

Male Rape: The Unseen World of Male Rape

By Aliraza Javaid¹

Abstract

This research explores the phenomenon of male rape and how the police recognise it, together with uncovering male rape myths in a local police force. Whilst male rape research is expanding, it was found that the police have a lack of knowledge, understanding, awareness, and specialised training of male rape. Therefore, police officers' attitudes, ideas, views, perspectives, and beliefs on specific topics pertinent to male rape are discussed. This project also seeks to comprehend gender expectations and stereotypes of men, so as to comprehend the prevalence of male rape, the negligence of male rape, and the under-reporting/recording of male rape. Moreover, because male rape is a part of sexual violence, feminist theory is used as a foundation for this project, since feminism seeks gender equality. Ultimately, this research emphasises the need for the police to adequately manage male rape victims and take male rape seriously, without any negative attitudes, ideas, views, perspectives, and beliefs.

¹ MRes Social Sciences

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1.0 Introduction

Definition

This research focuses on male on male rape; male rape will be referred to as a sexual violation of a man by another man through forced and non-consensual penetrative sexual intercourse.

Research Questions

There is a main research question, which the dissertation is based on: why are male rape victims given less attention by the police than their female counterparts? There are also sub-questions to supplement the main research question: 1) Why are police officers disregarding male rape victims? 2) Why are male rape victims reluctant to report to the police?

The Rationale for Conducting the Dissertation

The rationale for researching the police is because they are the first port of call for male rape victims when rape is reported, and they have a core comprehension of the factors that facilitate to the under-reporting of male rape and the impact of rape on men's lives. The police also give information regarding male rape victims' needs and the availability of provisions in fulfilling those needs. Therefore, the police are a good data source.

The Aims of the Dissertation

- To unveil the phenomenon and practice of male rape in Britain;
- To closely examine the male rape law, as it affects how the police respond to male rape;
- To pick out and research the aspects that determine the under-reporting/recording of male rape;
- To identify and scrutinise male rape myths within the police subculture;
- To comprehensively examine and study the police responses to male rape.

The Outcomes of the Dissertation

- To improve understanding of/contribute to knowledge about male rape in a form of a suitable output, such as a relevant journal article, so dissemination in an accessible format can help meet the desired outcomes;
- To help inform male rape victims, give them the strength to vanquish their fears of reporting, persuade them to report, and search for the information and assistance that they rightly deserve;
- To eliminate people's negative perceptions of male rape, and regenerate such perceptions with more positive ones;
- To assist local and central governments to help improve policies and laws in regards to male rape;
- To help enhance the reporting/recording procedure in a local police area.

Background Context

Research studies (e.g. Hoyle and Young, 2002; Sleath and Bull, 2010) have found that male rape in the twenty-first century is—more than ever before—a social issue, for many male rape victims are reluctant to report to the police, because of male rape myths ingrained within the police which contribute to the under-reporting of male rape (Khan, 2008). If the police hold misguided views about male rape then it can be problematic in the sense that they may poorly respond to male rape victims (Lees, 1997). Khan (2008) found that police officers are usually the first port of call for male rape victims when reporting their case, so this also forces the researcher to thoroughly study the following: male rape myths within a local police force; how police officers respond to male rape; how the police are influenced by social and cultural aspects when dealing with male rape victims; the under-reporting of male rape to the police, and the under-recording of male rape.

2.0 Male Rape Victims in the Criminal Justice System

This chapter begins with a discussion about the development of the law on male rape, and the weaknesses that come along with such a development, which is important to discuss because the law influences how the police respond to the crime. Police officers must enforce the legal definition of male rape in practice, so it is important to set out the legal context of male rape. The second section of this chapter discusses how male rape victims are treated in rape trials in court; this then feeds into the last section of the chapter, which is a discussion of issues raised by the first legal case of male rape to come before the courts: the case of *R v Richards*.

2.1 The Development of Male Rape Law

Historically, there has been little legal consideration of men as victims of rape. It was not until recently that the law was changed to identify male rape as a crime that is equal to female rape. Before the development of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which criminalised male rape for the very first time (Walklate, 2004), statute laws regarding rape only considered men to be able to perpetrate a sexual crime against a woman due to the unequal power roles within intimate heterosexual relationships (Edwards, 1981). As a result, the rape laws historically only criminalised non-consensual penile penetration of the vagina. The rape laws did not recognise the fact that men can be victims of rape too, through non-consensual penetration of the anus. Fortunately, the recent development of the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2003 specifies that male rape is a crime, which is equal to female rape in law to date; however, this has not come without considerable shortcomings. For example, whilst non-consensual sexual acts such as object/oral penetration, penetration by a part of the body other than a penis and anal rape are made illegal, the SOA 2003 is not gender-neutral so it cannot account for women as perpetrators of rape in the 21st century (Khan, 2008). The law on rape continues to be gender-specific to date, which means in law, only men can be perpetrators of rape, not women; therefore, it is crucial that the SOA 2003 becomes gender-neutral in current society, so that it accounts for women as perpetrators of rape.

It is also important to note that the SOA 2003 does not strictly make perpetrators who force their victims to perform sexual activities on the perpetrators (for example, the victim penile penetrating the perpetrator's anus) seem like a serious offence (Rumney and Taylor, 1997b). This is worrying because research has found that male rape perpetrators usually get their male rape victims to perform sexual services on other victims or on the perpetrator (Groth and Burgess, 1980), and such acts can be seen as humiliating as these may be acts that some men might not wish to participate in even consensually (Rumney and Taylor, 1997b). However, a weakness of Groth and Burgess's research is that the research was based on a small sample (22 male rape cases), so their findings cannot be generalised, but the study did raise some of the contentious issues in male rape.

Despite the above shortcomings of the SOA 2003, it does come with some advantages; for instance, Section 1 of the SOA 2003 gave first recognition to non-consensual penile penetration of the mouth and criminalised this for the very first time, as the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 did not. Although the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 criminalised male rape for the very first time in the sense that the Act made non-consensual penile penetration of the anus a crime (Walklate, 2004), it did not consider to make non-consensual penile penetration of the mouth illegal at the time. Though the SOA 2003 made non-consensual penile penetration of the mouth an offence, it does not elucidate the notion of consent. Further, part b of the SOA 2003 stipulates that if a victim does not provide 'consent' to a sexual activity then an offence is perpetrated. In section 74 of the SOA 2003, consent is understood as "*agreement by choice*" and a person has the "*freedom and capacity of that choice*"; however, consent is difficult to prove, and is left to the police and the courts to judge or decide if consent has been given or not at the time of the alleged attack. In particular, perpetrators of male rape may use "*the mistaken belief in consent defence*", which means that rape allegations are commonly refuted on the grounds that the perpetrator 'misread the signals', and so thought that the alleged victim provided consent at the time of the incident (Lees, 2002: appendix 3).

Before the SOA 2003, there was not a clear, legally recognised definition of consent. SOA (2003) defines consent as "*a person consents if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.*" (SOA, 2003: section 74). This framework helps to ensure that there is a foundation in which the criminal justice system can make impartial verdicts. However, Dyer (2002) reports that the rape law needs to be clearer so that it can help to prevent as well as prosecute rape—because consent cannot be given when the victim is 'asleep', 'drunk' or 'unconscious', it is still a question of the perpetrator's word against the victim's in acquaintance rape and date rape cases, but only in stranger rape cases is the issue of consent perceived as an important issue (Dyer, 2002). Although Dyer provides an interesting argument, it is purely anecdotal without any research evidence to prove her claim, and so Dyer can be accused of being bias when conducting her argument. Nevertheless, Dyer urgently stresses for the rape law to be clearer and this makes sense when one of the conditions of rape stipulated in section 1 (c. 42) of SOA (2003) states that "*A does not reasonably believe that B consents.*" However, the phrase "reasonably" is not clearly defined in the Act and so leaves it open to subjective interpretations by the police and the courts.

Another benefit of the SOA 2003 is that it does decriminalise homosexual group sex

in a private place, which shows how far the law has come to accept homosexual activity, in comparison to the 1980s and 1990s when most western countries passed laws criminalising homosexual activity per se. Although the decriminalisation of homosexual activity between consenting adults may come across as the law becoming more accepting of homosexuals, it does raise some problems. For example, research evidence has shown that male rape victims are more commonly homosexual (Groth and Burgess, 1980), and many gay men look for casual sexual partners (through cruising) in a clandestine way (Mezey and King, 1989). Consequently, gay men are at risk of rape. Mezey and King (1989) argued that gay male rape victims may be reluctant to report to local authorities due to the discernment of the police as anti-homosexual, and the fear of authorities blaming the victims because they have put themselves at their own risk. However, Mezey and King acknowledge that their sample was biased, as they placed advertisements in the gay press for victims to partake in, and only a psychological theoretical framework was used in their study, which means they did not consider the social contexts wherein the rapes took place.

It should also be borne in mind that the legal literature on male rape does not always distinguish between adult men who were sexually assaulted as young boys with those sexually assaulted as adult males. This makes the legal literature unclear when discussing about male rape victims, because research has shown that the effects of rape are different for a child's response to rape in comparison to that of an adult's (Hoyle and Young, 2002). Therefore, policy makers ought to think about these vast differences, so that better mechanisms can be put in place for male rape victims. Moreover, the legal literature on male rape does not consider or understand the impact of cultural differences, even though research has shown that cultural differences influence how male rape victims respond to their rape (Hoyle and Young, 2002).

Another issue is that the legal literature on male rape has been predominately based around men's experience of rape in the United States of America. A main difficulty of comparing and contrasting findings of male rape research is that different jurisdictions have dissimilar views or definitions of male rape, and those views and definitions can alter periodically. For instance, in Dubai, male rape is treated merely as homosexual behaviour and not thought of as a non-consensual act. Moreover, homosexuality is punishable in Dubai so if male rape victims report their offence, then they will most likely be seen as having participated in consensual homosexual sex, and homosexual acts under Sharia law are punishable by death (Forsloff, 2009).

The above section has shown how it is important for the rape law to be gender-neutral, so that it can account for women as perpetrators of rape. However, because the rape law is gender-specific, does mean in law, rape is a crime that can be committed only by men; therefore, making rape an inherently male crime. In the next sections, the way and manner that the SOA 2003 is practically applied in rape trials and what impact it has on male rape victims within the court process will be discussed.

2.2 The Treatment of Male Rape Victims at Rape Trials

Research have documented that, in practice, female rape victims continue to be cross-examined or thoroughly questioned about their sexual past, which forces female rape victims to confirm their blamelessness in court (Lees, 1997, 2002). It is clear that

male rape victims will experience similar interrogations, because questions surrounding the male rape victim's sexual history with the alleged perpetrator are permissible in a rape trial. Therefore, this can allow defence counsels to insinuate that because consensual homosexual sex took place previously, it was also consensual homosexual sex at the time in question (Khan, 2008).

