



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
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AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF SERIAL RAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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All that is necessary for the triumph of evil
is that good men do nothing
- **Edmund Burke**

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TITLE: An exploratory analysis of serial rape in South Africa
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ABSTRACT

This study is the first of its kind to explore the phenomenon of serial rape from a behavioural profiling perspective within the South African context. The dearth of scientific research on serial rape in South Africa has impacted negatively on the recognition and investigation of such cases.

The data set for the study consisted of police dockets, victim statements, court transcripts, detectives' reports, and correctional services reports on nine serial rapists who assaulted and/or raped a total of seventy five victims. A behavioural profiling framework that was developed from existing literature was used to systematically analyse the victim and offender data using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques.

Initial victim and offender profiles were constructed using key elements such as age, population group, modus operandi, and sexual behaviour of the offenders. The initial results showed that the South African serial rapists typically exhibit the same behavioural elements reported in international literature with respect to aspects such as the methods of approach utilised, average age of the victims, ages of the offenders, offender – victim relationship, and sexual acts. However, the research also illustrated that South African serial rapists also displayed some behavioural aspects that have not been reported in international literature. In particular, South African serial rapists approach and attack their victims at two different locations. The research also showed that South African serial rapists are more willing to target victims outside their own populations groups. Young children also appear to be targeted more frequently by the South African serial rapists. The South African offenders also employed a new method of approaching the intended victim (i.e. the delayed-con approach).



The results are discussed in terms of the extent to which the behavioural patterns, similarities and differences with observations made in international literature, and current police practices with respect to the investigation of serial rape in South Africa could be utilised to enhance investigative processes. Also, specific areas in need of further examination are identified, as are strategies that could assist in decreasing the occurrence of 'linkage blindness' in serial rape investigations in South Africa.

KEY TERMS

Serial rape, behavioural profiling, descriptive-exploratory, qualitative, quantitative, case study research, linkage blindness, document study, serial rapist typology, behavioural profiling framework.