

**MEN'S EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATING IN THE SILENT  
PROTEST**

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**Student Name:** Carina Johnson

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**Supervisor:** Dr Anita Padmanabhanunni

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MEN'S EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATING IN THE SILENT PROTEST**

Carina Johnson

This study aimed to investigate how male university students become involved in activism to end sexual violence against women. Historically, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention efforts have been a women's issue and men have not typically been part of this violence prevention picture. However, in the past two decades there have been increasing efforts to involve men. This has been motivated by growing recognition that, "while most men do not use violence against women, when violence does occur it is perpetrated largely by men and the ideas and behaviours linked to masculinity are highly influential in men's use of violence against women" (Flood 2011, p. 361). This project focuses on the Silent Protest, a campaign against sexual violence initiated in 2006 at Rhodes University. Since its inception the Silent Protest exclusively recruited women but, in 2011, men were actively invited and encouraged to participate as allies in activism to end sexual violence. This study aims to investigate the pathways through which male university students come to be involved in the Silent Protest and the meanings they derive from participation in protest activities. Men who participated in the Silent Protest were interviewed and the transcripts were analysed from an interpretative phenomenological framework. It was found that participation was motivated by an awareness of rape as a significant societal problem, a desire to make a difference, wanting emotional closure and as a result of the influence of family and friends. Participation resulted in both negative and positive experiences for male students.

Positive experiences included a sense of accomplishment and pride and a sense of solidarity whilst negative experiences were feelings of helplessness, guilt and shock, feeling drained, and feeling grouped with rapists. Enhancing knowledge in this area can serve a critical role in informing outreach efforts on how best to engage and involve men in working towards ending sexual violence against women.



## DECLARATION

I declare that *Men's Experiences of Participating in the Silent Protest* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Carina Johnson

Signed: Carina Johnson

July 2016



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## **Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

Sexual violence is a serious problem in South Africa and the number of rapes perpetrated each year is of considerable concern (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012). South Africa's history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid reinforced particular forms of masculinity and femininity that are central to the perpetuation of gender based violence (GBV) (Casey & Smith, 2010). The prevalence of rape and increasing societal awareness of its psychological impact have prompted social activism efforts. Historically, GBV prevention efforts have been a women's issue and men have not typically been a prominent part of this violence prevention picture (Bennet, 2008). However, in the past two decades there have been increasing efforts to involve men. This has been motivated by growing recognition that, "while most men do not use violence against women, when violence does occur it is perpetrated largely by men and the ideas and behaviours linked to masculinity are highly influential in men's use of violence against women" (Flood, 2011, p. 361).

This study focused on the Silent Protest, a campaign against sexual violence initiated in 2007 at Rhodes University. Since its inception the Silent Protest recruited women and men's involvement was limited. However, in 2012, men were actively invited and encouraged to participate. This study aims to investigate the pathways through which male university students come to be involved in the Silent Protest and the meanings they derive from participation in protest activities. Enhancing knowledge in this area can serve a critical role in informing outreach

efforts on how best to engage and involve men in working towards ending sexual violence against women.



## Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

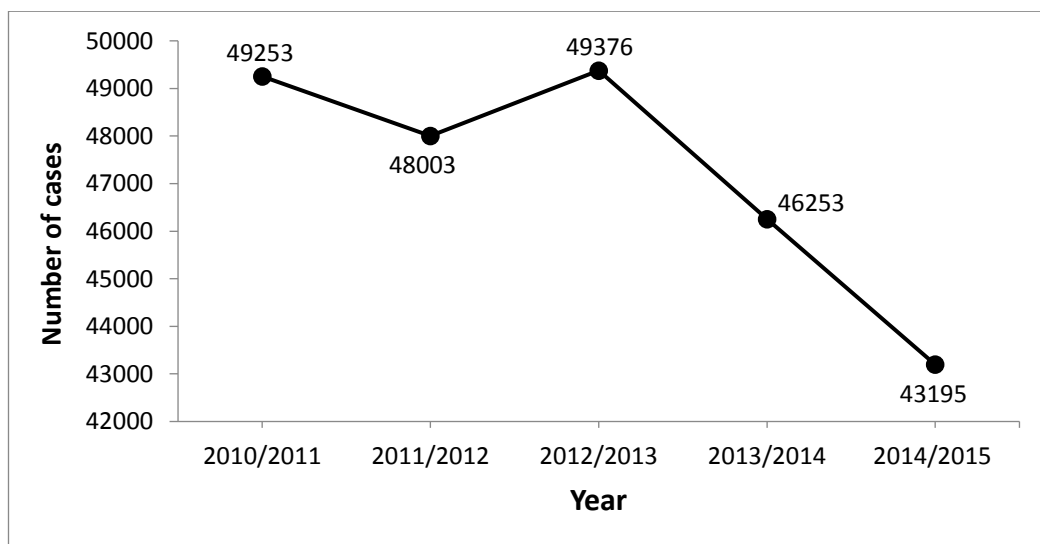
This chapter aims to contextualise the study by providing information regarding the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa, the causal role of traditional gender roles in contributing to sexual violence and organisations and activist groups which have formed to address the issue. Lastly, the increased recognition of the role men have to play in challenging current gender roles contributing to GBV, and their engagement in these movements as social justice allies will be presented.

### 2.1 THE PREVALENCE OF RAPE

South African Police Services (SAPS) statistics provide the most reliable information about prevalence rates. The Institute for Security Studies generates an overview of SAPS statistics and report 43 195 recorded rapes (Institute for Security Studies, 2015).

The table below provides statistics for the past five years.

TABLE 1.1 Rape over the last five years



SAPS statistics are, however, affected by high rates of under-reporting with the Medical Research Council, reporting that only 1 in 25 rapes are reported to the police (Lucas, 2010). Rape survivors have reported a variety of reasons for their reluctance to disclose rape. This includes an increasing awareness of the low conviction rate and this has been argued to contribute to a lack of faith in the ability of the criminal justice system which leads to underreporting (SAPS, 2014). According to Van der Bijl and Rumney (2009) attitudes regarding rape also influence reporting. There are particular rape myths that contribute to victim blaming attitudes and these types of myths can lead to survivors experiencing self-blame. The police and other authorities have been found to subscribe to or advocate these rape myths contributing to survivors being treated in a disbelieving way which further inhibits reporting (Van der Bijl & Rumney, 2009). Low reporting rates and non-disclosure of sexual victimisation obscure the extent of the problem and result in a silence surrounding sexual violence in South Africa.

## 2.2 RAPE: CAUSAL FACTORS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Historical factors such as slavery, colonialism, and apartheid, present in South Africa, have contributed to GBV. These historical events have played a role in reinforcing particular forms of masculinity and femininity that underlie GBV (Casey & Smith, 2010; Flood, 2011; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle, 2011).

### 2.2.1 **Historical factors**

South Africa's history of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid was maintained by violence and the violation of human rights. Slavery and colonialism resulted in

taking up arms and led to centuries of violence and warfare across Africa. The apartheid system, similarly, was maintained through violent practices by white South Africans through forced conscription and militaristic control whilst black South Africans resorted to violent forms of resistance and protest (Gqola, 2007). Violence was therefore not only from the apartheid state, but also from the opposition, and contributed to the normalisation of violent practices from both sides. The normalisation of the violent practices prevalent in slavery, colonialism and apartheid left a legacy of human rights violations and contributed to the legitimisation of violence in South Africa (Moffett, 2006; Gqola, 2007). The legitimisation of violence, combined with a patriarchal system and a culture accepting of violence has been identified as contributing to the high rates of GBV in the country (Britton, 2006). Beliefs and customs regarding this legitimacy are still evident in situations where a violent, abusive or oppressive status quo, such as male domination and female subordination or racial intolerance, is tolerated. Moffett (2007) therefore claims that the legacy of apartheid, in addition to dominant masculinities found in a patriarchal system, contributed to the high levels of sexual violence in South Africa. In addition, the extensive ignoring of human rights during the apartheid era has been found to play a role in normalising sexual violence. Perpetrators often do not see their behaviour as criminal, blame the victim and subscribe to myths and stereotypes about rape. Jewkes et al. (2011) also found that a patriarchal society conforming to certain ideas of masculinity contribute to GBV. However, although most sexual offences are committed by men towards women, this is not always the case and increasingly more men are reporting being victimised.

### 2.2.2 Traditional gender roles

Traditional gender roles are historically, socially, and culturally constructed ideas about what it means to be a man (masculinity) or a woman (femininity) and guides behaviour, attitudes and beliefs (Boonzaier, 2008; Shefer et al., 2008). These ideas, in South Africa, have been influenced by the aforementioned historical factors. Although there is no unitary understanding of gender, there are certain dominant ideas in all societies about what it means to be a man or a woman. Traditional ideas regarding masculinity require men to prove that they are real men by taking risks, enduring pain, exhibiting toughness, and having multiple sexual partners (Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Traditional ideas regarding femininity involve passivity (Boonzaier, 2008), subservience (Shefer et al., 2008) and being nurturing, caring and selfless (Boonzaier & De La Rey, 2004). Ideas regarding masculinity and femininity, are influenced and constructed within an historical, cultural, and social context (Boonzaier, 2008) and is not fixed or stable over time (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, there are certain forms of masculinity and femininity that are endorsed in particular societies.