Another mechanism of discrediting the male rape victim at a rape trial is using men's physical response to rape as a way of highlighting consensual sex (for example, victim getting an erection when being raped) (Rumney and Taylor, 1998). However, other research has found that men having an erection and ejaculating when being raped is an involuntary reaction to the sexual attack, as it is just the way the human body works; ejaculation is not always in conscious control, but is an involuntary physiological reaction (Groth and Burgess, 1980). Male rape victims may misinterpret ejaculation with orgasm, and may then be perplexed of the physiological reaction when being raped (Groth and Burgess, 1980). Defence counsels can use this against the victim in a rape trial (Rumney, 2001). Indeed, defence counsels will use men's physical response to rape as a way of arguing that the male rape victim consented to sexual intercourse, and will persuade the jury that consensual sex took place rather than considering that the victim was raped (Rumney and Taylor, 1998). The defence counsel can use men's physical response to rape in two ways: firstly, as proof of the victim's consent; second, as the foundation on which it can be disputed that the perpetrator did have an honest belief in the victim's consent, so does not have a guilty mind or in other words the *mens rea* for committing rape (Rumney, 2001).

The issue of men's physical response to rape is demonstrated in the case of *Armstrong*. In this case, the victim was a prisoner who states that another inmate anally raped him, but the victim was fondled and subsequently got an erection (Rumney, 2001). In this case, the victim's physical response to the rape was the focal point when being cross-examined. The defence counsel argued that because the victim had an erection, he conveyed the impression of being 'sexually aroused' and 'keen', so provided the 'signal' that he wanted to participate in sexual intercourse; following a defence submission, the trial judge ordered the members of the jury to exonerate the alleged perpetrator, because there was 'no adequate evidence' of the alleged victim's non-consensual agreement to sex (Rumney, 2001). The victim's physical response to rape could also be used as a mitigating factor in sentencing (Rumney and Taylor, 1998). In *Billam*, the court declared that there ought to be some mitigation of sentence where the victim has behaved in a way that led the perpetrator to think that the victim wanted consensual sexual intercourse (Rumney and Taylor, 1998). Further, the misguided view that all male rape victims are homosexual can be problematic, because it can harm the credibility of the victim in a rape trial (Lees, 1997). This is because homophobic jurors or those perplexed of the phenomenon, that is, male rape or confused about male sexual orientation can be swiftly influenced by cultural and social myths within a courtroom, where there can be a reason to overemphasise any bias already maintained; therefore, male rape victims are susceptible to accusations like 'consented at the time', 'led him on' or 'he asked for it' (Khan, 2008). Consequently, this can influence the outcome of the trial.

Fortunately, the reform in rape law has enabled male rape victims' voices to be more recognised and has provided male victims with a stronger position in court, than was the case previously; however, it seems that victims can still get discredited in court.

Another example of discrediting victims in court includes allegations being brought on male rape victims about prior homosexual acts, particularly when the victim asserts to be a heterosexual man, usually due to the stigma they think they will cause to their friends and families if they confess to being a homosexual man (Khan, 2008). Although Rumney (2001) argues that the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 helped to limit the circumstances wherein alleged victims could be interrogated about their prior sexual relations in rape trials, he also agrees with Khan that victims are usually susceptible to degrading questions about prior sexual behaviour and experience (see section 2.3 for an example).

Regardless of sexuality, all male rape victims are subjected to maltreatment in rape trials. Early evidence (see McMullen, 1990) demonstrates that many male rape victims reported that the way and manner that the police and the courts treated them were worse than the rape itself (secondary victimisation). However, McMullen's discussion is purely anecdotal and he has no research evidence to support his claims. He is also biased in his arguments. Because he was a male rape victim himself, it seems he found it difficult to be neutral when writing about male rape. Nevertheless, McMullen's argument can in part account for the argument that the attrition rate in cases of male rape seem to reflect the poor rate in female rape cases (see Rumney, 2001). However, Rumney's study consisted of complainants in a small sample of cases concerning allegations of sexual assault or male rape, so the findings cannot be generalised to all other legal cases of male rape. Another problem of Rumney's study is his selection of research methods on a hypersensitive subject: the two male rape victims, which was the sample size, were interviewed by phone and letter. This is problematic because the interviewer is unable to develop a rapport with the interviewees, and therefore, is more likely to be unable to generate rich, trustworthy, valid, and reliable information (Sarantakos, 2005).

Meanwhile, stereotypical views with regard to how a 'genuine' victim of rape ought to have suffered physically or physically resisted during the rape abound in rape hearings (Rumney, 2001). Matoesian (1993) claims that in female rape cases, the defence counsel instil beliefs in the members of the jury concerning what occurs in a 'genuine' incident of rape, and then request the jury to form their opinion on their rape case with reference to that. For instance, the defence counsel would expect a 'real' rape victim to have physical injury from the rape (Lees, 1997). Research data, gathered from rape hearings consisting of alleged female rape victims, implies that the defence counsel will usually dispute that an alleged female rape victim's dearth of injury and physical resistance are not consistent with an assertion of sexual assault or rape (Lees, 2002). In the case of *Armstrong*, the defence counsel consistently stressed the alleged victim's dearth of injury and physical resistance, so as to argue that because the alleged victim suffered no injury nor physically resisted the alleged rape, must mean that he was not raped (Rumney, 2001). However, Mezey and King (1989) argue that many male rape victims freeze during the rape, because they are so fearful and in shock; therefore, the victims are unable to resist or fight back. On balance, the defence counsel infusing beliefs in the jury concerning what occurs in a 'real' rape is problematic, because the defence depiction of how a 'real' victim of rape would respond can be incorrect or may not consider the extensive variation of victims' responses.

Simultaneously, the defence counsel can try to make out as if the male rape victim was lying about the rape, and so a false allegation of rape was made; therefore, defence lawyers can, again, infuse beliefs in the jury but this time about false allegations of rape (Rumney, 2001). There has been documented evidence demonstrating how defence lawyers can diminish a victim's credibility in court (and this can be done in a way to portray the victim as having lied about the rape), which influences their assessments of the likely responsiveness of the members of the jury to a victim's complaint (Lees, 1997). However, Lees (1997) argues that the fact that rape is a difficult crime to report in the first place, must mean that the number of false allegations of rape is very small. In the case of *Richards*, it was disputed that the false allegation of attempted indecent assault and rape emerged out of regret at having sexual intercourse in exchange for money (Rumney, 2001). The next section critically evaluates the case of *R v Richards*, because it is the first legal case of male rape to come before the courts.

2.3 Sentencing for the Crime of Male Rape: The Case of *R v Richards*

In the case of *Billam*, sentencing guidelines were set out so male rape offenders can be prosecuted and convicted, but notions surrounding male rape myths and male sexuality can influence sentencing for male rape (Rumney and Taylor, 1998), although its genuine influence is currently not known because of the lack of male rape cases being reported, recorded, prosecuted, and convicted. In the case of *R v Richards*, which was the first male rape case in the United Kingdom where a male offender was charged with male rape, offers no suggestion that the victim was dealt with in an antagonistic way (Khan, 2008). This leads Codd (1996) to believe that judges are more inclined to believe that voluntary consent to sexual activity between a man and a woman took place, rather than a rape having occurred, whereas between two men, judges are more inclined to think that non-consensual sex took place.

In the case of *Richards*, once the victim and defendant had drunk alcohol, the defendant, who at the time of the attack was 25 years old, escorted the 18-year-old male rape victim into a commons (see Khan, 2008 for a detailed description of the case). Thereafter, the victim was choked and was made to do oral sex on the alleged perpetrator who then, after receiving fellatio, tried to rape the victim. The alleged perpetrator, however, claimed the victim was a prostitute because he performed sexual intercourse in exchange for money, and so the defendant pleaded not guilty to the incrimination of male rape. Rumney and Taylor (1998) also offer their perception on the case of *Richards*: when making the verdict, the perpetrator's prior convictions of sexual crimes (such as the rape and abduction of a 15-year-old young girl) were considered amongst the judge and jury, and the judge argued that because drugs and alcohol facilitated his prior crimes, they also facilitated sexual violence on this instance. Although there was no available evidence for Richards to be detained under the Mental Health Act, the criminal justice system believed that Richards was suffering from a mental disorder, so it was likely that, if Richards was not incarcerated and detained, he would perpetrate analogous crimes in the near future; therefore, the verdict for *Richards* was life imprisonment (Khan, 2008). This harsh sentence of male rape may imply that this appalling crime is aligned with the severity of the crime of female rape in terms of punishment.

However, in *Richards*, the victim was thoroughly interrogated about his prior sexual

relationships, but the defence did not gain acquiescence from the judge, even though, at that time, the constitutional regime specified that the defence needed permission from the judge to ask questions pertaining to the victim's past sexual history (Rumney, 2001). For example, Section 2(1) Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 specified that without the judge's permission, "*no evidence and no question in cross examination shall be adduced or asked at the trial, by or on behalf of any defendant at the trial, about any sexual experience of a complainant with a person other than the defendant.*" Still, in *Richards*, the victim was questioned about his general sexual preference. The victim in *Richards* was asked if he has had any previous sexual relations with anybody, and if he was sexually assaulted in the past; thereafter, he was asked if he understood what a 'rent boy' was, because there was a suggestion that the victim, a youth, who was residing at a hostel, with not very much cash, is prone to exchange sexual services for cash (Rumney, 2001). Conversely, Codd (1996) raises a contrasting view on this particular case, in that she believes that there seems to be very little insinuation that the victim consented to sex. She does, however, agree with Rumney in that the victim's sexuality was thoroughly questioned on many times. This questioning of sexuality is in line with other research: Mezey and King (1989) found in their research of twenty-two male rape victims, that of the two men who informed the police of their rape, one did conceal his homosexuality even though the courts and police continuously challenged his sexuality.

Although the *Richards* case reveals that rules and codes of sentencing were adhered to, it is expected that this judicial decision of sentencing, which emphasised the severity of male rape, will offer guidance within further potential male rape cases. However Rumney and Taylor (1997, a, b) note that it is yet to be perceived if sexual assault between former sexual partners or ongoing sexual partners is less acute than stranger rape. Similarly, it is not known if clemency in sentencing is applicable to the sexual assault of male prostitutes, taking into account Rumney and Taylor's (1997a) argument that the courts ignore the impact that rape has on both female and male prostitutes.

In conclusion, this chapter has drawn attention to and the inadequacy of the law with regard to male rape. It is important to do this, because the law influences how the police respond to crime. The law on male rape is the 'backbone' of police responses to male rape; officers have the responsibility to enforce the legal definition of male rape in practice. The law on rape continues to be gender-specific, which means in law, only men can be perpetrators of rape, not women; therefore, it is crucial that the law changes so that it accounts for women as perpetrators of rape. Also, it is clear that both male and female rape victims are similarly interrogated in rape trials; for instance, both usually get blamed for their rape, because the defence counsel are keen to show that the rape victim led their attacker on (Rumney, 2001). It must be borne in mind that one should be careful about making inferences regarding how male rape victims are treated from a small number of sources—more so as most of the studies consisted of very small samples. However, the crime cannot be overlooked. The next chapter, therefore, discusses how the police deal with male rape victims, and if they help to recover male rape victims' trauma of being raped, or make the trauma worse.

3.0 The Police and Policing Male Rape

This chapter begins with a numerical discussion of how prevalent male rape is and what the extent of the problem has been, so it can be understood how serious male rape is on a scale for the police to deal with. Thereafter, the next section elucidates male rape victims' experiences of the police, which can to some extent explain why the statistical figures of the prevalence of male rape are considerably low. Are the statistics of the prevalence of male rape low because the police are homophobic towards gay male rape victims? To find out, it is important to shed some light on some police literature to discover if homophobia is present within the police subculture, which is the focus of the last section of this chapter.

