are often more serious than those suffered by female victims (Golden et al. 2010). Victims often submit without struggle or do not attempt to fight an attacker due to fear of physical force or of being killed, or because the assailant is armed with a weapon or threatening to do something to other person that is close to victim. Victims of rape are often the targets of negative social reactions and are blamed for wearing short skirts, provocative dresses, drinking, flirting, doing drugs and bringing rape upon themselves (Meyer, 2000).