The dominant form of masculinity in a society is referred to as hegemonic masculinity and sets the standard for all men to aspire to (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is rooted in institutional power differences and conditioned acquiescence (Hearn & Morrell, 2012; Morrell et al., 2012). The qualities associated with hegemonic masculinity are heterosexuality, assertiveness, strength, suppression of emotions and dominance. Ricardo and Barker (2008) found

sexual violence to be influenced by norms and social meanings of a masculinity consisting of rigid gender norms and power imbalances. The face of hegemonic masculinity in South Africa is one of male superiority, dominance, oppression and male sexual entitlement which many studies have found to contribute to gender inequality and sexual violence (Casey & Smith, 2010; Flood, 2011; Jewkes et al., 2011). Jewkes et al.'s (2011) cross-sectional study on masculinity and rape perpetration in South Africa found that the most common motivations for rape was related to ideas of sexual entitlement. Perpetrators of rape differed from men who did not rape in a number of ways; they were more likely to have gender inequitable views, to subscribe to rape myths, and their interactions with female sexual partners were characterised by hegemonic masculinity (Jewkes et al., 2011). Thus the standards associated with hegemonic masculinity is considered one of the factors underlying the perpetration of sexual violence against women. Selebogo and Ojakorotu's (2013) evaluation of equality, empowerment, and GBV furthermore indicated that attitudes linked to hegemonic masculinity in South Africa continue to reinforce and maintain women's subordination and that socio-cultural attitudes still encourage women to remain silent about GBV and abuse.

### 2.3 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF RAPE

Rape has a detrimental impact on people's lives and a multitude of studies (Ellis, Atkeson & Calhoun, 1981; Faravelli, Giugni, Salvatori & Ricca, 2004; Littleton & Breitkopf, 2006; Guerette & Caron, 2007) testify to severe and long-lasting psychopathology and poor adjustment following rape. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, fear and anxiety, shame and guilt, and interpersonal problems

have been found to be more likely among rape survivors than survivors of other forms of trauma. In many cases, the experience of rape leads to difficulties with interpersonal relationships such as communication difficulties and has a negative impact on sexual relationships (Connop & Petrak, 2004). Gilboa-Schechtman and Foa (2001) have found rape to be the traumatic event most likely to lead to the development of PTSD (Gilboa-Schechtman & Foa, 2001 cited in Steenkamp, Dickstein, Salters-Pedneault, Hofmann, & Litz, 2012; McGowan & Kagee, 2013). PTSD symptoms include “repeated and unwanted re-experiencing of the event, hyperarousal, emotional numbing and avoidance of stimuli which could serve as reminders of the event” (Ehlers & Clark, 2000, p.319). In addition to developing PTSD, Faravelli et al. (2004) found negative psychological outcomes to be more common among rape survivors. Thus, PTSD symptoms such as distressing recollection of the event, distressing dreams, and distress at re-exposure, along with symptoms of diminished sexual desire, depressed mood, sexual aversion, genital pain, feelings of guilt, binge eating, and purging behaviours were significantly more common in rape victims than victims of non-sexual trauma. Survivors experience less enjoyment from daily activities and interpersonal relationships are negatively affected by a heightened sense of distrust of other people and subsequent isolation (Guerette & Caron, 2007). In addition, returning to normal sexual functioning following rape can be problematic (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979; Faravelli et al., 2004).

Self-blame and feelings of guilt are also common among rape survivors. Survivors commonly attribute the rape to their own actions preceding the attack, or interpret



the rape as a consequence of their inherent nature, producing feelings of shame and guilt (Janoff-Bulman, 2010). Such self-blame among rape survivors is associated with poorer post-rape adjustment.

## 2.4 ACTIVISM AGAINST RAPE

Increased awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence and its impact on women has spurred social activism. Activism has been found to contribute to social change (Franklin, 2003) and various organisations have formed in South Africa to address GBV and instigate change.

### 2.4.1 Activism in South Africa

Activism in South Africa is historically linked to colonialism and the anti-apartheid Black Freedom Struggle (Blackstone, 2007; Franklin, 2003). According to Britton (2006) and Molyneux (1998) all movements in South Africa should be seen against this larger social and political context. Protests such as the Silent Protest are located within the context of social discrimination, judicial ineffectiveness, and a long history of the violation of human rights.

Activism surrounding Black Freedom, both in South Africa and in the United States of America, provides information about the effectiveness of activism and social movements to effect social change. Non-violent protests such as sit-ins, marches, and boycotts were found to contribute to social change (Franklin, 2003). The aims of South African activism have primarily been empowerment, transformation, and social change.

#### 2.4.2 Women's movements in South Africa

Women's movements, similar to activism in general, are located within a social and political context and are influenced by culture, political climate, the character of society, family forms, and the forms and degree of solidarity among women (Molyneux, 1998). Prior to, and during the apartheid era, women, regardless of race, were silenced in both the political and private spheres of life. During apartheid women became involved in opposition groups to both the apartheid regime and gender inequality. The African National Congress (ANC) Women's League formed in the 1980's and aimed to highlight women's political concerns and seek representation within the ANC. However, gender struggles continued and the Women's National Coalition (WNC) was formed in 1992. The WNC primarily relied on influence within political parties to bring issues of gender inequality into public discourse (Hassim, 2005). However, despite increased representation of women within the political sphere, and the recognition of women's oppression as a legitimate concern, gender inequality remained widespread (Hassim, 2005). Women's movements are situated in different spheres. At the national level, movements such as the Gender Advocacy Programme and the Gender Research Project in South Africa participate in legal and policy debates and have made significant legislative and policy gains (2005). Regional networks and coalitions focus on common feminist issues and community-based organisations mainly focus on the practical needs of women.

### 2.4.3 Activism against sexual violence in South Africa

Sexual violence and GBV in South Africa are considered linked to patriarchy and systems of oppression (Britton, 2006). GBV is manifested by rape, sexual assault and harassment, corrective rape, and domestic violence. Women's movements highlight issues of gender inequality and GBV and various GBV prevention efforts have been initiated to raise awareness, influence policy, and end gender inequality. Some efforts are international such as the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign, while some such as the One in Nine Campaign (OINC), are local. The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign, formed in 1991, is an international campaign organising events to raise awareness of the problem of GBV, promote gender equitable behaviour and influence policy. The outcomes are to raise awareness, assess the level to which GBV is addressed in local communities, increase participation with local community-based organisations and create activities at a local level to end GBV. In South Africa Gender Links and partner organisations help to implement the 16 Days of Activism (16 days of activism, 2009).

The OINC was formed to draw attention to gender inequality and the problem of GBV and to challenge the South African criminal justice system which is believed to contribute to the prevalence of rape through low conviction rates. The OINC is a coalition of 25 organisations that was formed during the rape trial of Jacob Zuma, the then Deputy President of SA, in 2006. The campaign challenged the negative public opinion of the alleged victim and aimed to express solidarity with her as well as with all women who speak out about rape. The campaign is based on feminist

principles of women leadership, equal power relationships, and combating oppression. It is participative and draws on the resources, expertise, and skills of a variety of organisations to achieve its aims (Bennet, 2008). The objectives of the OINC are to build solidarity, monitor and research sexual violence, educate and inform the public via the media about sexual violence, transform the judicial system, and show solidarity and support to women who speak out about sexual violence. Solidarity and support is shown through activism focused on supporting survivors during rape trials and organising awareness-raising protests such as the Silent Protest.

#### 2.4.4 The Silent Protest

The present study took place in Grahamstown, a small university town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, where the One in Nine Campaign (OINC), together with Rhodes University, initiated what would become known as the Silent Protest. The first protest was held in 2007 with 80 female participants (Barker, 2014). The protest has grown considerably to more than 1600 participants in 2014 (Ms Kelland, Personal communication, May 16, 2016). Initially men's involvement was limited and controlled and in 2012 men were invited to participate fully.

The Silent Protest is an annual day-long anti-rape protest that aims to raise awareness around the extent of the problem of sexual violence in South Africa, challenge the silence around rape and sexual violence, express and enact solidarity with all survivors of sexual violence, and create spaces where people can talk about their own experiences of sexual violence (Why do we protest?, 2014). The silent

aspect of the protest draws attention to ways in which survivors of sexual violence are silenced by perpetrators, society, the criminal justice system, and through psychological reactions to rape.

The Silent Protest has three categories of participants identified by t-shirts with different slogans. Some people participate as silent protestors. These participants wear t-shirts with the slogan “sexual violence=silence” and their mouths are taped so that they do not eat, drink, or speak for the duration of the protest. These protestors represent the silencing that survivors of sexual violence and rape experience. Other people participate as solidarity protestors wearing t-shirts with the slogan “sexual violence=silence, in solidarity”. Solidarity protestors do not have their mouths taped and express solidarity with men and women silenced by rape and sexual violence. The final category is self-identified survivors of rape. These protestors also do not have their mouths taped and symbolise breaking the silence by wearing t-shirts with the slogan “rape survivor” or “survivor” (Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2015).