3.1 The Prevalence of Male Rape

From the time when male rape first became legally identified in 1994, there has been a considerable rise in the police recording male rape offences in England and Wales. In 1995, the police recorded 150 male rape offences (Home Offices, 2002), whereas in 2004-05, the police recorded 1135 male rape offences (Nicolas, Povey, and Walker, et al, 2005). More recently, in 2006-07, the police recorded 1150 male rape offences, and from those crimes, 413 included males who are ages 16 and above; also, other types of sexual violence of males against other males are covered by a variety of additional sex crimes (Nicholas, Kershaw, and Walker, 2007). However, these figures are most likely to be largely underestimates of the true reflection of male rape, considering the large amount of under-recording/reporting of male rape. This is particularly evident in Khan's (2008) study where she established a reporting rate of between 8% and 44%.

However, the expansion of information technology and performance-monitoring regimes have allowed the police to utilise their discretion in situations of imperceptibility; in other words, these developments help the police to increase the reporting rate of crime (Reiner, 2002). Consistently, the police statistics are frequently examined because of a huge quantity of offences being unrecorded and unreported (Reiner, 2002). Despite recent developments, Lees (2002) argues that the police statistics are just the 'tip of the iceberg' of the real indication of sexual offences. That is, the police statistics hide the true reflection of male rape incidents. This of course can be for various reasons; some of those are examined more closely in this research (see chapter 6.0). This notion of the police statistics hiding the true reflection of rape incidents and conveying a false indication of the prevalence of rape is also known as the 'dark figure' of crime, which describes the quantity of undiscovered or unreported rape (Jones, 2003). This clearly raises the issue of just how reliable/valid police statistics are. It is also important to note that police officers use their discretion when recording an incident of male rape, so one should be aware of whether or not police officers see male rape as the same as female rape in terms of severity and significance.

Recent research has found that police officers' responsibility and care for victims of male rape are very poor, as the treatment they provide is insufficient, because of a lack of training, awareness, and understanding of male rape (Khan, 2008). The author in this study also notes that because the police recorded figures on male on male rape is low, in comparison to male on female rape where it is statistically a high crime rate,

police officers only focus more on crimes that are a threat to society, so service provisions only emerge for those crimes where statistical figures are prominent and excessive. The low statistical crime figures for male rape is partly explained by Stermac, Sheridan, Davidson, and Dunn (1996) who comment that male rape victims are reluctant to disclose their sexual victimisation to an agency (e.g. the police, as research shows that the police question the sexual nature of rape: see lees, 1997) that will ask about the sexual aspects of their assault. Instead, male rape victims prefer to report their physical, nongenital trauma to emergency departments or other units that will not ask the victims about the sexual component of their attack; therefore, enabling the victims to reduce their emotional distress (Stermac et al., 1996). In this study, however, a longitudinal research design was used, in which it is common for longitudinal studies to have just a small group of participants. In this case, their study had only twenty-nine men, which makes it difficult to apply the results to a larger population. Even so, their sampling error was decreased because their research remained with the same sample over time.

3.2 Male Rape Victims' Experiences of the Police

There are a multitude of reasons why men do not report their rape to the police. Khan (2008) investigated counselors who support male rape victims, and the counselors gave a variety of reasons why victims of male rape do not report to the police; for instance, some police officers can be homophobic, so they would inadequately deal with, overlook, or disbelieve male rape victims (Khan, 2008; see also Hodge and Canter, 1998). Other recent research found that the police are deficiently informed about male rape, which leads them to ignore male rape victims, pass them onto non-statutory agencies or manage them in a harmful way (Rumney, 2008). In which case, secondary victimisation is formed, which refers to police officers' attitudes and behaviours that are homophobic, insensitive, antagonistic, and victim-blaming, and can, thereby, be distressing for male rape victims (Rumney, 2008). Earlier research also confirms this where it is discussed that the police challenge male rape victims' sexuality and masculinity, as they simply believe that men cannot be raped; therefore, the police believe that male rape victims are somehow culpable for their rape because they did not fight off the attacker, as men are supposed to always be strong, powerful, invulnerable, macho, and able to protect themselves (Lees, 1997). The police denying or minimising male rape as an issue operates in numerous forms (see chapter 6.0 for a discussion on research findings to help understand these numerous forms further). As we have seen here, such police views imply that male rape is actually not possible per se.

On top of this, there has been a widespread agreement in the literature that the police are more likely to blame homosexual male rape victims than heterosexual male rape victims for their rape (Isely, 1991, Stermac et al., 1996; Hodge and Canter, 1998; Lees, 1997, 2002). According to Hodge and Canter (1998), homosexual victims of male rape are also less likely to report their rape to the police than heterosexual victims of male rape. Contrarily, Khan (2008) believes that homosexual male rape victims are more likely to report their rape to the police than heterosexual male rape victims. In part, this may possibly be because heterosexual male rape victims may fear that their sexuality or masculinity will come into question, along side the stigma

they think they will bring to their family for being raped if they report (Lees, 1997). In this study, questionnaires were disseminated to the police and male rape victims in which Lees, as similar to Hodge and Canter, found that her results showed that the police deal with homosexual men less sympathetically and sensitively than heterosexual men. She further concluded that a number of police officers in her study consider that sexual violence is less distressing for homosexual men, because the police are more likely to presume that the 'rape' was instead consensual sex or that the complaint was fabricated due to malevolence, so homosexual victims' testimonies are seen as 'unreliable'.

In a British study of forty victims of male rape, only five reported to the police (Walker, Archer, and Davis, 2005). In this study, from those five victims who reported, just one victim declared that the police were helpful and responsive; the remaining four said the police were disinterested, homophobic, and unsympathetic. All four regretted reporting to the police, because they believed that their complaint was not considered significant. However, one must be cautious when taking into account if these particular conclusions show an ongoing issue within police responses to male rape. Walker et al. (2005) state that the average time, between the attack and victims partaking in research, was ten years; as a result, it is not known when the five male rape victims informed the police. Evidently, a male rape victim reporting their offence that happened ten or twenty years ago may have obtained completely dissimilar responses from one who has reported a rape more recently. Taking into account that there are now specialist rape support units that are particularly aimed at helping victims of rape, and their specific, professional, and robust training makes it much more easier to fulfil the needs of all victims of rape (Williams and Robinson, 2004), than was the case twenty years ago.

Despite this specialist development in the 21st century, there is documented evidence to show that male rape victims can feel reluctant to report to disbelieving, unsympathetic police officers (Lees, 1997). Male rape victims also fear being revictimised, so instead they feel safer to suffer in silence than to report, yet those who do report, usually suffer isolating and hostile reactions from the police (Isely, 1991). Isely reinforces this idea of the police revictimising male rape victims. Isley argues that looking for help in managing the effects of rape usually becomes a traumatic experience, wherein feelings of anger, depression, anxiety, guilt, and sexual confusion are reinforced in victims, as the police revictimise them. Of course, Isely was writing in the 20th century, so one should be aware, when appreciating Isely's argument, that male rape victims may have to some extent changed their perception of the police in the 21st century, considering that improvements have been made in the police service when dealing with rape victims. For example, police officers have objectives regarding the number of sanctioned detections that officers are expected to achieve, so they are more likely to police vulnerable vicinities—areas where rape is likely to occur—and communities vulnerable to hate crime like homophobic violence in order to reach their targets (Rowe, 2008). However, police officers' work can be autonomous or in other words 'invisible', because it does not essentially require constant supervision (Rowe, 2008).

With that said, police officers' work being autonomous and largely hidden can be problematic if certain places are being under-policed; namely, the gay community. Williams and Robinson (2004) argue that the gay community is heavily under-

policed, which is problematic because other research has shown that perpetrators of male rape are more likely to seek out vulnerable gay men who frequent vulnerable places, such as the gay community (Stermac et al., 1996). Gay or bisexual men socialising in the gay community are, therefore, more at risk of being raped. In which case, a double victimisation can formulate if gay or bisexual men are attacked and then subsequently feel unprotected by the law, and feel harassed or discriminated against by the police. That said, it was found that gay and bisexual men both felt that the police revictimised them after they reported hate crime (Williams and Robinson, 2004). Stermac et al. (1996) argue that heterosexual, homophobic men can carry out male rape as a way to execute homophobic violence onto gay men. This can in part account for the argument that male rape is about power and control, and not about sexual gratification (Groth and Burgess, 1980).

Meanwhile, there is an assemblage of 'heterosexual' men who are 'invisible' to society, and infamously problematic to police because of their dearth of association to any particular marginalised grouping in the community: the 'heterosexual' men are conceptualised as having sexual intercourse with other men, however, do not necessarily label themselves as bisexual or gay (Williams and Robinson, 2004). These characterisations of men are usually in heterosexual 'loving' relationships; however, they do surreptitiously practice gay sexual activities in communal areas or in other words, known as 'cottaging' (Humphreys, 1975). It is worthwhile to note that Humphreys failed to obtain consent from his subjects, as he tracked down their addresses and names via their license plate numbers, and then interviewed them at the men's homes under false pretences and in disguise; of course, this is extremely unethical. Regardless, this cohort of men pose a certain problem for the police, as not merely are they susceptible to male rape, but they are also more probable to not report their attack due to the stigma they think they will bring to their family (Khan, 2008), or fear of exposure (Williams and Robinson, 2004).

The police usually consider male rape perpetrators and victims to be both solely homosexual (Lees, 1997), so clearly officers do not consider that heterosexual men can become male rape victims. Some studies conclude that despite the sexuality of the perpetrator and victim, any male person is capable of being raped (Mezey and King, 1989; Lees, 1997; Groth and Burgess, 1980). The male rape myth that victims and perpetrators of male rape are solely homosexual is an issue, as this can influence male rape victims reporting, in that (particularly heterosexual) male rape victims are less likely to confide and trust in police officers if the officers believe in such a myth (Lees, 1997). Relatedly, McMullen (1990) argues that irrespective of sexuality, all male rape victims find it almost impossible to report male rape, although McMullen has no research evidence to support his claim. However, where research evidence is found, does coincide with McMullen's theory: Mezey and King (1989) conclude that it is clear that the police tend not to take men who report rape seriously, nor do they tend to record an alleged offence as rape.

Therefore, it is unclear how many male rape offences actually happen which are reported or unreported. Hodge and Canter (1998) report that victims of male rape might only report their rape to the police if the chances of police officers' disbelief are considerably reduced. For example, when harsh physical injuries are present and high on male rape victims, then officers are more likely to believe/support them, and they are also easily awarded the victim status (Kaufman, Divasto, Jackson, Voorhees, and

Christy, 1980). A victim's status is significant when dealing with rape victims, because a crime is unlikely to be classified as rape if the victim's status is seen as socially illegitimate; therefore, the police only see certain victims of rape as legitimate and worthy of a victim status (Rowe, 2008).

The example of Christopher Smith, who clearly was not awarded the victim status, suffered aggressive questioning from the police. In the United States, a stranger raped Smith at gunpoint, and what follows this case is a suggestion of the sense of desolation that male rape victims can experience and the way wherein aggressive interrogation may have a harmful effect on a male victim's aptitude to precisely remember an upsetting incident (Scarce, 1997). Christopher Smith tells how the police responded to him:

"Then I told the story again. Then again. They asked questions. They interrupted. They told the story back to me, but changed things. They inserted information that I did not provide. Questions sprayed at me from every direction like bullets from a machine gun. Everything became so cloudy and confused." (Scarce, 1997: 191-2).

