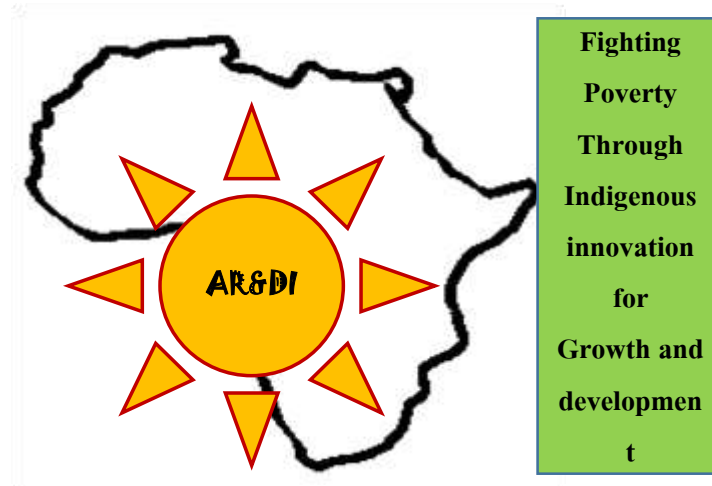


The use of patriarchy and a sense of entitlement in justifying gender-based violence including sexual abuse of young children.

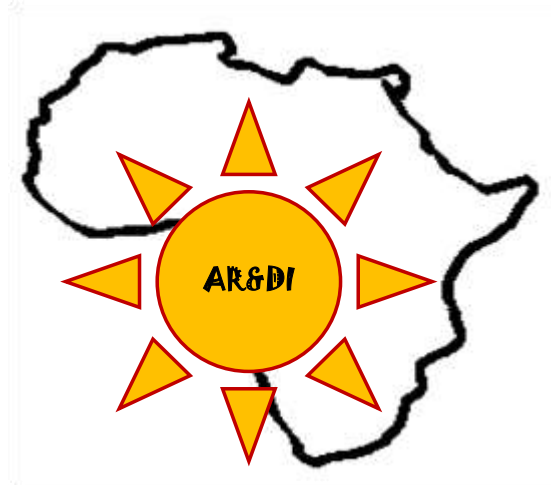
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OUTLINE

- **Background**
- **Aim of the research project**
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- **Key Findings**
- **Conclusion**
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BACKGROUND

- South African population is estimated at 51.8million (Stats SA, 2011)
- SA has some of the highest incidences of child and baby rape in the world with more than 67,000 cases of CSA against children reported in 2000. Child Welfare groups believe unreported incidents could be 10 times higher.
- The 2009/2010 SA Police Service report indicates a significant increase of 36,1% (7 276 cases) in the incidence of all sexual offences against children between 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.
- 39,5% of sexual offences were committed against children between ages 15-17.
- Of the 27 417 cases of sexual offences against children, 60,0% were committed against children below the age of 15 years.
- **29,4% of these sexual offences involved children aged 0 – 10 years.**
- SAPS 2011/12 figures suggest children are subjected to sexual abuse more than any other crime in SA.

BACKGROUND CONTINUED

- The figures are an unwelcome observation in a new democracy, with only an estimated 7% of reported rapes leading to a conviction.
- There are conflicting views about why some men sexually abuse very young children with arguments suggesting causes are related to:
the exercise of power, perpetuated by narratives legitimizing patriarchy to justify male domination and subordination of women
- **The sexual abuse of Baby Tshepang occurred when SA reportedly had high rates of HIV/Aids. It led to suggestions that child abusers are motivated to rape by a belief in the virgin cleansing myth**
- Argument illustrated the complexity of CSA as a social problem highlighting that not one explanation is adequate for understanding this phenomenon. There are strong arguments for the importance of including the gendered nature of the problem in the debates.
- **To** date there is a paucity of sociological research with perpetrators on CSA in SA

Aim of the research project

Why this study:

- There is limited research on sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. One psychosocial study was completed in Gauteng with men who abused children under three years by Kleijn (2010).
- International literature available on causes of CSA focuses more on biological and psychological explanations – with emphasis on objectivity and facts.
- High rates of baby rapes call for exploration of perpetrators' frame of reference for a deeper understanding of CSA of infants.

Therefore the study aimed to:

- To understand how perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children make sense of sexually abusive acts towards young children.
- To examine factors motivating some men to sexually abuse young children,
- To add to the body of knowledge, stimulate international debates, and inform policy and practice on child protection practices.

Methodology

- Qualitative Research methodology
- Grounded theory informed approach
- Eight correctional centres in three South African provinces participated
- Semi-structured interviews conducted in eight languages with 27 incarcerated sex offenders, who reported committing the offences when they were between 15 and 86 years old, all convicted for sexual abuse of children aged six years and below.
- Their victims were between 18 months and 7yrs old, at the time of the abuse, including 3 boys and 30 girls.
- Vignettes were used for those who denied the offence.

KEY FINDINGS

- HIV/AIDS myth was dismissed by perpetrators as an explanation for high rates of infant rape
- In providing motives for CSA perpetrators explanations highlighted two key factors:
 - reports on the context for or prior to abusive behaviour focusing on childhood adversities; and inadequacies in their adult relationships with women.
 - perpetrators' narratives illustrating pro-abusive attitudes to women and young children. They show how socio-cultural factors including patriarchal notions of manhood, mainly a belief in sexual entitlement, are used to justify CSA.
 - This paper focuses on how men used a sense of entitlement to sex to justify targeting young children for sex.

SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT TO SEX

- SIX SUB-THEMES WERE IDENTIFIED:

YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO LISTEN TO A WIFE...A WOMAN IS A CHILD

- A belief that men are superior, born providers and protectors to socially and economically weak women and children who are possessions under male authority needing dependence on men.
- A belief that girls should be socialised to be subservient and tolerant of SV and boys should be controlling towards girls and women.

IF YOU MISS SEX BLOOD SURGES TO THE HEAD

- A belief that men have an uncontrollable biological sexual urge, a biological right to have sex as and when they want to keep them sane. Women should always be there to service male desire.

‘IF YOU MISS SEX BLOOD SURGES TO THE HEAD’ continued

- Sex on demand with only a woman or a child and not masturbation is justified by beliefs that masturbation sinful, unhealthy and unacceptable
- Uncontrollable urge used to justify CSA and SV in general because “male sexual desire is paramount to women and children’s rights.

‘TWO POTS ARE DELICIOUS’

- Narratives legitimise multiple sex partners suggesting the importance of unrestricted access, variety for male sexual diet and sexual excitement through polygamy or mistresses – a practice within a patriarchal order
- promiscuity is unproblematized as women are seen as a commodity, and having multiple partners is perceived as an inherited trait
- Narratives highlight non-emotional engagement in sexual relationships and the use of double standards which condone deception, privileging male infidelity. Majority of men in this study had multiple partners.

I SHOWED HER THE MONEY AND ASKED HER TO HAVE SEX WITH ME

- Uncontrollable sexual urge, preoccupation with sex and challenges in intimate relationships leads to transactional sex with women and children.
- Buying a girl/woman a drink or giving money gives sexual entitlement.
- Despite their ages children who receive or ask for gifts/money are assumed to agree to adult-child sex. This is used to justify CSA or rape.
- Children who ask for money from men preoccupied with sex are friendly, easily groomed and more at risk of CSA and being silenced with bribes.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Most men reported using physical violence towards women and using force in all aspects of women's lives to assert their power and control.
- Men talked about being socialised into the normative use of excessive force to assert male authority and force young girls into sexual relationships. Girls tolerated and accepted SV as a norm and never reported violence.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE IN SEXUAL VIOLENCE continued

- Coercion is not perceived as SV but a way to accelerate a 'yes' from an undecided girl/woman.
- Extreme forms of coercion include gang rapes meted out to women and children who challenge male superiority and deny men access to sex.
- Rape explained as powerful tool for revenge to put a woman in her place.
- Child rape used/seen as most painful tool to punish and humiliate the mother - some men reported deriving pleasure from seeing the fear in their victims' eyes.

RIGHTS ARE RIGHT BUT THEY ARE ALSO NOT RIGHT...

- Democratisation of SA is blamed for encouraging women to challenge men
- Democratic laws unacceptable as they undermine patriarchal order/power, giving women rights to dictate sexual terms, rendering men powerless and emasculated , leading to a crisis of masculinity

SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT TO SEX

RIGHTS ARE RIGHT BUT THEY ARE ALSO NOT RIGHT...

- Men expect unchallenged domination to protect their sexual entitlement. Women who challenge men are perceived to abuse their rights and viewed with suspicion to be untrustworthy and promiscuous.
- Men allege women abuse their rights by making false rape allegations. These explanations were used to justify resorting to CSA.
- Men claim women's rights are a threat to male superiority hence their decision to avoid imposing themselves on women, who often report them to the police for false rape allegations, by targeting children as objects of their sexual pleasure knowing the high likelihood of not being caught for CSA.

CONCLUSION

- One of the first sociological studies to explore perpetrator explanation of sexual abuse of very young children in South Africa;
- Perpetrator explanations illustrate deeply ingrained pro-abusive attitudes towards women and children.
- The explanations illustrate the social construction of manhood characteristic of a patriarchal society. They emphasize the importance of male superiority in a way that condones the use of violence to exercise power and authority.
- Despite democratisation the culture of sexual violence is perpetuated through socialisation. Boys learn to use violence against women and children as a norm. Girls learn to tolerate, perceive abuse as a norm and condone it as well.
- The study found that a belief in a sense of entitlement brings with it denial of responsibility for abuse and externalisation of blame to mostly victims.

CONCLUSION continued

- Men used their claims of being disempowered to access sex through conventional means to justify CSA.
- The study highlights the impact of democratisation in a patriarchal society on manhood illustrating that sexual violence is gender based and that this cuts across all ages, a factor which heightened the risk for sexual offending towards the youngest members of society.
- The perception of women and children as a commodity, possession, object of male pleasure further highlights the deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs and practices which, despite having a democracy with the most progressive laws in the world, continue to be upheld. This therefore illustrate the complexities in debates about sexual violence as a gendered problem in an unequal society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Dialogue on gender equality and child-rearing practices – to examine how boys and girls are socialised.
- Continuous awareness programmes for open talk about sex, sexuality, child sexual abuse across all sectors of society.
- Implementation of balanced gender equality and empowerment programmes which include both women empowerment and empowerment of men to avert the crisis of masculinity.
- Offender rehabilitation programmes not only focusing on medical treatment models imported from the west but on corrective programmes that address context-specific socio-cultural issues for South Africa.

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THANK YOU!

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