There are three phases in the Silent Protest. The first phase occurs early in the morning when t-shirts are distributed, protestors are briefed, and silent protestors have their mouths taped by survivors of sexual violence. This is followed by a march through the university grounds to the Rhodes University administration building and speeches by the organisers. The second phase occurs at lunch-time when protestors gather for a “Die-In”. This involves protestors lying on the ground, absolutely still and is aimed at symbolising the loss of life that occur in some cases

of sexual violence. The final phase of the protest involves a march from the Administration building of the University to the Cathedral situated in the town square in Grahamstown. At the cathedral a “Breaking the Silence Ceremony” is held where survivors are offered an opportunity to share their experiences of sexual victimisation. The final phase concludes with a “Take Back the Night” march aimed at reclaiming spaces typically unsafe for women.

#### **2.4.5 Men as social justice allies in women’s movements**

Women’s movements have historically rejected male involvement and have been firm in being led and sustained by women (Bennet, 2008). This was motivated by concerns that involving men held the potential for marginalising the voices and agendas of women as well as diluting a feminist agenda (Flood, 2011). This remains a valid concern since Guckenheimer and Schmid (2013), within a classroom environment of feminist studies, found that masculine voices continue to have more authority than feminine voices.

According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), male dominance and female subordination is not a self-reproducing system. It is argued to be socially defined, relational and involved in a “constant process of negotiation, translation and reconfiguration” (2005, p. 844) in which both men and women relationally construct, sanction and conform to gender roles (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2004). Thus, since hegemonic masculinity is not a stable or fixed way of being, how to be a man can be renegotiated and replaced with more humane and less aggressive masculinities that could then become the dominant form of masculinity (Connell &

Messerschmidt, 2005). Men's involvement in women's movements are seen as a means of furthering those aims.

According to Flood (2011), the rationale for involving men in women's movements to end GBV is three-fold. Firstly, although not all men are perpetrators of GBV, the majority of perpetrators of such acts are men (Gass, Stein, Williams & Seedat, 2011). As such, changing the attitudes, beliefs, identities, and relations of men is the first step towards social change. Secondly, hegemonic masculinity and male dominance is a key aspect of the perpetuation of GBV in South Africa and male participation in movements furthering the aims of women take necessary steps towards gender equality (Selebogo & Ojakorotu, 2013). Thirdly, men control most of the resources in society, resources required by women's movements to instigate change (Flood, 2011). An additional reason for male participation is the benefits to men themselves. Men, like women pay a price for hegemonic masculinity and non-conforming men also face subordination (Dowd, 2010; Edwards, 2006; Guckenheimer & Schmid, 2013). Freire, in Schapiro (2007) explains how oppression and unearned privilege limits human potential, growth, and development. Developing a flexible, more egalitarian, and less aggressive form of masculinity can increase men's growth, development, and personal well-being (Connell, 2003; Funk, 2008) and reduce the pressure on men to conform to traditional forms of masculinity that underlie GBV (Ruxton & Van der Gaag, 2013).

Male participation in women's movements against GBV, according to Broido's (2000) definition, can be seen as a form of social justice ally development. "Social

justice allies are members of dominant social groups (e.g. men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership” (Broido, 2000, p. 3). Thus, in a women’s anti-rape movement, social justice allies are men, and specifically men who have not experienced sexual victimisation (Broido, 2000).

#### **2.4.6 Experiences of social justice allies**

Prior research on social justice allies such as those conducted by, amongst others, Broido (2000) and Casey (2010) have mainly focused on effective mobilisation efforts to generate involvement. Although research on the experience of being a social justice ally is underrepresented in the literature, studies by Connell (2003) and Casey and Smith (2010) have found that participation leads to shifts in meaning, attitudes, and beliefs, and men becoming more aware of the personal impact of gender inequality on their own lives. These aspects are further discussed in chapter three which details the study’s theoretical framework.



### **Chapter 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework for this study is interpretative phenomenology. Within this broad framework, ally development theory is drawn on to unpack men's motivations for participating.

#### **3.1 INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGY**

Interpretative phenomenology explores personal lived experiences and how people make sense of those experiences. Three theoretical perspectives central to IPA are phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography.

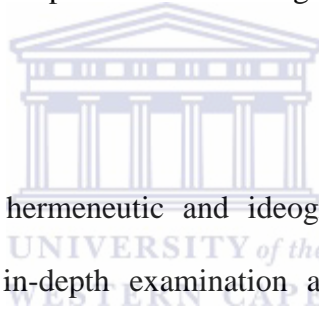
Phenomenology is the study of consciousness (Davidsen, 2013) and is concerned with examining things in its own right as it occurs. Phenomenology examines everyday experiences when they become of significance to a person through reflection on the experience. Husserl (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) describes such reflection as a phenomenological attitude of reflecting on one's perception of an object or experience rather than the object or experience itself. However, the object and reflection on the perception of the object are always linked and he used the term "intentionality" to describe this relationship. Husserl focused on discovering and describing the essence of an experience. He was mainly concerned with examining how a person engages with phenomenological inquiry on their own experiences whereas psychological research focuses on the experiences of others. Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre extended Husserl's ideas and in addition to describing human lived experiences, focused on a more contextualised phenomenology. Central to phenomenological inquiry is how people make meaning

of their experiences and meaning making should always take the worldliness of experience into account. Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre emphasised the worldliness of experience; experience is considered to be embodied, perspectival and temporal (Smith et al., 2009). Thus an experience and the meaning ascribed to it is always contextualised in terms of experience through the body, situation in time and in relation to something. Understanding the meaning attributed to an experience involves a hermeneutic perspective.

Hermeneutics is a theory of interpretation. According to Schleiermacher, an interpretative researcher or analyst, through interpretation of the text, can reveal a perspective of which the author themselves may be unaware (2009). Heidegger, similarly considers any understanding of the experience and meaning making of another as interpretative. In IPA a double hermeneutic is present where the researcher attempts to make sense of the participants' processes of making sense of their experiences (Smith, 2011). IPA mainly employs a hermeneutics of empathy and one of questioning (Smith et al., 2009). The former involves an attempt to gain an insider's perspective on the experiences and meaning making of the participant whereas the latter refers to adopting a questioning and analysing stance in order to examine the experience from different angles. A hermeneutics of suspicion use existing psychological theories to understand experiences and as such is incompatible with an IPA approach (2009).

Phenomenology is therefore the examination of the manifest object or experience as well as reflection thereon whilst an interpretative stance is necessary to further understanding by examining latent or underlying aspects of the object or experience.

The third theoretical perspective underlying IPA is ideography. Ideography focuses on the particular. IPA aims to understand how particular phenomena are experienced and understood by particular people in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009). Ideographic research therefore focuses on the examination of individual cases before moving towards more general claims. Goethe and Warnock consider the universal to underlie the particular validating a detailed ideographic approach (2009).



The phenomenological, hermeneutic and ideographic nature of interpretative phenomenology allows in-depth examination and interpretation of particular experiences. Investigating the experiences of social justice allies in this research project is therefore done by following the IPA approach. Motivation and participants' understanding of their motives are also investigated using IPA and existing theories are drawn upon to show convergence and divergence with extant literature.

### 3.2 ALLY DEVELOPMENT

Broido (2000) and Casey and Smith (2010) have identified certain factors influencing the development and subsequent participation of social justice allies.

These theories will be drawn upon as a lens to understand the motivations of participants.

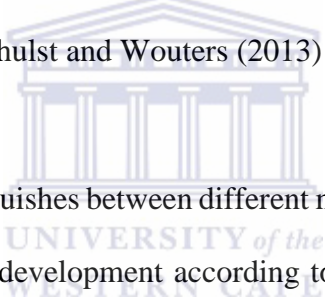
The development of social justice allies has been extensively researched and several elements have been found to play an important role. Broido's research on college student ally development (2000) and Casey and Smith's (2010) findings on the pathways of men's involvement in anti-GBV work identified multiple critical factors influencing the development of social justice allies. Key elements in transforming potential allies into active allies, from Broido's perspective, is information regarding the social issue, meaning making, self-confidence, and recruitment (2000). According to Broido, people first need information regarding the existence and impact of oppression, the experiences of victims of oppression, the perspectives of others on social justice issues, the existence of their own privilege, and the importance of being an ally as well as how to do so. Through self-reflection, discussion, and taking the perspective of others, people make meaning of the aforementioned information. Broido indicates that if people have the self-confidence to acknowledge their role in perpetuating the problem and the self-esteem to place themselves in opposition to the problem, they are more likely to become active allies. The final step in ally development is active recruitment into movements (Broido, 2000).

Casey and Smith (2010) identified factors of ally development falling into three similar arenas: sensitising experiences, meaning making, and opportunity experiences. Sensitising experiences, similar to Broido's information element

(2000), broadens people's awareness of the problem. This is achieved through relationships with members of the disadvantaged group and discovering the personal relevance and impact of oppression on the lives of significant others. Regarding violence as personally relevant can lead to shifts in meaning and a change in people's worldviews. In line with Broido's work, according to Casey and Smith tangible invitations precede involvement.

### 3.3 MOTIVES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLY PARTICIPATION

The motivation for participation in the Silent Protest is explored from within an IPA framework and explained in terms of existing theories of motivation namely that of Walgrave, Van Laer, Verhulst and Wouters (2013) and Edwards (2006).