In addition, the police aggressively questioned Smith's sexuality. This may partly be because male rape essentially challenges fundamental notions of male rape victims' sexuality and masculinity; therefore, the police are perplexed, shocked, and in disbelief that a man can ever be raped (Lees, 1997). Surely then male rape victims will be reluctant to report to the police if officers believe that a man cannot be raped. Khan (2008) found similar results to Lees: the police were found to hold male rape myths, particularly one concerning that 'a man cannot be raped' because of his power, masculinity, machismo, dominance, invulnerability, and due to his societal expectation to be the penetrator, not the submissive. Worryingly, Khan concludes that the police do not take male rape seriously, especially when they believe in male rape myths, so this can be harmful when the police deal with male rape victims—bearing in mind, the police are very often the first point of contact for male rape victims when reporting (Gregory and Lees, 1999). Another male rape myth that the police are guilty of believing in is that the 'male victim asked for it', which is proven in Isely (1991). Here it was found that the police heavily blamed male rape victims for their victimisation, and it was discovered that the victims were met with mockery, negativity, and victim-blaming attitudes. Of course, it is never a victim's fault for being raped. Still, Isely's research demonstrated that male rape victims frequently encountered negative responses from the police: hysterical laughter, beliefs of how 'homosexual men want to be raped', and 'you must have led him on' attitudes. Add to that, with the current global recession and so lack of resources, the police may be selective with what types of crime they can adequately cater for. Reiner (2000) argues that the police priorities which laws to employ, and to what degree those laws will be implemented in any given situation, considering it is not practical, achievable, nor usually acceptable for the police to implement every single law on every single incident. He further argues that the police use their judgement whenever they choose to implement the full degree of their official power, so they can maintain in having an emblematic place in connection to the authority between the state and citizens. There is the possible risk of the police regarding male rape as a lesser significant crime type than, for example, female rape; therefore, the police may rank male rape as a low priority crime type, so instead, may enforce laws to protect other crime type victims (Gregory and Lees, 1999). However, enforcing laws can be problematic, especially when junior police officers, who are more probable to engage in routine patrol work

and deal directly with victims of rape on a first encounter, have less experience and meticulous training to adequately manage victims of rape (Rowe, 2008).

At the same time, junior police officers or officers of any rank can misuse their authority; in other words, the police can take advantage of, and abuse, their powers (Neyroud and Beckley, 2001). Neyroud and Beckley recommend that the robust means of eradicating the police taking advantage of, and abusing, their powers, is to improve police professionalism, but in order to do this, a robust ethical framework for police work must be identified. However, even if an adequate ethical framework was recognised, autonomous police discretion will always pervade police work, because it is an essential and lawful part of police duty (Rowe, 2008), which leaves cultures that reinforce discrimination, prejudices, and stereotypes to frequently and excessively influence police discretion inappropriately (Loftus, 2010). However, Loftus's article abandons specific questions of sexuality, gender, and ethnicity; instead, Loftus only examines the contemporary relevance of classic police literature for the changed policing landscape. Thus, not providing evidence of the underlying discriminatory attitudes, which may wield substantial influence over the everyday police work.

This section of the chapter shows how collectively these findings can be worrying. Recent research (Rumney, 2009) confirms the fundamental argument of this section of the chapter; that is, whilst certain male rape victims report a positive response, others report a negative response whereby the police can unfairly question homosexual men or those seen to be homosexual. In which case, the police question gay men's truthfulness, credibility, and trauma when they report (Rumney, 2009). Therefore, this notion of secondary victimisation can come into play when male rape victims are met with such hostile treatment, which expresses attitudes and behaviours that are homophobic, insensitive, antagonistic, and victim-blaming (Rumney, 2008). This implies some extent of crossover in officers' responses to victims of female rape, where the police can formulate analogous postulations concerning integrity founded on questionable criteria (see Lees, 2002). Although this section of the chapter demonstrates clear issues regarding police mistreatment of victims of male rape, one ought to be cautious about implying that women or men obtain preferential treatment in the law of England and Wales. From the existing evidence discussed here, it is just impossible to formulate a strong discussion in support of preferential treatment of female or male rape victims. The next section helps to clarify if the police subculture helps to perpetuate or dispel male rape myths; that is, whether or not preferential treatment is given to male rape victims or female rape victims.

3.3 The Police Subculture and Male Rape

It is vital to briefly outline what 'police subculture' actually means, and helpfully Loftus (2008: 757) defines this nicely:

“The notion of ‘police [sub]culture’ has been widely utilized to understand the inner world of the police and broadly refers to a set of shared informal norms, beliefs and values that underpins and informs police outlooks and behaviour towards people”.

The police subculture is a helpful way for evaluating the values that guide police officers' daily practices. Although it is understood that police subculture is neither unchanging nor monolithic, and can differ from place to place or between the various

roles and occupations in a constabulary (Westmarland, 2008), there are nonetheless numerous chief characteristics, which can generally be recognised. One of these characteristics is homophobia, as Reiner (2000) confirms. Male rape victims can be homosexual (Groth and Burgess, 1980), and the police do deal with such victims (Isely, 1991), so it is important to examine the police subculture and homophobia collectively to see how police responses to male rape are influenced, as there has been a research gap in this particular area.

The amalgamation of negative views in society and sexual violence concerning homosexuality do bring up the issue if homosexual victims of male rape are exposed to a type of twofold victimisation. The problem that appears is the degree to which negative views of homosexuality influence how the police respond to/deal with male rape. Lesbian and bisexual women's identity is usually associated with masculinity, whilst gay and bisexual men's identity is equated with femininity; therefore, the hypermasculine police subculture may facilitate police officers to deal with homosexual males in a more negative way than lesbian females (Williams and Robinson, 2004). According to Reiner (2000), the police subculture is embedded with homophobia, conservatism, prejudices, discrimination, and machismo. These factors are also confirmed in other research (e.g. Jordan, 2004), where it was concluded that these factors result in the police failing to meet the needs of rape victims. These points are demonstrated in an undercover documentary showing police officers neglecting and belittling a rape incident when on duty; instead, the officers were watching pornographic material, rather than meeting the needs of a rape victim (Rowe, 2008).

However, numerous police forces create information on websites or in the form of leaflets that explain male rape myths, and how the police should challenge such myths, along with how to deal with male rape victims' needs (e.g. the Metropolitan Police force's 'Sapphire Project' offers help for male rape victims) (see Rumney, 2008). This development to end homophobia, stereotypes, and discrimination within the police subculture works alongside the creation of the Gender Agenda document, which also aims to end such factors. The Gender Agenda document (accessed on 24/05/2013) was created so the police could show that they value lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) victims. However, the Gender Agenda document ignores the fact that some male rape victims do not identify themselves as LGBT. In other words, the document does not consider *heterosexual* male rape victims. Heterosexual male rape victims may be suffering from a breakdown of a masculine identity (Lees, 1997), but the Gender Agenda document does not discuss how to deal with this; thus, resulting in the police not knowing how to respond to the effects that heterosexual male rape victims suffer. The Gender Agenda document also ignores the possibility that male rape can be committed as a hate crime. Walklate (2004) comments that there is a symbiotic link with the lack of LGBT police cops and the failure of constabularies to understand the nature and impact of bias-motivated crimes.

There is research evidence to suggest that negative prejudices, discrimination, and stereotypes ingrained in the police subculture reduce the police's ability to survey anti-gay hate crime and domestic violence in gay relationships; thus, police officers do not regard such offences as serious as heterosexual victims suffering violence (Williams and Robinson, 2004). Analogously, Whitfield (2004) explains that police

officers believe that gay men are not seen as unimportant; however, their gay culture can have a negative influence on officers' ability to obey their duties, because many officers can find their culture off-putting. Instead of providing care for victims, some LGBT police officers would over-identify with the police subculture, in order to ensure that they do not get alienated nor marginalised from their fellow co-workers (Whitfield, 2004; Loftus, 2008). This may include having to portray homophobic attitudes in front of one's peers, so as to prevent being sidelined from their colleagues. The hegemony of heterosexual police officers in the police force categorise less 'macho' ideas of policing practice with femininity or homosexuality; this is archetypal of the attitudes that police officers display, and certainly not unusual of those found in modern policing subcultures (see Loftus, 2008).

The police promoting homosexuality as less 'macho' than heterosexuality does raise the issue if the police also display homophobic attitudes. Research has documented that anti-gay police officers have made LGBT victims unwilling to report their offence, because of the officers' homophobic attitudes (Rowe, 2008). Similarly, Williams and Robinson (2004) argue that the underreporting of hate crime is because the police are antagonistic to LGBT victims. The issue of under-recording of male rape can also cause a significant issue if we reflect on Loftus's (2010) argument that police solidarity within a police subculture can include secrecy, lying, and the covering up of infringements. This is best verified in other research where it is believed that a police force is a conservative profession that values internal solidarity and togetherness (Chan, Devery, and Doran, 2003). Whether Loftus's claim is still applicable to date is unknown, because it is difficult to conduct research involving the police recording an allegation of male rape there and then. However, developments have emerged to decrease homophobia in the police force. For example, on a yearly basis, police officers parade around gay pride festivals to show the LGBT community that they value them; for instance, eighty police officers paraded, with police uniform on, at the London Gay Pride Festival in 2003 where there were recruitment stands from numerous constabularies, so the LGBT community can see that the police do take hate crime very seriously (Rowe, 2008). However, Reiner (2000) believes that police officers will invariably, to a certain degree, accentuate homophobia, conservatism, machismo, and normative heterosexuality.

Normative heterosexuality is formulated within constabularies through subduing homosexuality, and because constabularies are patriarchal, police officers are encouraged to use physical violence against homosexuals in order to assert their duty to 'hegemonic masculinity' (Messerschmidt, 1993). According to Lees (1997), 'hegemonic masculinity' illustrates chauvinistic views of men who are characterised as heterosexual, hypermasculine, strong, powerful, invulnerable, and macho. This type of 'superior masculinity' is contrasted with homosexuality, which is seen as a 'subordinate type of masculinity' that represents inferiority to the leading 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Gregory and Lees, 1999). The emergence of different types of masculinities creates confusion as to what 'masculinity' is, in which case, the notion of masculinity becomes blurred and vague in its meaning. Still, Messerschmidt (1993) argues that the police look to exert power and control over the subordinate type of masculinity: homosexuality, which symbolises 'deviancy', and police officers aim to defend their 'hegemonic masculinity', rather than provide support and care for homosexual male victims who are seen as alien. However, the problem with Messerschmidt's (1993) analysis is that

he overlooks heterosexual male victims when only writing about police officers' disregard for gay male victims. In short, he appears to consider heterosexual men as invulnerable to victimisation.

This chapter pinpointed several issues that the police neglect: one of which was the police under-recording male rape. Lees (2002) argues that the police statistics hide the true reflection of male rape incidents. In part, this is due to police officers not recording male rape because they do not take it seriously than female rape—the police only concentrate more on crimes that are a threat to society, so service provisions only emerge for those crimes where statistical figures are prominent and excessive (Khan, 2008). Simultaneously, the underreporting of male rape is an issue, which is partly because the police are 'cold' when male rape victims report their crime; for example, the police are more likely to blame homosexual male rape victims than heterosexual male rape victims for their rape, which can force gay male rape victims to be reluctant to report to the police (Hodge and Canter, 1998). Relatedly, the final section of this chapter then attempted to uncover if the police are intrinsically homophobic. According to Reiner (2000), the hypermasculine police subculture is embedded with homophobia, conservatism, prejudices, discrimination, and machismo, so these factors can negatively influence how police officers respond to male rape victims, some of whom are homosexual (Isely, 1991).

The next chapter helps to clarify the notion of masculinity with the assistance of feminist theory, because the creation of masculinity is vital to comprehending male rape, as the issue of rape is an issue of masculinity. Russell (1990), writing on female rape, implies that being sexually violent is masculine behavior, so rape is essentially masculine behavior. The means wherein men see themselves, and the procedures on which these views are formed, are important to comprehend why men rape other men.

4.0 Theoretical Perspectives on Explaining/Understanding Male Rape

Feminist theoretical research on sexual violence is extensive: it highlights the hidden figure of unreported rapes in official police statistics (Lees, 1997, 2002); considers views on rape; examines police responses, and attempts to eliminate rape myths to be replaced with facts (Gregory and Lees, 1999). Therefore, feminist research makes a vast contribution to the study on male violence against women, particularly with regards to sexual violence. Feminist research also plays a pivotal role in uncovering the extent of male violence against women, and reveals the effects rape has on female rape victims. Although feminist research is incrementally useful for female rape victims, little feminist research is provided for male rape victims, which is interesting as feminism seeks gender equality. Therefore, it is important to examine feminist theory, because it seeks to emphasise the gendered nature of rape. It is also vital to examine radical feminist theory in particular, because Stanko (1990) argues that men rape other men for exactly the same reasons they rape women: to exercise power and control over the victim.

4.1 Feminism

Services for managing victims of rape have ameliorated over the past ten years, but the concern of 'no-criming' still continues to raise worry; for example, it was found

that the Crown Prosecution Service did not pursue high proportions of rape allegations or the police classified them as 'no-crimes' (Gregory and Lees, 1999). Here it was also found that the bulk of rapes that the police tend to mostly deal with are stranger rapes (i.e. a rape wherein the victim does not know the attacker), because they are not difficult to gather DNA evidence from. Perhaps then the police see stranger rape victims as 'real victims' and manage them with more compassion. This is proven in Lees' (1997) research where she found that the criminal justice system and society both see stranger rape as 'true' rape, rather than acquaintance rape (i.e. a rape wherein the victim knows the attacker). Nevertheless, it is apparently clear that feminist pressure to improve police guidelines in order to adequately accommodate rape victims' needs has formulated, so police treatment of rape victims has greatly improved.

Gregory and Lees (1999) stress that there is an urgent requirement for the police to consider male rape more seriously, to inform male rape victims throughout the many phases within the legal process, and for the police to respond promptly and efficiently to rape allegations, along with constant training of the rape trauma syndrome and other effects. However, radical feminism argues that it is not possible to utilise legal apparatus to challenge patriarchal oppression and domination when the procedures and language of these institutions and social processes are saturated with patriarchal structures and beliefs (Khan, 2008). One of those patriarchal beliefs is that a man cannot be raped, because he is supposed to be strong, powerful, invulnerable, insensitive, and macho; those men who report rape are seen as not 'real men' for not fighting the perpetrator off (Lees, 1997).

Despite patriarchal beliefs within the criminal justice system prevailing, there has been feminist research documented (e.g. Lees, 1997; Stanko, 1990) to prove that men do rape other men as a way to boost, preserve, and execute 'hegemonic masculinity'; that is, the male sexual offender purposely wants power and control over their subordinate, powerless male rape victim. For Groth and Burgess (1980), this enhances the sexual offender's masculinity by 'stripping' away their rape victim's masculinity. This feminist ideology of power and control stems from radical feminism, which places rape in the extensive social structure, in which there is a hierarchy rooted within patriarchal relations that enables men to exercise power and control over women (MacKinnon, 1991). For radical feminism then, male rape is conceptualised as an extension of male power and control over women, in that male rape offenders regard their male victims of rape as inferior, weak, and subordinate 'women' who have no power; therefore, showing intrinsic issues of domination, power, and control over women (Stanko, 1990).

In contrast, positivism refutes feminist ideology, because it fundamentally argues that rapists do not carry out rape as a means to execute power and control, but rather rapists are sexually or mentally disordered, as argued in the research of the 'Disease Model of Rape' (Scully, 1990, as cited in Walklate, 2004: 122). Historically, Karpman (1951) advocated for the theoretical paradigm of positivism, since Karpman argued that rapists are 'sexual psychopaths' who are not conscious agents intentionally perpetrating sexual assault; rather, they are ill with a disease. A sexual psychopath is commonly someone who is incapable of love, cannot experience remorse or guilt, and can be very impulsive without much thought of the implications of their actions. However, a chief weakness of positivistic views on rape is the

suggestion that rapists suffer a lot more than victims of rape, which subsequently overlooks the perpetrators' responsibility of rape and ignores the effects rape victims' experience. Still, Thornhill and Palmer (2000, as cited in Walklate, 2004: 123) believe that sexual assaults should be comprehended consequential of 'male sexual desire', but their research does not include rape of men, so their research is unable to be explained as 'male sexual desire', but as a form of power and control. This is because male rape offenders are sometimes heterosexual, so they do not have feelings for their victims; instead, they want to execute power and control as a way of punishing their victims for their 'deviant' homosexual lifestyle (Groth and Burgess, 1980).

The theoretical paradigm of feminism seems to be more adequate in explaining sexual violence than positivism, because feminist research evidence is wealthy and comprehensive, whereas positivism lacks robust evidence to support its claims. Although feminist research stipulates that male rape is as an extension of male power and control over women, as male rape offenders treat their male rape victims as inferior 'women' (e.g. Stanko, 1990), it does also specify that 'masculinity' is a social category, not a biological one (Lees, 1997). Namely, how a man perceives oneself as a man, and in what way masculinities are formed within a social and cultural setting, are vital to understanding male rape. This is verified in Groth and Burgess (1980), Berrington and Jones (2002), Lees (1997), and Kelly (1988) where they have concluded that masculinity is a social concept, and not biologically determined. In short, feminism refutes positivism on rape in the sense that they conceptualise rape as a violent act, which is used as a means to execute power and control; therefore, feminism collectively argues that rape is not about 'desire or lust', but about power and control. Although feminism robustly explains rape, it does come with some limitations, which are important to examine next.

4.2 The Limitations of Feminism

Radical feminist theory of patriarchy is criticised for being too descriptive instead of being analytical, so is incapable of explaining the inception of male supremacy; therefore, radical feminist theory does not offer appropriate strategies for aborting male power (Bryson, 1992). Walby (1990) illustrates that the radical feminist theoretical paradigm of patriarchy does not suggest that every single male person oppresses every single female person in society, but instead the patriarchal theory enables for a distinction between individual men on the one side, and the structures of male supremacy on the other. Therefore, the enemy is male supremacy, which is perceived to be a social construction instead of an innate determination, in all its appearances (Walby, 1990).

Further, radical feminist theory only centers itself around the ideology that men are always rape offenders and women are always rape victims. Although the growth of radical feminism attributed recognition and meaning to women by recognising them as rape victims, little thought has been ascribed to male rape victims. Radical feminist research have formed from the foundation that males control and dominate females, and that sexual assault and other types of sexual violence carried out against females assist to strengthen this male supremacy (Khan, 2008). The feminist positions

overlook the issue that men do get raped. The feminist positions should pay attention to male rape victims, as they aim to advocate gender equality. Instead, feminism sees male rape as a threat against the attainment of feminist support provisions made for female rape victims (Gillespie, 1996). Such research attacks implications that rape crisis centres are usually unhelpful to male rape victims, as the following demonstrates:

“On the one hand, they [Survivors organisations’ spokespersons] acknowledge the contribution and work of feminist groups in putting men’s violence, rape and sexual abuse on to the public agenda and the setting up of support services for women, while on the other hand, they repeatedly assert that RCC’s [rape crisis centres] have been unhelpful, indeed hostile, to male survivors who have called telephone counselling lines for support”. (Gillespie, 1996: 155).

The situation still exists in the 21st century, since feminist support organisations do not deal with male rape victims (Khan, 2008). Although the Survivors organisation works intimately alongside RCCs, many male rape victims get turned away from some RCCs when seeking help, leaving male rape victims untreated, isolated, and unable to ask for help (Donnelly and Kenyon, 1996). Donnelly and Kenyon (1996) argue that feminist-based rape crisis centres are least probable to recognise and manage male rape victims, seeing male rape as unproblematic, and disbelieving that men can be raped. The authors also acknowledge that, as fewer social, physical, and cultural provisions are available for men, they report at much lower rates. Maybe the main worry for feminist writers such as Gillespie (1996) is the apparent threat of male rape victims rivaling for financial support. Gillespie argues that RCCs are compelled to expand support to men from state provisions—who might be on the RCC’s executive or management committee and who usually supply funding—and from male rape victims. She further argues that whilst RCCs are usually helpful of the demand for survivor groups for male rape, they are not in general wanting to deflect hard earned funding and resources, and dispelling energies required for operating women support provisions in the hunt of creating separate men support provisions. Alarming, she quotes:

“Developing services for men who need or want them should not be achieved at the expense of what is now 20 years of developing knowledge and expertise within the rape crisis movement.” (Gillespie, 1996: 162).

The problem with Gillespie’s ideology is that there is a dearth of understanding of male rape, and implies a dearth of empathy of the issues that male rape victims suffer, in spite of the fact that RCCs went through analogous animosity in attempting to create women support provisions. Gillespie goes on to argue that the incidence and prevalence of male rape are not known, and utilises this to imply that there is no urgent need for RCCs to incorporate help for male rape victims. Although it is not strange that feminist activists rivaling for equal amount of funding will dispute that the larger part should be given to the more problematic social issue, the degree of male on male rape is momentarily unidentified. Therefore, it is vital for funding and resources to develop in order to uncover the extent of male rape.

Another problem of Gillespie’s analysis is that, whilst Gillespie is knowledgeable about female rape being an unseen offence intrinsically, because of its nature, Gillespie does not think that analogous causes might make male rape victims reluctant

to inform local authorities. Although Gillespie illustrates that the prevalence and incidence of male on male rape are not known, Gillespie criticises the funded research of a nationwide study of ten thousand males to uncover the extent and nature of male on male rape, disputing that no analogous research has been produced for female victims of rape. This feminist analysis does not identify that maybe the funded national survey is important to create data to convince feminist writers like Gillespie, that men can be raped.

In summary, feminist research plays a pivotal role in uncovering the extent and nature of male violence against women. Khan (2008) argues that all male rape research clearly demonstrates that the main motivation for rape is to exercise power, control, and domination; concepts first recognised by radical feminism to explain rape. Radical feminist research challenges positivism's explanations of rape, in that they demonstrate that rape is used as a means to execute power and control, utilised to humiliate, degrade, destroy, and hurt victims (Stanko, 1990), rather than seeing rapists as sexually or mentally disordered (see Karpman, 1951). Although feminist explanations of rape are more robust in terms of evidence than positivistic explanations, the feminist positions overlook the issue that men do get raped. While feminism has enabled women's victimisation to be recognised, it is vital that they enable men's victimisation to be recognised too, considering that feminism seeks gender equality. Some feminist writers (e.g. Hooks, 2000) have argued that men's emancipation is an essential part of feminism, since men are also harmed by gender roles and sexism.