Walgrave's theory distinguishes between different motivation types whilst Edwards presents a model of ally development according to broad motives. As such, both Walgrave's and Edwards' models are well-suited for exploring motivation. According to Walgrave et al. (2013) there are four motives for participating in social activism. Motivation for participation is distinguished along an instrumental vs. expressive and an individual vs. collective continuum. The expressive continuum links to Van Stekelenberg's (2006) ideological motive and gives people the opportunity to express their feelings or views and to act in accordance with principles (Walgrave et al., 2013). Instrumental motives motivate people to participate in social action when the benefits of participation outweigh the costs. Individual motives are aimed at improving one's own situation whilst collective

motives motivate people to act on behalf of a group and is aimed at improving the fate of all members (2013).

Edwards (2006) presents a conceptual model of ally identity development according to three broad motives: aspiring ally for self-interest, aspiring ally for altruism and ally for social justice. Aspiring allies for self-interest, similar to Walgrave et al.'s individual and instrumental continuum, are motivated to participate for reasons related to their own interests i.e. to support people with whom they have a personal connection and ongoing motivation for participation is dependent on the presence of those people. According to Walgrave et al. (2013), they regard themselves as distinct from a system contributing to injustice and inequality and seek to protect members of the out-group. Aspiring allies for altruism, on the other hand, are motivated to participate to help and empower those they see as victims in need of justice. This involves both an individual and collective element, in addition to an instrumental element. Ongoing involvement is dependent on acceptance and praise and inhibited by criticism. Altruistic allies acknowledge the presence of a system conducive to creating the problem, however similar to aspiring allies for self-interest, position themselves as separate from that system. Social justice allies, lastly, are motivated to participate in order to benefit everybody, both the target group members, themselves, and society at large. They acknowledge that harmful systems maintain the problem, as well as their role within those systems, and seek to transform, renegotiate or destroy such systems and therefore has aspects of both the individual and collective continuum as well as the instrumental and expressive continuum.

Research on participation motivation of social allies have mostly focused on movements addressing discrimination on the basis of race and sexual orientation. Russell's (2011) research on heterosexual allies of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) movements categorised motives as based on principles, or personal roles, relationships and experiences. Russel found that principle-based motives involved equality, justice, morality and fairness which is in line with Walgrave et al.'s expressive continuum. Personal motives were enhancing relationships, getting closure on past experiences, transforming guilt regarding privilege through action, and individual anger and outrage at inequality (2011).



## **Chapter 4    METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1    RESEARCH DESIGN**

This study was a qualitative inquiry into the motivation for, and the heretofore under-studied phenomenon of men's experiences of participating in women's movements. IPA provides a rich description of experiences by exploring participants' experiences and how they make sense of it in detail and is tied to the hermeneutic perspective in that it engages a double hermeneutic of the researcher trying to make sense of the participants' process of making sense of their experiences (Smith, 2011). IPA is grounded in the verbatim words of the participants, but also moves beyond the text to an interpretative level (Smith, 2004). IPA researchers analyse participants' words to learn how they make sense of their experiences (Smith, 2011). Hence IPA was considered an optimal methodology for the study. The study was phenomenological, gave an ideographic account of each case, engaged in a double hermeneutic, was inductive and discussed results in relation to existing literature and as such, conformed to the characteristic features of IPA (Smith, 2004; Smith, 2011).

### **4.2    AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into men's protest participation. The objectives of the study was to explore:

- Men's motivations for participating in the Silent Protest
- Men's experiences of participation.

### **4.3    PARTICIPANTS**



Eight men who took part in the Silent Protest participated in the study. The majority of participants were in their twenties. All of the participants were Caucasian. Two participants were staff members at Rhodes University, five participants were students and one participant was an attorney. There were three categories for participants in the Silent Protest: Silent protestors, Solidarity protestors and Rape Survivors, and the Silent Protest consisted of three phases: a morning gathering, a lunch-time die-in, and an evening ceremony (described in the Literature review). The men participated in the Silent Protest in a variety of ways. Two participated as Silent Protestors and had their mouths taped shut, four participated as Solidarity Protestors and three participants were involved in organising the protest and as marshals on the day. Five participants took part in the entire protest, one participant attended the first and second phase, one attended the first phase only and the eighth participant only attended the third phase. See table 1.1 for participant information. Each participant was initially labelled with the date of the interview and later given a pseudonym.

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Table 1.1: Elements of participants

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Role at university</b>	<b>Role in Silent Protest</b>
Seth	Staff member	Solidarity protestor
Ben	Staff member	Marshal
Sam	CA	Solidarity protestor
Shaun	Student	Solidarity protestor/marshal
Daven	Student	Solidarity protestor
Fred	Student	Silent protestor

Luke	Student	Silent protestor
Felix	Student	Marshal

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#### 4.4 PROCEDURE

Organisers of the Silent Protest provided access to their Listserv, a group email address for all people who took part in the protest. Prospective participants were recruited with an email inviting male participants and providing information on the study (Appendix A). Four participants responded via email and phone. Snowball sampling was used to recruit a further four men through referrals from the initial four. All of the participants satisfied the criteria of having participated in the Silent Protest as social justice allies. Men who had personally experienced sexual victimisation were excluded from the study in order to maintain a focus on the experiences of allies. Participants were provided with information about the research and a description of the interview process (Appendix B) and an appointment convenient to the respondent was made. Seven of the interviews were conducted in a private room inside the Rhodes University library and one interview was held in a participant's office on the campus. Each person participated in a semi-structured interview of approximately one hour conducted by the researcher. Written consent was obtained by signing a consent form (Appendix C) which explained the voluntary nature of the study, the right to withdraw at any stage, and confidentiality. An interview schedule (Appendix D) was used to guide the interview. Interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed

verbatim. The transcribing was conducted by the researcher herself in order to become thoroughly familiar, and engage in depth with the content.

#### 4.5 DATA COLLECTION

The aim of the interview was to capture a rich and detailed description of their motivation for participating and their experiences of participating. For this reason, a semi-structured format was used to guide the interview, whilst at the same time remaining flexible enough to enable follow-up of interesting possibilities. Interview notes were made immediately after each interview noting observations and emerging insights.

#### 4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis followed several stages. In order to understand the phenomenological element and overall account of participants' motivations and experiences, the first stage involved an ideographic (case-by-case) examination of verbatim transcripts. This involved listening to the recordings and reading transcripts one by one. Initial impressions were noted and data on motivation and experiences were asterisked with different colours. Subsequent interviews were asterisked in the same way. The second stage was a detailed analytic examination of each case to identify categories of motivations and experiences which were written down for each interview. Mention of motivation and experience was quoted for each interview, providing a line reference for back and forth checking of interpretation with actual spoken words. In the third stage similar data was grouped into categories and later into super-ordinate and sub-ordinate components. The fourth stage involved identifying

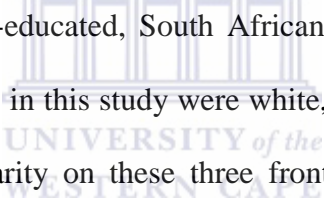
and describing the most essential feature of the phenomenon. A reference of the narrative of the relevant participant was provided for each theme to retain the personal experiences of the participant and enable the reader to assess the applicability of the interpretation. An interpretative process followed showing how each extract contributed to the themes. Themes were related to one another, to the research question and, in the final stage, to existing literature.

#### 4.7 RIGOR: TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Cresswell (2007) identified strategies for rigor in qualitative studies of which peer debriefing, member-checking, thick description, an external audit and reflexivity was used. Peer debriefing enabled an exploration of perceptions and perspectives with regards to the data. Member-checking of the transcripts ensured accurate representation of the participants' accounts and assisted in the confirmability of findings. Each interviewee received the transcript of their own interview to review and confirm its accuracy. No distortions were reported. Thick description aimed to provide enough detail about the data and the setting for the reader to interpret the results themselves (Popay et al., 1998 in Horsburgh, 2003) and in so doing enhanced transferability and allowed the reader to judge the applicability of the results to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 cited in Barusch, Gringeri & George, 2011). Transparency through an external audit showed how data was collected, analysed and represented which contributed to confirmability. Strong evidence from the text enables readers to assess the validity and pertinence of interpretations and conclusions (Sin, 2010; Barusch et al., 2011).

#### 4.8 RESEARCHER'S SELF REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity makes apparent the influence of the researcher's knowledge, background, attitudes, experiences, and values on the research process (Horsburgh, 2003). The theoretical underpinnings of this study, IPA, relies heavily on an interpretation provided by the researcher. A double hermeneutic is involved and as such, the process of interpretation is done from within the frame of reference of the researcher. This needs to be acknowledged in order to promote rigor and trustworthiness. Although Horsburgh (2003) considers neutrality and detachment in the research process impossible, reflexivity can demonstrate self-awareness which contributes to the trustworthiness of findings (Kingdon, 2005).



I am a white, university-educated, South African woman living in the Western Cape. All the participants in this study were white, university-educated and South African. Although similarity on these three fronts cannot assume similarity in knowledge, background, attitudes, experiences, and values, the impact of differences as a result of education, ethnicity, and nationality on the research process are considered minimal. This research focused on men which introduced a gender difference. As a woman, I am affected by sexual violence in a different way compared to men which has an impact on how I might interpret the messages the men in the study convey to me. I am also sensitive to the consequences of rape for the survivor and familiar with the literature on the prevalence and impact of rape. This creates a lens through which I interpret the information from participants.