It is important to note that this dissertation draws heavily on the philosophy of feminism: in theoretical terms in explaining male sexual violence and in adopting some of the principles of feminist research methods. Therefore, it is important to discuss about methodology and methods, so the reader can understand how this dissertation evolved. The next chapter will demonstrate such evolution.

5.0 Research Methods and Methodology

This chapter discusses the research method adopted, and explains that the empirical research solely undertook a qualitative stance. The value of adopting a qualitative approach is explained, along with the method of collection and data analysis. The hypersensitive nature of researching male rape victims also calls for a discussion on ethics, alongside a discussion of oneself within the research process. Before this, the chapter begins with outlining the dissimilar parts of the empirical research, which are then subsequently discussed.

5.1 Research Method

The semi-structured interview, which is a qualitative method that uses open-ended questions, is suitable for gender-specific issues rather than strictly defined questions utilised in quantitative questionnaires (Beetham and Demetriades, 2007). Of course, male on male rape is a gender-specific issue, because predominately men are the offenders of such a crime and the victims are always men. For Beetham and Demetriades, "[Semi-structured interviews] *are considered important to gender researchers for evaluating the nuances of many of the social phenomena important to*

an analysis of gender relations that cannot easily be quantified by numerical statistics or values." (2007: 203). A quantitative approach was seen inappropriate for this study, because this study did not seek to neither test any hypothesis nor develop numerical data for generalisations to be made. Therefore, tape-recorded, semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate and flexible method for the research questions.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews were appropriate to use because they can easily capture police officers' beliefs, thoughts, views, and attitudes of male rape. This interview technique can give knowledge regarding the workings and experiences of specialist police officers who specifically manage rape cases, so the researcher could examine the competence of the officers. Although conducting interviews, transcribing interviews, and analysing transcripts were time-consuming, they were easily accommodated into the researcher's personal life (Bryman, 2012). A further advantage was that semi-structured interviews gave comprehensive and rich answers; consequently, this produced a huge amount of data that was easily and readily analysed (Bryman, 2012).

Although quantitative research can give vital knowledge in regards to the frequency of male rape, it does not provide information about the impact and meaning of rape on men's lives. A meticulous research project about the prevalence of male rape would need substantial resources and would still experience issues of men's reticence to inform the local authorities of their rape. However, a qualitative approach can discover police officers' reasons as to why they think men do not report, and examine officers underlying, subjective beliefs about male rape in a rich, comprehensive manner, which quantitative research is unable to do. Analogously, qualitative research allows the researcher to engage within the research procedure instead of standing on the sideline (Khan, 2008).

However, qualitative research is accused for being 'subjective' and 'unscientific', which is usually in contrast to quantitative research, which is considered to be more 'objective' and 'scientific' (Khan, 2008). Still, it can be debated that when studying the police, it is neither desirable nor achievable for the researcher to take on a 'detached' method on the police attitudes, views, thoughts, and beliefs of male rape, as frequently adopted in a quantitative research for a more 'scientific' and 'objective' outlook.

In the interviews, certain questions about male rape myths were asked (see interview guide: appendix 1), and topics of discussion included issues pertaining to the responses to male rape victims and officers' perceptions of male rape. These interview questions/topics helped the researcher to identify any misguided beliefs, male rape myths, and homophobia ingrained within the police subculture; they also helped the researcher recognise if the police are entirely informed of the problems of, and connected to, male rape. It was, however, possible for police officers to give misleading/untruthful answers when challenging rape myths, because they may feel like they had to respond in a 'politically correct' way, instead of giving honest answers (Khan, 2008).

The interviews were recorded and then later transcribed, as the researcher was interested not only in what police officers reveal, but also in the type of language the

officers use and in what ways they are conveyed. Sarantakos (2005) highlights that it is most likely for the nuances of participants' language to fade if the researcher only writes notes on paper. Therefore, a tape-recorder was used to counteract this problem, but Bryman (2012) alerts us to the fact that transcribing interview data is time-consuming and intricate, as the recorder may not clearly pick up exactly what the participants say and so recorded voices may be blurred when transcribing. This argument is comprehensible because the tape-recorder did not clearly record police officers' voices at times.

5.2 Sampling Method and Research Design

The researcher employed the purposive snowball sampling method in this dissertation, because it was the most appropriate sampling method to purposively select specialist police officers who specifically deal with male rape cases, who then accordingly gave information, required to locate other specialist police officers who have had experience of dealing with male rape cases or are dealing with such cases. The researcher only concentrated on specialist police officers rather than general police officers, as specialist officers are the ones designated to investigate and manage rape cases in-depth. As such, the data collected cannot be generalised to generic police officers who do not meet the criteria of specialist police officers; however, the researcher's purpose was to conduct a detailed analysis of the data.

Another reason why purposive snowball sampling was appropriate and ideal for this dissertation is due to the case study research design—that is, Northumbria Police—which is a single police service, and was the focus for this dissertation. Overall, purposive snowball sampling was most appropriate and ideal to use to help answer the research questions, because the researcher intended to examine a certain subgroup of police officers within one police service, considering there is a lack of social research available on how Northumbria Police, within the North East, deal with male on male rape in the local proximity.

From the total population of Northumbria police officers, the researcher studied a subset of officers, which resulted in the sample size of participants for this dissertation finalising as 3, because the amount of specialist police officers who investigate male rape cases in Northumbria Police is small. This is a low sample size so the data gathered cannot be generalised to other police officers/services, but as previously mentioned, the researcher intended to conduct a detailed analysis of the data, in order to understand the social world from the specialist police officers' point of view; as a result, giving the researcher an insight into how the police manage and deal with male rape.

5.3 Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis alongside comparative analysis. Thematic analysis requires the researcher to recognise themes appearing out of data, and the researcher followed thematic analysis with thematic coding where codes/labels were placed onto segments of the data that looked important. Comparative analysis involves comparing along with contrasting concepts or theories that appear out of the data. Thematic analysis and comparative analysis are both rooted within grounded theory, which was the framework for examining the data gathered. Bryman (2012),

however, stresses a weakness of grounded theory which is that it forces the researcher to separate out qualitative data into many different parts; consequently, causing the context and narrative flow to be disjointed. However, the researcher only chose some of the police officers' quotes and placed them in the dissertation, and accordingly compared and contrasted these to existing theories already developed. This is because the researcher is limited in what can be included in the dissertation, and due to the word limit, the researcher is restricted in how much can be written.

5.4 Methodological Philosophical Paradigm

This research project is heavily grounded in inductive theory, whereby theory is developed from the data gathered from the research participants. This dissertation fundamentally aims to comprehend the specialist police officers' subjective views, attitudes, and beliefs of male rape, and their subjective meaning of social action. This approach is embedded within the epistemological stance of interpretivism, which relates to the empathetic comprehension of human behaviour; analogously, phenomenology, which is concerned with how individuals understand the social world wherein they situate (see Bryman, 2012). Therefore, social reality is meaningful for police officers and police action itself has meaning, whereby police behaviour depends on the meanings that they attribute to their own behaviour and to other persons' behaviours. Ultimately then, the researcher intends to comprehend police officers' perception of the social world through this research process.

The researcher also adopted some of the principles of feminist research methodology, because recent male rape writers (e.g. Khan, 2008) have adopted such principles when researching male rape, which is understandable as feminism seeks gender equality (Hooks, 2000). Some of the feminist research methodology principles adopted in this research were to build a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, to eradicate any sort of power imbalance between the interviewer and interviewee (especially with the two female interviewees), and participants were not regarded as solely 'research objects' or as just sources of data. Therefore, giving due consideration to ethics.

5.5 Ethical and Practical Considerations

5.5.1 Ethics and Difficulties Encountered During the Research

The researcher chose to interview the police instead of male rape victims, as male rape is a sensitive subject, so male rape victims are highly likely to suffer psychological pain if the researcher interviews them. In other words, secondary victimisation was likely to form if victims were interviewed, wherein victims suffer internal psychological pain when re-living the emotions of being raped (Walklate, 2004). It was also difficult to attain access to male rape victims who are usually reticent to talk about their rape to researchers who have not had enough time to form a trusting relationship with them (Sleath and Bull, 2010). On balance, the researcher found that getting informed consent from male rape victims was very difficult, and did not wish to breach the privacy of male rape victims.

The research subject of male rape victims required a sensitive approach (see ethics framework: appendix 2). Ethical dilemmas were centered on ensuring that the police officers in the sample were neither physically nor psychologically harmed by the

research, and mechanisms were used to make sure of this during the research process. For example, the interviewer remained neutral when conducting the interviews, in order to not challenge the interviewees' answers. It was also ensured that the dissertation process did not in any way interfere with or hinder police officers' work. In order to ensure this, fieldwork was conducted when the police were not occupied, so interviews with the police were fitted around their work commitments—the police guided the fieldwork solely on their terms. However, police work was, to some extent, decreased after clearance was gained, as the research required officers to be interviewed, but by stressing to officers of the importance of the study, helped to counterbalance the concern over police time.

Simultaneously, the research participants were neither exploited nor regarded as sources of data only. It was essential to regard the wellbeing of the participants as utmost important to the project and this was invariably first priority for the researcher, giving due thought to the ethics of carrying out this dissertation. However, Lee (1993: 4) asserts that in sensitive research, the researcher can also experience potential costs. Lee further argues that while sensitive research includes some cost (either in terms of inconvenience, time, or finance), the feature of sensitive research is that possible costs surpass the unexpected. Indeed, the researcher experienced a cluster of costs, such as inconvenience, time, and finance, but fieldwork required the researcher to go to the police service, so primary research can be conducted on the officers' terms; this guaranteed fixed appointments for interviews. However, balancing fieldwork with writing/reading was somewhat difficult, as the research process was continuously varied on a day-to-day basis; nevertheless, securing access was paramount to the research.

5.5.2 Gaining Access

To research Northumbria Police, the researcher gained access through Dr. Cole in the Department of Social Sciences at Northumbria University. However, the research still had to go through a 'gatekeeper' within Northumbria Police. The 'gatekeeper', a specialist police officer, needed to look at the interview questions in order to make sure that they were appropriate. A few of the questions were queried and had to be rephrased before full clearance was granted. Still, access was an ongoing and continuing process, even after the researcher got through the 'gatekeeper', as interviews were never guaranteed, so the researcher, once inside the police service, constantly had to negotiate access in order to accumulate interviews with more officers in the department.

5.5.3 Building a Rapport

Building a rapport with the interviewees was necessary so participants could feel at ease at the interviews; this was necessary also because the researcher was attempting to gather reliable and useful answers. In doing so, mutual confidence and trust was required. Thus, in a few instances where it appeared that the respondents' answers were not as forthcoming as expected, the researcher carefully listened. This had an additional advantage of maintaining the researcher's reputation as friendly and easy to talk to. This was necessary in order to secure further interviews.

5.5.4 Interviewer/Interviewee Differences

Whilst it was important to be neutral when carrying out interviews, at brief times, it was fairly emotional to observe interviewees' lack of knowledge about male rape. However, it was crucial that the researcher eradicated any prejudices, theories, or biases already held, but "*there is no way of seeing clearly without a theoretical lens, just as there is no passive, neutral position.*" (Burawoy, 2003: 646-647). Although the researcher plays a pivotal role in the data collection process, the researcher's characteristics—e.g. (but not limited to) gender, ethnicity, age, class, previous exposures and experiences, and education background—are independent variables that influence interaction and outcomes (Pattillo-McCoy and Buford, 2000). That said, the researcher's individual characteristics and academic background influenced how the researcher understood all of the interviews, even if the researcher, to some extent, silently disagreed with the interviewees in terms of beliefs about male rape; nevertheless, the researcher remained professional at all times. An interviewer can possess many threads of identification, some of which may be exposed or unexposed, but because of the intricate nature of identity, there will unavoidably be certain features of the self that link with whom we research, and other features that stress our differences (Pattillo-McCoy and Buford, 2000).

Another example of interviewer/interviewee differences was that of police power. There was a power imbalance in the interviews conducted, because the police controlled the type and amount of knowledge they expressed to the interviewer. However, the researcher's label as a student induced the interviewees to appreciate the researcher's positionality within the interviews (this helped to attain confidence and trust in the researcher), which was inferior to all of the interviewees' senior positions because of their specialist expertise. Therefore, this allowed the police to challenge any of the questions asked at the interviews, which on one occasion was done so very mildly, but it was important for the researcher to either manage it with humour or respond in a diplomatic manner (depending on the situation and individual) (Sultana, 2007).

5.5.5 Validity of Responses

The researcher ensured that confidentiality and anonymity were given to the police officers participating, which hopefully encouraged them to trust the researcher with the knowledge they provided; therefore, possibly increasing the validity of responses. Another mechanism used to increase the validity of responses was to form a relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, which is in contrast to the quantitative, structured interview technique wherein reducing the personal involvement of the interviewer is encouraged. However, all of the interviews conducted became an interactive process in which they were made to feel informal and enjoyable, so as to elicit more valid responses.

Although background research and pedantic thought both played important roles prior to the dissertation commencing, it became clear that the project itself may be considered as a threat to the police service. Thus, in the early stages of the research, much work had to focus on conquering the worries that participants have, in regards to how partaking in the research may have both public and personal benefits. Of course, declaration of total anonymity was provided to alleviate any worries that the

police may have. On top of this, the officers were informed that the findings portrayed would be unattributable. In doing so, pseudonyms were utilised all through this dissertation, and any possibly recognising knowledge was either omitted or altered, so it was hoped that the police trusted the researcher with valid responses.

Further, Beetham and Demetriades (2007) argue that researchers are responsible for making sure they utilise gender-sensitive methodologies and methods, so as to ensure positive action and valid responses. In this dissertation, it was ensured that the officers were not discriminated against when talking about a male-dominated crime type, considering that two of the interviewees were women. However, because of the taboo nature of male rape, which the researcher felt could potentially add to the reticence of officers participating in the research, made it fundamental to make sure that the research was carried out in a carefully considered and sensitive way. Khan (2008) argues that researching taboo topics usually involves managing social problems that society might decide to avoid or not to recognise. According to Khan, the notion that 'proper' individuals would not want to research stigmatised subject areas can usually facilitate dubious inquiring of the researcher's true purpose for formulating the project. However, it was stressed to the participants that the motive for conducting this dissertation is to raise awareness of such a neglecting crime type, which hopefully encouraged the validity of responses.

Another mechanism used to increase the validity of responses was making sure that the data was maintained as complete as possible utilising verbatim transcripts of interviews, instead of notes on important knowledge. This gave a complete, accurate, and detailed picture of the police experiences of male rape cases discussed, and maintaining testimonies within context. However, because the police might think it is essential to maintain their closed organisation safeguarded from examining research, which could be critical of their police work, it was constantly ensured to the police of the fundamental purposes of the project. It was also clearly expressed that the dissertation aims to improve services for male rape victims, in order to secure confidence and trust in the police; consequently, helping to raise the validity of responses.

6.0 The Findings and Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the interviews with the police. The chapter is based on three interviews, each approximately one hour long, conducted with two female and one male specialist officers at Northumbria Police. The interviews were conducted from May 2013–June 2013. The stress is on qualitative analysis; therefore, the main findings have been presented and encapsulated using example verbatim quotes to represent the police officers' ideas, views, perspectives, and beliefs on specific topics that are relevant to the research questions.

6.1 The Role of the Police: Service or Force?

The police officers in the sample were asked who they considered ought to manage male rape victims. The aim of this question is to discover how the police see their role regarding the treatment of male rape victims. Rumney (2008) comments that the police often pass male rape victims onto voluntary agencies, for they do not perceive

themselves as service-providers; instead, they think that other provisions like the voluntary sector or social services ought to supply support to male rape victims. In other words, the police see themselves as law enforcers instead of service providers.

The findings of this study support the literature. The officers interviewed do not see themselves as service providers, but rather as law enforcers only. According to two officers, the police should *not* deal with the effects of rape:

“We are not the best people to deal with the emotional effects, and the aftermath. Definitely not. That’s why we work with ISVA service”. (Officer 3).

“It’s probably better that they [male rape victims] see services who are qualified and trained to sort of deal with that issue [effects of rape].” (Officer 1).

“Do I always think the police are the best people to support victims. No. I think that’s why we introduce support services to do that for us [...]. I haven’t got the best knowledge of training to be able to support a victim psychologically about the effects of their crime that’s happened”. (Officer 3).

“For that ongoing [...] counselling, long term support, that’s not the police’s role. That’s not what we’re there for. We can’t provide that because we responded so much to everything that’s coming in [sic]”. (Officer 3).

The police also thought that those agencies that have the essential expertise and training to best manage male rape should do so. Although the police believed that male rape is a very serious crime, which ought to be investigated like any other crime, they do think that male rape victims ought to be managed likewise as female rape victims. This is in terms of providing the same services for both male and female rape victims. However, Hoyle and Young (2002) argue that male rape victims suffer differently compared to female rape victims, in that they additionally experience a loss of masculinity, and can question their sexuality.

It is clear that the police believe that they are not trained to manage the effects of rape. The police also believe that many male rape victims are reluctant to be managed by the police, for many reasons; for example, fear of the police disbelieving them. However, the police will normally tell victims what services are available for them (e.g. victim support etc). Still, victims are reluctant to come forward to report to the police. For example, one officer comments:

“[A] lot of victims aren’t sure that they want to report straight away to the police, so we now have processes in place through the ISVA and the SARCs that a victim can report direct to them”.

Moreover, the development of specially trained officers has enabled the police to help meet male rape victims’ needs. This research found that many male rape victims are reluctant to have a male officer managing them.

“[W]e have specially trained officers [...] that can be a man if that person [victim] wants a man. Even likewise, they can have a woman if they prefer a woman, so that’s something which has been developed [...]. They [male rape victims] wouldn’t have been able to have a choice years ago”. (Officer 1).

On balance, it was felt that the effects of rape are very serious; however, the use of the multi-agency approach, whereby state agencies and voluntary agencies work intimately together, is seen as paramount in meeting male rape victims' needs alongside specially trained officers. The voluntary agencies can inform the police if the victims decide to report their rape; the police believed that this increases the reporting rate if the victims do not want to directly report to the police themselves. However, Khan (2008) argues that many men will be more likely to report their victimisation to the police if they felt that they had the support of both the police and other agencies.

6.2 Male Rape: a Legal or Social Issue?

The police were asked whether they thought male rape is a legal or social issue. A legal issue in the sense that whether or not male rape is taken seriously as a crime in law. A social issue in the sense that if male rape affects certain members of society (such as the homosexual population), and how society sees male rape, and if this consequently affects male rape victims from reporting. This question helped to unravel how importantly the police consider male rape and its significance to police work. All three officers regarded male rape as a social and legal issue, but they have a lack of accurate knowledge about male rape, because of stereotypes and perceptions. One officer quotes the following:

“There’s always stigma attached to it [male rape] and [...] gay men per se are put in a vulnerable group category. [...] [T]hey are vulnerable to predatory males, because [...] they will be reluctant to report, so then they could potentially become a bit of a target for predatory males, who probably aren’t gay themselves, but, whatever reason, they target that group. [...] I think it’s their [gay male rape victims] lifestyle.”

This quotation highlights a male rape myth; that is, ‘all male rape victims are homosexual’. Consequently, this is an issue, for this can influence male rape victims reporting, in that (particularly heterosexual) male rape victims are less likely to confide and trust in police officers if the officers believe in such a myth (Lees, 1997). The quote also refutes the literature review (see chapter 3.0), since the research presented in the literature review demonstrates that all men, despite their sexuality, can become male rape victims. The same officer demonstrates another issue:

“[W]e’ve had experience of men, who on the face of it, being married, have children, [...] the stereotypical two plus two family, but actually, frequent the gay scene, and can become victims, so they won’t report because the effect it will have on their life basically. They could get caught [...] which is difficult to over come really from a police’s point of view”.

The cohort of men described here are in heterosexual relationships and pose a certain problem for the police, as not only are they susceptible to male rape, but they are also more probable not to report their attack due to the stigma they think they will bring to their family (Khan, 2008), or fear of exposure (Williams and Robinson, 2004). Williams and Robinson (2004) further argue that the gay community is heavily under-policed, which is problematic because other research has shown that perpetrators of male rape are more likely to seek out vulnerable gay men who frequent the gay

community (Stermac et al., 1996). In which case, a double victimisation can formulate if gay or bisexual men are attacked and then subsequently feel unprotected by the law and feel harassed or discriminated against by the police. One officer demonstrates another means of discrimination in the next quote:

“They [male rape victims] have to go through the whole scenario again in court and that can be traumatic in itself, [...] so it’s a difficult one really for a lot of people if they are not strong to go through that process. I can understand why they don’t report”. (Emphasis added).

This quote implies the police’s lack of understanding of the problem. This is because research has shown that one male rape myth that the police are guilty of is believing that the ‘male victim asked for it’ or he is somehow blamed for his own victimisation, because he is weak since he did not fight off the rapist, as men are always supposed to be able to protect themselves (Lees, 1997). Consequently, secondary victimisation forms which refers to the courts and police officers’ attitudes and behaviours that are homophobic, insensitive, antagonistic, and *victim-blaming*, and can, thereby, be distressing for male rape victims (Rumney, 2008).

The specialist officers also believed that male rape is a legal issue, since it is a crime, as one officer observed:

“The laws there [...] we’ve definitely got a very clear definitive legal framework to which we work around to show offences are there and to be dealt with, and how we deal with them”.

This quote supports the legal literature (see chapter 2), in that the legal recognition of male rape demonstrates that the crime is now taken seriously and thereby encourages men to report rape to the police (Khan, 2008). However, the same officer does not consider male rape as a growing problem that is affecting society or in other words, it is not a social issue:

“I think that it’s hard to say that it’s a growing problem [in society], because we don’t have [...] the sort of research and figures to sort of scope and back up what the problem is”.