There were times during interviews in which I felt acutely uncomfortable. These times fell into two categories. The first were times when participants would recount significant others' experiences of rape. I found stories of rape difficult to hear and they evoked feelings of anxiety and intense sadness. The research did not focus on the experiences of survivors of rape and participants were only included if they had not experienced rape themselves. This limited the personal stories of rape, but a key motivator for participation was the awareness of rape and its impact on significant others and therefore personal stories were present. My anxiety and sadness influenced the direction of the interview and the time allocated to these experiences. Since it was not the focus of the research, the interview emphasised their experiences of participation and motivation for participation more than the stories of rape of significant others. However, it may be possible that the voice of the participant was not allowed full expression of their stories. This is a difficult aspect since those stories lay outside the scope of the research, but, by including them, the participant may have gone on to divulge other highly relevant information. In order to not become overwhelmed I regularly spoke to close friends, my supervisor and a therapist.

The second cause for discomfort was flippant remarks. Some participants reported the highlight of the event to be the doughnuts and chocolates handed out at the end of the day of the protest. My sensitivity to the extent and impact of rape initially brought up frustration with the participants. However, upon speaking to another professional, I came to see those comments as coping modes indicating how

overwhelmed and ill-equipped the participants felt in the face of the problem which helped me to grasp their experiences more deeply.

Lastly, a few words on power differences. A power difference between the researcher and participants is common. As a researcher, I was regarded by most of the participants as an expert on the problem of rape, whilst they were experts on the Silent Protest. The first participant I interviewed was nervous and had great difficulty expressing his feelings and thoughts. However, treating him as an expert on the Silent Protest and giving him the opportunity to describe the protest helped set him at ease. For some of the interviews the participants were well versed in the prevalence and impact of rape as well as the Silent Protest and the interviews flowed effortlessly. There were two interviews with marked power differences. One was with a senior staff member of the university currently doing research in a similar field. I found it difficult to keep the interview on track as he related aspects of his work which fell outside the scope of the research project. The other interview was with a participant who was extremely disillusioned and had intense feelings of hopelessness. I found it painful to listen to his despair and it took some effort to keep myself from entering a therapist role with him. In these situations the interview guide was valuable in ensuring I stayed on track.

As a woman and as a researcher on the topic of GBV I engaged with the topic in a different way compared to men. In conducting this research, I am aware that I cannot completely suspend my views and beliefs, and that these will inevitably impact on the content and meanings under investigation when using IPA. Peer

debriefing and thick description were used in order to minimise bias resulting from my worldview, whilst evidence from the text (in the form of verbatim transcripts) was also provided.

#### 4.9 ETHICAL STATEMENT

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Senate Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the organisers of the Silent Protest. Consent from Rhodes University was obtained to recruit students and all ethical procedures of UWC were adhered to. Study participants were informed of the general nature and aims of the study and informed consent was obtained in each case. Study participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study and the right to withdraw at any stage and they were assured of confidentiality of individual transcripts and anonymity in results. Participants were informed of access to details of counsellors should they feel the need after the interview, although none of the participants indicated this need. They could also contact me at a later stage should they then have the need for additional support.



## Chapter 5 RESULTS

The study focused on exploring men's motivations for and experiences of participating in the Silent Protest. The findings of the study are divided into two sections. Part one deals with motivations and part two with their experiences.

### 5.1 PART ONE: PARTICIPANTS' MOTIVATIONS FOR TAKING PART IN THE SILENT PROTEST

There were four main reasons for participation. Participants were motivated to partake as a consequence of their awareness of rape as a significant societal problem, wanting to make a difference, wanting emotional closure and as a result of the influence of friends and colleagues.

#### 5.1.1 Awareness of rape and its impact on significant others

All participants indicated that the decision to participate was influenced by the appraisal that rape was a pervasive and significant problem in society. For all participants the media was reported to have a role in fostering their awareness of the extent of the problem of rape as well as the lack of prosecutions and underreporting.

*It is ongoing in the news. There are articles almost daily about violence against women.*

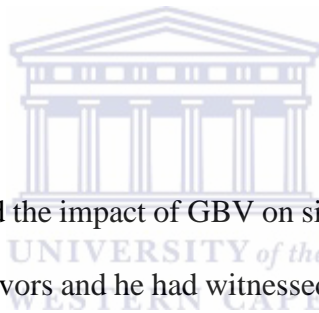
*I think that as far as I know, only one in four rapes is reported in South Africa. It's very much underreported.*

*[Daven]*

Some participants had family members who had been sexually victimised and this motivated them to participate in the protest. Shaun, for example, reported that his mother, half-sisters and girlfriend were survivors of rape. He reported that his recognition of the negative impact of sexual abuse on the lives of those closest to him motivated his involvement in the protest.

*I think one of the reasons I initially always wanted to participate is like, it's issues quite close to my heart. Um, it's affected friends, family members, mothers, sisters.*

*[Shaun]*



Sam had also experienced the impact of GBV on significant others. His mother and girlfriend were rape survivors and he had witnessed domestic violence in his home. Sam reported being troubled by the language that was used to justify violence against women, reporting that his father justified assaulting his mother by stating that it was a man's responsibility to keep a women quiet.

*My dad hit my mom. He opened the door and she came out screaming and he hit her... and he hit her. And I remember feeling there was something very, very, very wrong with that. But my dad's narrative was, she was loud, she was screaming and he had to keep her quiet.*

*[Sam]*

Sam reported that he was also exposed to sexist language at university. This increased his awareness that sexual violence was a cultural attitude rather than being only about rape and assault.

*I remember also, the language of sexism like, I used to play a lot of gaming when I was in res (residence). And guys would say, ah, I totally raped that team, or like, that test was an absolute abortion... And something about that made me feel like this is not just about rape. This is not just about assault, there is a whole culture...*

*[Sam]*

### 5.1.2 **Wanting to make a difference**

All participants reported that their decision to participate was motivated by their “wanting to make a difference” by visibly demonstrating their opposition to rape and, in doing so, to serve as a role model for other men. The Silent Protest provided them with an opportunity to do so.

*Men need to be visible in these struggles. They don't need to be leading it, in fact they shouldn't in general...but they need to be there...taking a stand and sending a message.*

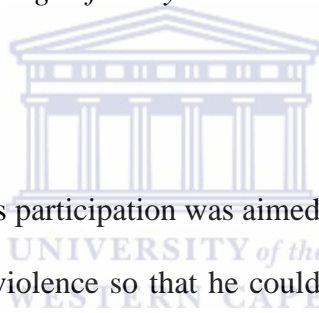
*[Felix]*

### 5.1.3 **Wanting “closure”**

Some of the men in the study reported that they had participated because they wanted closure. Shaun, for example, reported that he had been in a relationship with a woman who was a rape survivor until the end of the previous year. She had been severely triggered during the previous year's protest and it "destroyed" their relationship. The subsequent year he was motivated to participate in the protest by the expectation that it would result in closure.

*...for me it was largely about a bizarre sort of search for a catharsis or something. Some resolution, an emotional purge. I have no idea, but I was looking for something definitely.*

*[Shaun]*



Sam also reported that his participation was aimed at facilitating his understanding of the impact of sexual violence so that he could achieve a sense of closure. He stated that he "wanted to understand what had happened to his mother" to get a deeper emotional understanding of how rape affects women.

#### **5.1.4 The influence of other participants**

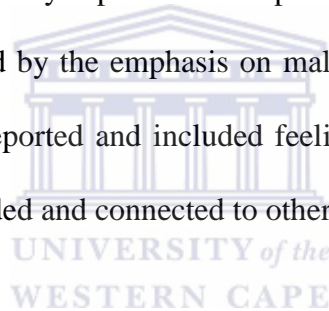
All of the men in the study reported that they were motivated by friends and the protest organisers to participate.

*...I met, via Twitter, Michelle Solomon...we had a conversation on Twitter and then she invited me to help... And so, because of that I got involved.*

*[Felix]*

## 5.2 PART TWO: MEN'S EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SILENT PROTEST

The men in the study reported both positive and negative experiences with regard to participation in the protest. Some participants were left with a sense of hopelessness after the Silent Protest. They reported that their awareness of the enormity of the problem resulted in feelings of futility and despair. Participants were also heavily impacted by hearing accounts of sexual victimisation by survivors. They felt shocked and experienced anxiety. Pain, anger, and sadness were evoked. As a result, they experienced the protest as stressful and taxing. Some participants felt offended by the emphasis on male perpetrators. Several positive experiences were also reported and included feeling a sense of accomplishment, feeling welcomed, included and connected to others.



### 5.2.1 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

#### 5.2.1.1 Sense of scepticism and feelings of helplessness

Some participants reported experiencing a sense of helplessness and futility as a result of participating in the Silent Protest. They felt despair during and after the protest owing to appraisals that the protest was ineffective in addressing the problem of rape and bringing about change. Sam reported feeling hopeless and powerless to effect any real change and had become “deeply sceptical” of the protest and whether it is actually achieving anything. During the Die-in he felt uncomfortable and disappointed; believing that it was not making any difference to the problem of rape in South Africa. He didn't know what he could do to address

the problem and he felt that nothing he, or anyone participating in the protest, could do would help, which increased his despair. He wanted to take a stand and support women, but feeling that it changed nothing made him want to draw back and “wash my hands and say I can’t do anything”. Sam related his experience of the Die-in.

*The silence was oppressive. I felt, I remember lying on the ground and feeling very uncomfortable about how quiet we all were and, and wondering about the symbolism of that and what, what it is actually doing. And feeling like it wasn’t doing enough.*

*...I had hoped that...I would come out with a greater understanding, but if anything, it made me despair more at how little it actually got done in a very real sense...*

*I was left with more questions than anything else. I was left with more feelings of what, what am I supposed to do now? There is really not much that can be done...the more I have thought about this, the more beleaguered I have become about it, the less, the less I want to actually do anything about it. The less I feel I actually can do something about it...I have become deeply, deeply sceptical of this now...my scepticism goes to the event itself as well. And thinking, what am I really doing?*

*[Sam]*

#### **5.2.1.2 Feelings of guilt**

Several participants reported that participation evoked feelings of guilt. Participation alone was regarded as insufficient and they felt they should take a

greater role such as being involved in the organising and running of the protest. Seth felt that he wasn't doing enough, participating in solidarity was not enough and that he should help to organise and run the protest as well.

*...I felt a bit guilty for not being more involved in organising. I want to be more actively involved in future.*

*[Seth]*

Similarly, Ben indicated that he would only participate in future if he felt he could make “a bit more of a contribution”.

#### 5.2.1.3 **Feeling shocked and shaken by stories of rape**

During the final phase of the Silent Protest survivors are given the opportunity to speak about their victimisation. The participants experienced this phase as “possibly the roughest part of the day”. They felt shocked and shaken by the reality, prevalence and consequences of rape.

*People come up and share their stories. And that's really, it's quite stressful actually...and hectic. The hardest part was just listening to the stories. It's really intense and you feel sort of shaken. I felt shaken by the time I left...you almost feel, like you think, what about your family...because it can happen to anyone.*

*[Daven]*

*I just sat there... Crying... Why is this hidden from us, and then the realisation that there are people here who are going to be damaged for ever. That's the awful, awful thing.*

*[Ben]*

In addition to shock, listening to the stories evoked other difficult and intense emotions such as sadness, anger, pain, and anxiety. Participants were left feeling both emotionally overwhelmed and empty with many of the emotions still present months after the protest.

*...disbelief and fear, I suppose that it will all just never stop...feelings of anxiousness, feelings of fear, feelings of sadness and just generally being overwhelmed... I got very anxious being in the Cathedral, because you're hearing all these stories and for some reason, I take all of them on in the sense that I need to fix this...*

*[Shaun]*

*...an emptiness and I guess also quite a bit of anger at the people who would rape anyone...mostly just like sadness thinking about the pain all those people went through....it was difficult, very saddening...*

*[Fred]*

Participants reported that the experience of listening to the stories was emotionally overwhelming enough to be traumatising.



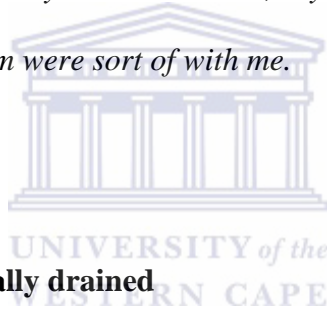
*...then people tell their stories and this is the most traumatising part for me...I always stand at the back of the Cathedral...this year it was because I needed to be able to get out.*

*[Felix]*

*...I felt uncomfortable...I felt overwhelmed, I really wanted to get out of there.*

*Immediately all the people who are close to you who have experienced these things sort of flood your mind. Yeah, my sisters, mother, ex-girlfriends, friends, all of them were sort of with me.*

*[Shaun]*



#### 5.2.1.4 **Feeling emotionally drained**

The Silent Protest was experienced as physically and emotionally exhausting. Participants felt drained and needed time to recover.

*Drained. Absolutely drained...there is something about it that just sucks all your energy out, you can't get anything done for like two days afterwards...because it requires such a heightened level of emotional awareness. It is exhausting...you are running on pure adrenalin...you drain yourself.*

*[Felix]*

*...it's incredibly taxing, you sleep for like two days after something like that...it's really just heavy, a lot of weight on you.*

*[Shaun]*

#### **5.2.1.5 Sense of being grouped with rapists**

Some participants reported that they felt offended by the emphasis on men being the perpetrators and that they were automatically grouped with men who perpetrate rape.

*...I had those sort of experiences where someone was going "how dare you be involved in the running of this as a man" ...I don't take offence, but it stings obviously.*

*[Felix]*



*...it seemed mostly a bit biased...biased against men...Um, I noticed that most of the people were talking about women being oppressed and men being the enemy...it made me feel a bit offended...that I am grouped in the same category as those people. [I felt] lumped in, I am not a monster, I'm a nice guy.*

*[Fred]*

### **5.2.2 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES**

#### **5.2.2.1 Sense of accomplishment and pride**

All of the men in the study appraised their participation as an avenue to provide support to survivors of rape and thereby “make a difference”, this led to their experiencing feelings of pride and a sense of accomplishment. These sentiments were captured in the remarks made by Seth and Fred owing to their participation in the protest. As Fred stated, “it leaves me feeling like I made a difference to someone by being there”.

*...[I got] some sense of accomplishment from doing something at least, rather than sitting behind your desk and reading internet articles and trying to think about something, it felt good to be a part of that.*

*[Seth]*



#### **5.2.2.2 Sense of solidarity**

Most participants experienced the Silent Protest as welcoming and inclusive. Seth reported that in previous years, he had not experienced the protest as inclusive because men had not been permitted to participate fully. However, in recent years men had been invited to take a more active role which made him feel more included.

*I think the overriding experience...there was a very, very welcoming space and a very safe space for, particularly for people who identified as survivors. Um, and an inclusive space where previously I haven't experienced it as an entirely inclusive space, particularly for men...I found it to be a wholly positive experience.*

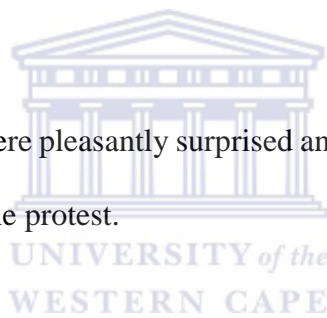
*[Seth]*

Shaun also felt supported and empowered on two levels. On the one hand he mentions how people would give him a hug and thank him for participating even though “It’s not like I was even a survivor, I was just participating in solidarity”. On the other hand, being around other men protesting GBV made him feel less isolated and alone in his stance against GBV.

*...it was a sense of, I’m not alone...it was great, it was welcoming and it was empowering.*

*[Shaun]*

Felix, Luke and Shaun were pleasantly surprised and amazed to see the support that people received during the protest.



*It’s amazing the kind of things you see in that space...you’ll just see people like go off in a corner and hug each other. It’s fantastic! It’s fantastic to see. It’s amazing to see the support they get.*

*[Felix]*

*It was nice to see that there was a lot, there was a significant amount of support for it.*

*[Luke]*

*...it’s tangible support, you can see it...And it’s really great.*

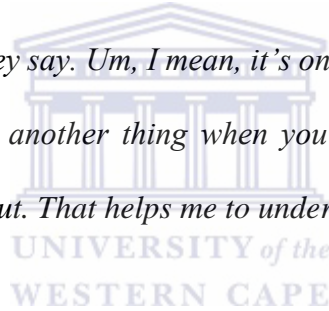
[Shaun]

### 5.2.2.3 Humanising rape

For some of the men in the study participation was reported to have “humanised rape” in that they had previously been removed from the experiences of rape survivors, but hearing about the experiences of victimisation “made it real”. Several participants reported that participation exposed them to the reality of rape and the effect it has on the lives of survivors.

*It helps me to understand the situation and also to understand the problem based on what they say. Um, I mean, it's one thing to just talk about victim-blaming, but it's another thing when you actually hear how the victim-blaming played out. That helps me to understand the situation.*

[Luke]



## **Chapter 6    DISCUSSION**

The aim of this study was to explore men's motivation for participating in the Silent Protest and their experiences of participation. Motivations and experiences will be discussed separately. The theoretical framework for the discussion is interpretative phenomenology. Within this framework, ally development and motivation theories will be drawn upon.

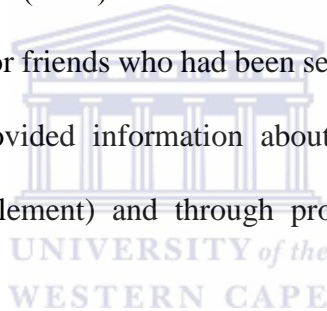
### **6.1    MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SILENT PROTEST**

This research study is one of only a few studies into male participation in women's movements in South Africa. As such it makes a significant contribution to existing literature in two ways. Most studies on social justice allies have been done in contexts of social out-groups in terms of sexuality (Russell, 2011; Swarr, Gross & Theron, 2009, Thoreson, 2008), racial inequality (Franklin, 2003), and disadvantage in general (Simon, Stürmer, Loewy, Freytag, Habig, Kampmeier et al., 1998; Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). It therefore contributes to understanding men's involvement in women's movements. Where studies have been done with men as social justice allies to women's movements, only a handful have been done in South Africa and as such this study further contributes to understanding the motives of South African men in participating in women's movements.