This quote contradicts the male rape literature, as there is now a comprehensive amount of data and research on male rape to confirm that male rape is a hidden problem in society. While the male rape literature expands, there seems to be a change in the courts’ views about homophobia (again, alluding to the male rape myth that male rape victims are solely homosexual):

“[T]he old days where they [courts] would criticize you for being gay, or some of the homophobic comments surrounding around being gay; that just wouldn’t happen now”. (Officer 1).

“[P]eople historically haven’t reported because of the [...] macho police. Years gone by where there may well have been homophobic attitudes.” (Officer 1).

According to Reiner (2000), the police subculture is embedded with homophobia, conservatism, prejudices, discrimination, and machismo. These factors are also

confirmed in other research (e.g. Jordan, 2004), where it was concluded that these factors result in the police failing to meet the needs of rape victims.

On the whole, it can be seen that the police see male rape as a crime and the legal framework guides the police to respond to the crime. The officers also see male rape as a social issue, because they believe it affects certain members of society (such as the homosexual population) and they think that society sees male rape as a taboo and has stigma attached to it; consequently, the police believed that this affects male rape victims from reporting to them. In short, the issues of under-reporting, stigma, and lack of training/understanding of male rape were outlined.

6.3 The Increase in Male Rape

The police were asked if they think that male rape is increasing, so as to give an indication of their awareness.

The officers believed that, historically, the police did not deal with rape very well, but that things have moved on since then; for example, they now have specialist officers who are specifically trained to deal with rape victims. However, all three respondents thought that male rape is not increasing; therefore, confirming the lack of reporting, understanding, and awareness of male rape (Khan, 2008). One officer suggested that male rape:

“[I]s an unknown quantity, so we don’t know if it’s a growing problem [...] it is massively underreported [...] it is a very difficult area of business”.

It is unclear, however, what the police are doing to help identify male rape, and they are not elucidating how changes have been made, perhaps they may be using certain language to deny incompetence.

The officers’ view that male rape is not increasing could perhaps be due to the police not recording incidents of male rape, because of male rape myths embedded within the police. Some of these myths that were found in this research are that only homosexual men are usually raped, male rape is often a homosexual problem, and men are not supposed to be raped.

The police statistics are frequently examined, because of a huge quantity of offences being unrecorded and unreported (Reiner, 2002). Lees (2002) argues that the police statistics are just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ of the real indication of sexual offences. That is, the police statistics hide the true reflection of male rape incidents. This notion of the police statistics hiding the true reflection of rape incidents and conveying a false indication of the prevalence of rape is also known as the ‘dark figure’ of crime, which describes the quantity of undiscovered or unreported rape (Jones, 2003). This clearly raises the issue of just how reliable/valid police statistics are. It is also important to note that police officers use their discretion when recording an incident of male rape, so one should be aware of whether or not police officers see male rape as the same as female rape in terms of severity and significance.

6.4 Meeting Male Rape Victims' Needs

The police were asked if they believe that they meet male rape victims' needs, so as to unravel their views on what is currently being done to meet those needs and what further services are required for male rape victims.

The respondents believe that they do meet male rape victims' needs, especially with the development of male and female trained officers, as one officer suggests:

“[W]e have specially trained officers so when a report is made, a specialist officer is sent. We have male SOLOs [sexual offence liaison officer] as well as female. [T]hey'll be the first one to go see the victim, so they would deal with their initial needs and forensic evidence”.

An officer believed that the development of being able to report anonymously also helps to meet male rape victims' needs, as victims do not have to report to the police if they do not wish to:

“[T]hey can do it through other agencies like MESMAC along the referral process or they could do it anonymously themselves if they wanted to ring or write in. There are various agencies that they can go to, to report, like some of the clinics, if they go to the sexual health clinic, like the gum clinic, or somewhere like that, after being attacked and being examined. Then they'll process where they can get information and they'll pass that anonymously to the police”.

Although this development provides more choices for male rape victims, some services do not welcome male rape victims, as one officer outlines:

“[S]ome rape services don't deal with men. [T]hey'll only deal with women because they're feminist organisations, like Tyneside Rape Crisis who are quite a big organisation for rape in this part of the world; they are a feminist organisation, and they won't deal with men, whether you're a victim or not, which is a shame”.

This quote is in accord with chapter 4.2, in that feminism sees male rape as a threat against the attainment of feminist support provisions made for female rape victims (Gillespie, 1996). The situation clearly still exists to date, as feminist support organisations still do not deal with male rape victims. Therefore, many male rape victims get turned away from some RCCs when seeking help, leaving male rape victims untreated, isolated, and unable to ask for help (see Donnelly and Kenyon, 1996).

The problems of resources and financial constraints, when dealing with male rape, were also raised:

“Counselling for men was just non-existent. Where now there is that facility [...] that they can get support. They can get counselling, but [...] the more it's reported, the more we understand and scope the problem, the more we can put resources into it but if there is a massive underreporting, and we are not aware of it, then they [the police] won't plough the resources into it”. (Officer 3).

With the current global recession and so lack of resources, the police may be selective with what types of crime they can adequately cater for. However, Lees (1997) argues that male rape victims suffer more trauma than female rape victims with the added questioning of sexuality and masculinity. This leads Gillespie (1996) to argue that raising awareness, resources, and finance to be dominated by male rape victims instead of female rape victims; therefore, marginalising female victims and their trauma (discussed in chapter 4.2).

Another issue that arose in the interviews was that training was not specific, but rather generic, as one officer suggests:

“The front line officers obviously a lot of them have SOLO training [sexual offences training]. It’s not specifically generically towards men, it is towards victims of sexual violence, so it is a bit generic”. (Emphasis added).

The literature does emphasise the fact that male rape victims do experience rape differently in comparison to female rape victims. Hoyle and Young (2002) argue that this is because male rape victims additionally experience a loss of masculinity and can question their sexuality, as previously discussed, but state agencies do not know how to deal with these issues. The authors also suggest that specific training should be given to state agencies, in order to meet male rape victims’ needs more specifically. Clearly then, more specialist training is required to adequately deal with male rape victims.

Another point of concern was the issue of the police subculture influencing male rape victims reporting:

“[L]ooking at it from a male perspective, if you were to look at the police and ‘right I’m going to report’ and you look at the majority of [...] officers are probably male, to then think about going and reporting that in a predominately male environment, must be quite a hurdle to get over initially [...]. [I]t’s still the issues [...] about [...] how males perceive their masculinity as being affected by male rape. That’s not something to actually happen to men, so for them then to come and disclose that to the police, I think must be really difficult.” (Officer 3).

This quote is in accord with the police literature (see chapter 3.3), in that the hegemony of heterosexual, male police officers in the police force is embedded with machismo and masculine behaviour with the additional factors of conservatism, prejudices, and discrimination (Reiner, 2000). However, these factors can negatively influence how police officers respond to male rape victims, some of whom are homosexual (Isely, 1991); for example, these factors can propel male rape victims from reporting (Lees, 1997) or can increase their trauma through secondary victimisation (Rumney, 2008).

Overall, it is evident that there is a lack of experience or knowledge of managing male rape cases. It is also clear that the police have overlooked male rape research, since they are embedded in male rape myths (e.g., ‘men are not supposed to be raped’), and are unaware of the current knowledge surrounding male rape. Therefore, improved awareness, knowledge, understanding, and specialised training of male rape are urgently required.

6.5 False Allegations of Male Rape

The police were asked for their views on false allegations of male rape and whether it was common or not. This was asked in order to ascertain the officers' views of males who come to report their rape—views which may influence how the police respond to male rape victims.

All respondents asserted that false allegations of male rape do moderately occur, asserting that they:

“[D]o get a lot of allegations with people with mental health issues, falsely report, ends up being false, whatever, but why would you want to prosecute someone with mental health issues”. (Officer 1).

The above quote shows a form of stereotype whereby a lot of homosexual male rape victims are seen as suffering from a mental health issue. This is in accord with the literature discussed in chapter 3.2, in that Hodge and Canter (1998) argue that the police deal with homosexual men less sympathetically and sensitively than heterosexual men, because the police are more likely to consider homosexual men as ‘abnormal’ and presume that their ‘rape’ was instead consensual sex or that the complaint was fabricated due to malevolence. Therefore, homosexual victims’ testimonies are seen as ‘unreliable’. That said the police have prosecuted alleged male rape victims for falsely reporting.

“[W]e’ve done people for wasting police time for falsely reporting”. (Emphasis added).

This insensitive quote is in agreement with the literature in chapter 3.2, since recent research found that the police are deficiently informed about male rape, which leads them to ignore male rape victims or manage them in a harmful way (Rumney, 2008). In which case, secondary victimisation is formed, which refers to police officers’ attitudes and behaviours that are homophobic, *insensitive*, antagonistic, and victim-blaming (Rumney, 2008).

7.0 Conclusion

This research fundamentally focused on police attitudes, views, and beliefs of male rape, together with uncovering male rape myths in a local police force. Feminist theoretical explanations were also used to help explain male rape, so as to give a better understanding of such an offence; this was presented in chapter 4 in which the fundamental argument was that rape is about power and control. Prior to this, chapters 2 and 3 were both critical literature reviews to demonstrate what is currently out there on male rape, and how this dissertation evolved from existing male rape research. There was a research gap in that there was a lack of male rape research conducted in the North East, and male rape myths are currently dominating some police forces around Britain (Khan, 2008), so it was important to inspect male rape myths in a local police force.

The research findings (presented in chapter 6) highlight the need to enhance knowledge of the different issues surrounding male rape. This research found that whilst the police are the first port of call for male rape victims, they have a lack of understanding to manage the victims in an empathetic and sensitive way, because of a scarcity of training, awareness, knowledge, and understanding of male rape. It is clear that male rape myths are present in the police, together with stereotypes and attitudes that are insensitive and victim-blaming; consequently, intensifying the issues of under-reporting. This supports analogous findings from Donnelly and Kenyon (1996), Hodge and Canter (1998), Khan (2008), and Lees (1997).

The dissertation findings were generated by using semi-structured interviews (see chapter 5) to unravel the specialist police officers' role in dealing with male rape and experiences of male rape cases. It was found that the police are unsympathetic and have a lack of understanding of male rape; therefore, better awareness, understanding, and training of male rape are urgently required, in order to eradicate any male rape myths that are currently present in the police. Meantime, gay male rape victims are reluctant to report to the police, because of fears of police disbelief/ridicule, embarrassment, and shame (Rumney, 2009).

Although a multi-agency approach is currently adopted in managing male rape victims, it is important that *all* of those agencies (including the police) are continuously educated, trained, and aware about male rape. Whilst some rape crisis centres like Derby Rape Crisis have begun to support male rape victims, many male rape victims still get turned away from many feminist organisations (see chapter 4.2). While feminism has enabled women's victimisation to be recognised, it is vital that they enable men's victimisation to be recognised too, considering that feminism seeks gender equality. Some feminist writers (e.g. Hooks, 2000) have argued that men's emancipation is an essential part of feminism, since men are also harmed by gender roles and sexism. However, it is only through the publicity of provisions that male rape victims will fully use them, and society will acknowledge the reality of male rape.

Meanwhile, future British research should attempt to discover whether or not homophobia fuels male rape, and such work would determine if gay men are at particular risk of victimisation. Although some research has explored homophobia and male rape collectively, this has been limited to prison rape within the United States. Scarce (1997: 34) quotes: "*As male rape becomes extensively documented and analysed, society will have less and less grounds on which to deny its existence*".

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