The current study found that men participate in protests against sexual violence for a number of reasons. This includes the awareness of rape and its impact on

significant others, wanting to make a difference, wanting closure and through the influence of other participants.

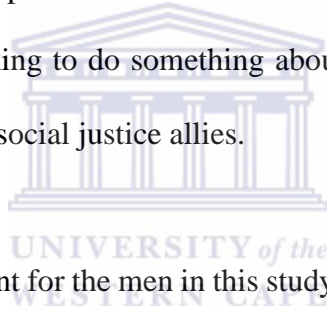
The appraisal that rape was a significant problem was stated as a motive for all participants. The participants in the study reported their awareness being raised by the media and by coming into contact with significant others who were survivors of rape. This finding corresponds to the existing literature (Broido, 2000; Casey and Smith, 2010). Broido's (2000) research shows that a key element in participation as a social justice ally is information about, and awareness of, the extent of the problem. Casey and Smith (2010) refers to these as "sensitising experiences". Thus, having family members or friends who had been sexually victimised, as in the case of Sam and Shaun, provided information about the experiences of survivors (Broido's information element) and through providing information, served as sensitising experiences.



A common precursor of participation in the present study was the influence of other participants. The men in the study reported that they were motivated to participate by direct invitation from the protest organisers and friends. Research done by Broido (2000) and Casey and Smith (2010) similarly found that involvement, in general, is not self-initiated, but influenced by direct and tangible invitations.

All the men in this study attributed their involvement to wanting to make a difference to the lives of rape survivors. Walgrave et al (2013) refers to motives aimed at improving the fate of victims as collective motives. Participating in the

Silent Protest provided the men in this study with an opportunity to express their opposition to GBV. However, they reported not only wanting to express their opposition, similar to findings by Russell (2011), but also to visibly demonstrate it and act as role models for other men. In addition to the aforementioned collective motives, Walgrave et al. discuss an expressive motive for participation in social activism which explains that people participate in order to express their feelings or views and because it gives them the opportunity to act in accordance with their principles. Russell (2011) dubbed these “principle-based motives”. Edwards’ (2006) model of ally development also includes a similar element. His research found that people participated as a result of acknowledging the existence of a harmful system and seeking to do something about it. Edwards identified people motivated in this way as social justice allies.



A final motivating element for the men in this study was a search for closure. Some of the men in this study reported difficult experiences with family members and intimate partners who are rape survivors. These men attributed their participation in part to a desire to get closure on their experiences through participating in the Silent Protest. These are referred to by Walgrave et al. (2013) as individual motives, motives aimed at improving one’s own situation, and by Russell (2011) as personal motives. Both Walgrave et al.’s and Russell’s personal motives, to gain closure on past experiences, corresponds to findings in this study. Sam, in addition to wanting closure, reported that his participation was aimed at facilitating his understanding of the impact of sexual violence on women. He felt unable to fully understand how rape affects a woman and wanted to gain more insight. Studies done up to date have



indicated that involvement results in increased understandings, but have not identified this as a motive preceding involvement making this a distinctive finding of the study.

## 6.2 EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPATION IN THE SILENT PROTEST

The second contribution of this study is its focus on men's experiences of participation in social activism against rape. Existing studies on male social justice allies have focused on ways to involve men (Casey & Smith, 2010) in GBV prevention efforts (Jewkes, Flood & Lang, 2014). To my knowledge, there are no studies that focus directly on men's experiences of participation within local contexts. Insight into men's experiences of participating in women's movements is important since men have an important and significant role to play in changing ideologies that contribute to and maintain GBV. Insight into their experiences can lead to increased involvement of men in women's movements.

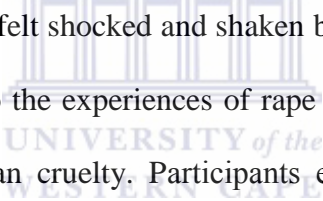
The men in this study reported positive and negative experiences of participation in the Silent Protest. Negative experiences were feelings of scepticism, helplessness, guilt and shock, feeling emotionally drained, and a sense of being grouped with rapists. Positive experiences were a sense of accomplishment, a sense of solidarity and humanising rape.

### 6.2.1 Negative experiences

All of the men in this study reported feelings of helplessness and scepticism. Some participants felt overwhelmed by the enormity of the problem of rape and did not

regard the Silent Protest as effective in addressing the problem which led to a sense of scepticism and futility. Other participants reported feeling stunned. They wanted to make a difference, but felt ill-equipped and defective by the enormity of the problem. This resulted in feeling helpless and wanting to distance themselves psychologically and be absolved from the responsibility.

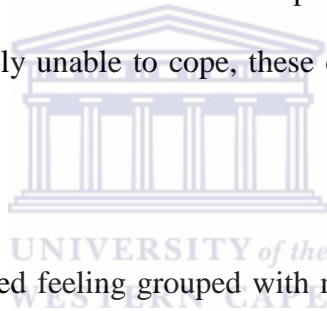
Feelings of helplessness were also present in participants' reports of feelings of guilt for not doing enough. Most participants in this study reported wanting to be more involved in organising and running the protest, and indicated that they felt participation alone was insufficient.



Participants in this study felt shocked and shaken by stories of rape. They found it difficult to be exposed to the experiences of rape survivors and to be confronted with the reality of human cruelty. Participants expressed disbelief at people's cruelty towards others and Felix reported that it "messed" with his head. This sense of shock and disbelief contributed to a sense of immobility as seen by participants reporting feeling "stunned" which in turn contributed to the helplessness discussed above. A sense of shock and disbelief, as well as feelings of helplessness and guilt, in addition to difficult emotions such as anger, sadness, and anxiety, caused participants in this study to feel emotionally overwhelmed and in some cases there were reports of feeling traumatised. Studies of rape survivors' experiences in the Silent Protest show similar results of participants feeling traumatised and distressed (Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2015). Thus all the participants experienced the Silent Protest as emotionally overwhelming and reported feeling emotionally

drained during and after the protest. This may indicate difficulties coping with the emotions evoked during the protest. Whilst some participants acknowledged the need for self-care and made use of facilities provided for that reason, the majority of participants did not.

Several participants made seemingly trivial comments regarding the inconvenience of having to start the Silent Protest early in the morning, or the fact that the distribution of chocolate and doughnuts was a high point during the protest. On the surface these comments seemed incongruous to the gravity of the theme of the protest. However, in the context of their experiences of feeling emotionally overwhelmed and possibly unable to cope, these could be their attempts to cope with the situation.



Some participants reported feeling grouped with men who perpetrate rape which made them feel offended and hurt. This experience is in direct contrast with the aims of the Silent Protest which, amongst others, include standing in solidarity with women who have experienced rape. Thus, for men to feel grouped with perpetrators may result in decreased participation.

### 6.2.2 Positive experiences

All the men in this study reported feeling a sense of accomplishment and pride by participating in the Silent Protest. The Silent Protest gave them an opportunity to show support, spread the message and make a difference which caused them to feel good about themselves. Participants also reported that they made sacrifices in terms

of having their mouths duct taped for the duration of the protest in that they were unable to eat, drink or speak. They expressed this as “taking it” with respect to the emotional impact of the protest. They reported that these sacrifices contributed to them feeling good about their contribution. To some degree feelings of accomplishment and pride therefore acted as a counter to the feelings of helplessness and scepticism discussed above. Padmanabhanunni and Edwards’ (2015) research show that participation in the Silent Protest challenged similar feelings of helplessness and powerlessness for rape survivors.

Most participants reported a sense of isolation from other men in terms of their views against GBV. They reported that the Silent Protest gave them an opportunity to feel supported and created a sense of solidarity. Padmanabhanunni and Edwards (2015) show, in the context of rape survivors, that participation can address alienation. Thus men in this study reported a sense of solidarity and inclusivity they had not previously experienced.

Several of the men in this study reported that the Silent Protest humanised the problem of rape. Previously they had felt removed from the experiences of rape survivors and the Silent Protest was experienced as eye-opening and enlightening. Participating in the Silent Protest was therefore an opportunity for personal growth in terms of developing understanding and insight. As mentioned in the section on negative experiences, this increased understanding and awareness of the experiences of rape survivors was also experienced as overwhelming and traumatising. It was therefore experienced both positively and negatively.

## **Chapter 7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 CONCLUSION**

The current study aimed to gain insight into men's participation in social activism against sexual violence. The study explored men's motivation for and their experiences of participation in the Silent Protest. The study found that men participated in the Silent Protest for several reasons namely their awareness of rape and its impact on significant others, wanting to make a difference in terms of addressing the problem of sexual violence, wanting a sense of emotional closure, and through the influence of friends and protest organisers. The men in this study had both positive and negative experiences as a result of their participation in the Silent Protest. Negative experiences included feelings of helplessness, guilt and shock, feeling emotionally drained, and a sense of being grouped with rapists. Positive experiences were a sense of accomplishment and pride, a sense of solidarity, and humanising rape.

All the men in this study were motivated to participate in order to make a difference to the problem of rape. For the men in this study, awareness of the extent of the problem preceded participation and was a key motivating factor. The Silent Protest helped to raise awareness of the impact of rape in that it humanised rape, making men more aware of the psychological harm caused to women as a result of rape. Participation in the Silent Protest helped to foster insight and understanding. Since the men in this study were already aware of the extent of the problem of rape in South Africa before participating in the Silent Protest, participation did not raise their awareness of the extent of the problem, but rather of the experiences of

survivors of sexual violence. This increased understanding however, was experienced as a double-edged sword. On the one hand the men experienced it positively and reported feeling enlightened by their increased understanding of the reality of experiences of sexual violence in the lives of survivors. On the other hand, this increased awareness led to feelings of helplessness, despair and scepticism. They felt that participation in the protest was ineffective in addressing the problem and bringing about change. Some of the men in this study became involved in organising and running the protest as a way to do more, but despite this, they still felt their contribution was insufficient. All of the men in the present study experienced the stories of rape as shocking and traumatising. Although, for many participants, hearing these stories helped to humanise the problem of rape, the dominant feelings were anger, pain, sadness, and anxiety. These intense emotions led to feeling emotionally overwhelmed and drained with some participants reporting that they needed a few days to recover from the impact of the Silent Protest.

The men in this study were motivated to participate in order to support survivors and felt a sense of accomplishment and pride. The Silent Protest furthermore provided them with an opportunity to express solidarity with other men with similar worldviews and to act as role models to men with different worldviews. Some men, however, experienced the Silent Protest as over-emphasising men as perpetrators of rape and they felt grouped with rapists.

## 7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Men's involvement in protest action against rape is essential since traditional male ideologies are strongly linked to GBV (Jewkes et al., 2011). Their involvement can help to transform harmful masculinities and foster gender equality. On the basis of the findings of this study several recommendations can be made to increase men's involvement. Currently most of the psycho-educational resources provided by the Silent Protest are aimed at women, particularly rape survivors, and it is recommended that resources which target men specifically should be made available. Firstly, it is recommended that resources should focus on the importance of men's involvement, showing that they make a significant contribution through participating even though it may feel like only one small step. In that way, the Silent Protest organisers can motivate more men to participate and possibly pre-empt intense feelings of being overwhelmed by the extent of the problem and feeling guilty for not doing more. Secondly, it is recommended that resources which provide information on what the experience of participation can evoke needs to be made available to men. This can help men to be emotionally and mentally prepared for what they might encounter during the day. Thirdly, efforts to increase men's involvement should focus on emphasising their function as role models to other men. It should also take into account the findings of this study that all the men became involved due, in part, to a direct, personal invitation from protest organisers or previous participants. Lastly, it is recommended that there is more emphasis on the importance of self-care for participants in general, not only for survivors.

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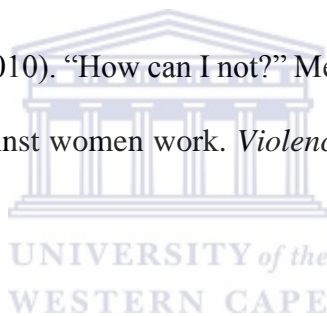


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## Chapter 9 APPENDICES

### 9.1 APPENDIX A: Email to prospective participants for recruitment



## UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

*Tel: +27 21-959 2453, Fax: 27 21-959 3515*

*E-mail: [cc.carina@gmail.com](mailto:cc.carina@gmail.com)*

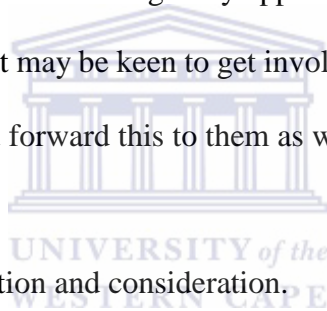
Dear Silent Protest participant

My name is Carina Johnson and I am a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape. I am doing a research thesis on Social Justice Allies. Social Justice Allies fight on behalf of others, in this case women, to end gender-based violence and inequality. The focus of this research is on the experiences of male participants acting as Social Justice Allies during the Silent Protest.

Involving men is an extremely important aspect in activism against sexual violence and knowing more about how men experience the Silent Protest can provide valuable information on how to involve more men.

To learn more about the motivations for participation and how participation was experienced I will be interviewing men who participated as Social Justice Allies in the Silent Protest in 2014. This excludes men who participated as rape survivors themselves. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for the interviewee.

If you are willing to participate in this research and can communicate in either English or Afrikaans and would like more information, please respond to this message by email [cc.carina@gmail.com](mailto:cc.carina@gmail.com) or call me at 082 311 0396. Your involvement in this research will be greatly appreciated. If you know of any other men who participated that may be keen to get involved in this research, it would be of great help if you could forward this to them as well.



Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Warm regards,

Carina Johnson

Masters student, Psychological Research

University of the Western Cape

[cc.carina@gmail.com](mailto:cc.carina@gmail.com)

9.2 APPENDIX B: Information sheet for participants



## UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

*Tel: +27 21-959 2453, Fax: 27 21-959 3515*

*E-mail: cc.carina@gmail.com*

**Title:** Men's experiences of participation in the Silent Protest

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The researcher will describe the process and answer all your questions. Please read this form and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether to participate. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can decide to withdraw at any time without any consequence. To do so, simply advise the researcher of your wish to withdraw.

### **The purpose of the study**

This research is to investigate what motivates men to participate in the Silent Protest and to explore how men experience the Silent Protest.

### **What will be asked of study participants?**

You will be asked to participate in an audio recorded interview of approximately 60-90 minutes.

You will also be asked to read through the interview transcript and confirm that it is accurate.

### **Total estimated time required from study participants**

Two hours.

### **Possible risks associated with this study**

The Silent Protest, as an anti-rape protest, confronts participants with the stark realities of the problem of rape in South Africa. This may be upsetting to participants and being asked about your experience during participation may remind you of uncomfortable feelings you may have experienced during the protest. However, you will be able to stop the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed. The researcher understands the sensitive nature of the protest and will conduct the interview with consideration and respect. The contact details of counselors will also be given to you in case you would like to talk to someone before or after the interview.

### **Benefits of participating in the research**

You will be given an opportunity to reflect on your own experiences which may lead to increased self-awareness and self-understanding.

### **Confidentiality and privacy arrangements**

A pseudonym will be used in any printed papers or articles to protect your privacy. The data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with the data or with participation in the research.

### **Audio recording**

Interviews will be audio recorded, or video recorded aimed away from your face; Recordings will be marked with pseudonyms and will contain no identifying information;

Recordings will be kept in a secure place (e.g. a locked cabinet in the researcher's office);

Recordings will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the researcher or research assistants;

Recordings will be erased after transcription and coding.



### **Contacts and questions**

If you would like more information about the study, have questions, complaints or wish to discuss problems about the study with someone please contact:

Dr Michelle Andipatin

Head of Department

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

University of the Western Cape

Email: [mandipatin@uwc.ac.za](mailto:mandipatin@uwc.ac.za)

Prof Jose Franz

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

University of the Western Cape

Email: [jfranz@uwc.ac.za](mailto:jfranz@uwc.ac.za)

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535





# UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa

*Tel: +27 21-959 2453, Fax: 27 21-959 3515*

*E-mail: cc.carina@gmail.com*

**Title of Research Project:** Men's experiences of participation in the Silent Protest

The study has been described to me in language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Participant's name.....

Witness.....

Date.....

Should you have any questions regarding this study or wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact the study coordinator:



Dr Anita Padmanabhanunni (PhD)

Senior lecturer

Counselling psychologist (HPCSA)

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17, Belville 7535

Email: apadmana@uwc.ac.za

Dr Michelle Andipatin

Head of Department

Department of Psychology

Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

University of the Western Cape

Email: mandipatin@uwc.ac.za



Prof Jose Franz

Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences

University of the Western Cape

Email: jfranz@uwc.ac.za

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Study participant pseudonym:

Date:

Begin tape recorder.



Thank you for participating in this study. As you are aware I am interested in why you participated in the Silent Protest and how you experienced it. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the purpose or content of the study?

You were asked to fill out a consent form. Here is another copy. I want to assure you again that this interview will be confidential and your anonymity will be protected. A pseudonym will be used when referring to this data in my data analysis and research report. I also want to remind you that you may stop this interview at any time. We could continue at a later stage, or if you would like to withdraw from

the study, it will be respected. Do you have any questions about this before we begin?

Guidelines – framework of possible questions and prompts to include:

1. Was 2014 the first time you participated in the Silent Protest?
2. What attracted you to the protest, how did you get involved?
3. Tell me about the protest.
  - I understand that there are three categories of protesters. In which category did you partake?
  - There are different stages in the protest, from early in the morning, lunchtime and an evening ceremony. Can you tell me about the process?
  - How was each different stage?
  - Which stage was the most emotionally charged for you?
  - What stood out for you during the protest? What was most significant for you?
  - How did you feel after the protest?
  - How does it feel reflecting on your experience?
  - How do you feel about the protest now, today?
4. What motivated you to get involved in the Silent Protest?
  - Why did you choose to participate?
  - What do you want to achieve through participating?
    - i. How does that affect you and your position as a man in our society?

- ii. What are the challenges you faced making the decision to participate?
  - iii. What are the benefits for you of participating?
  - iv. What was difficult or beneficial for you in the protest?
5. Is there anything else significant for you about participating in the protest?
6. Do you think you will participate again in 2015? Why, or why not?

Thank you very much for answering all these questions. This is the end of the interview, do you have anything else you would like to add or clarify? (Allow for clarification).

Thank you again.



Switch tape recorder off.



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