

“RAPE AND CABLE THEFT ON THE INCREASE”:
INTERROGATING *GROCOTT’S MAIL* COVERAGE OF RAPE
THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH.

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Abstract

This study investigates *Grocott's Mail's* rape reporting through a participatory action research process. It draws on feminist cultural studies, sociology of news, and normative theories of the media to inform the research project. The participatory action research process explored three areas with the journalists at *Grocott's Mail*: their understanding of the community they serve and their own professional identity as a community of practice, roles of the media in society which inform reporting, and rape as a social issue and problem. Through this process the study found that the pervasiveness of rape in the Grahamstown community, the complexities around rape reporting which include the significant legal challenges, the personal impact rape cases have on journalists, and the journalistic roles and approaches employed in rape reporting all influence how the paper covers rape. In analysing these matters the study found that the primary factor inhibiting a successful strategy for managing rape reporting was that *Grocott's Mail* does not place gender-based violence on their news agenda as an issue requiring attention in order to develop the community they serve.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.0 Introduction

This study aims to investigate rape coverage at *Grocott's Mail* with regards to journalists' understandings of gender-based violence, and to explore journalistic routines and roles which impact on rape reportage. In January 2009, *Grocott's Mail* editor Steven Lang, contacted me about the Orientation Week edition of the newspaper (10 February 2009). He sought my input regarding how to grant gender-based and feminist issues the necessary attention in the edition. I was the founder and working group member of an organisation at Rhodes University, the Gender Action Project (GAP), a feminist organisation with a strong advocacy and activism agenda. GAP engaged in awareness campaigns throughout Orientation Week, these campaigns were centered around gender-based issues, sexuality, and gender-based violence, specifically, rape. In approaching me, Lang set into motion a relationship between GAP and the paper, one which was founded on the desire to shift how rape was understood within the Grahamstown community, and to change how rape was reported on by the journalists at *Grocott's Mail*. Lang and I engaged in multiple conversations around rape coverage, and the difficulty in doing justice to a rape story, from February 2009 to October 2010.

I garnered from these conversations that there was a dissatisfaction at *Grocott's Mail* with regards to rape coverage, and a sense of the staff being overwhelmed by the frequency of rape in Grahamstown. The frequency of rape and the number of cases the bi-weekly paper is presented with create a sense of urgency around rape as an issue that needs to be addressed through reportage. It became apparent in these conversations with Lang that the paper did not have a strategy for shifting journalist practice around rape stories. It was these conversations, and the themes present in them that I bore in mind in proposing this study. The study allows space to investigate and explore journalistic practice and understandings around rape, and brings to the fore the complexities that exist for a community paper attempting to address rape as a serious social issue.

Lang's inclusion of GAP in the Orientation Week edition was understood as an attempt to involve *Grocott's Mail* in a greater campaign against gender-based violence in Grahamstown. But despite this intention and the conversations around rape, the reporting of rape has not reflected this commitment, as evidenced in the headline which is used in the title of this thesis, "Rape and cable theft on the increase"¹. This is emblematic of how rape as an issue is treated as yet another crime, regardless of extent, severity and pervasiveness.

In the headline, rape is treated as being in the same category as cable theft, this serves to trivialise the severity of rape. However, what appears to happen with this is not a lack of understanding around the seriousness of rape, but rather that the issue gets lost in the processes that exist in the newsroom such as the day-to-day gathering of information and meeting deadlines. This results in the commitment to engage in the greater campaign against gender-based violence not being translated into changed practice. The intention for change is evident, but the complexity and normativity of routinised newsroom processes, prevent the shift in reportage.

A particularly glaring example of the gap between intention and reportage is the story on the rape of a first year student which occurred at a pub, the Rat and Parrot, during Orientation week of 2009. *Grocott's Mail* published the accused's image and name on the front page of the Tuesday 17 February edition in an attempt to „name and shame“ him. However, this action was illegal in terms of the Criminal Procedures Act 55 of 1977 which states that the name and image of an alleged sex offender cannot be published until the accused has pleaded to a charge. The story also did not have the effect *Grocott's Mail* had desired – condemnation by the public of this behaviour. Instead, many members of the community sympathised with the young man as was

¹ Headline on page 2 of *Grocott's Mail* 4 June 2010.

apparent in subsequent letters addressed to the editor, such as “O-week accusations”² (A Mother 2009: 4), and “Rights? What rights?”³ (Michael J Naidoo 2009: 6).

In GAP’s view this reporting drew attention away from the gravity of gender-based violence, with the article itself failing to contextualise rape within the student culture of violence against women at Rhodes University, and within the overall context of gender-based violence in South Africa.

Grocott’s Mail is the oldest independent newspaper in South Africa, and because it caters to a “distinct geographical space” and places a “clear local-first emphasis on news, features, sports, and advertising” it is considered by its editor, journalists and the School of Journalism and Media Studies to be a community newspaper (Lauterer 2006: 1). *Grocott’s Mail* is an experiential newsroom whereby students from the School of Journalism and Media Studies gain practical experience during their studies. The paper produces two editions per week. Sex crimes (including rape) are given a great deal of coverage on the pages of *Grocott’s Mail* and most of this reportage is presented as crime beat reporting. Bonnes, a Politics Masters student at Rhodes University conducted a study of *Grocott’s Mail’s* rape coverage during the period from 14 October 2008 to 29 October 2009. She analysed rape articles in *Grocott’s Mail* to assess whether, and then how the paper perpetuated rape myths. The study found that the paper consistently perpetuated rape myths through de-emphasising the perpetrator and effectively blaming the survivor. She shows through a critical discourse analysis how this effect is produced by *Grocott’s Mail’s* routine use of passive voice and word choice in their rape reportage (Bonnes 2010: 41). The term “myth” in relation to rape myths is used here by feminist scholars and

² “I cannot help feeling sorry for this young man and his family. We must remember that he is not guilty of rape until proven guilty!... Sometimes I think the young girls consume far too much alcohol and expose their bodies, forgetting that men are aroused by sight. Cover up, girls!”

³ “...we have some who say: „All men are rapists, they are all guilty by association. When someone accuses them of a crime, they must be guilty, because in the absence of any evidence and due process, we believe that they must be guilty, because others who were just like them were also guilty“...evil comes in many forms and sometimes too, it comes from quarters least expected. Our only defence is an open and questioning mind, and a real awareness of our very human failings, in all things”.

activists to mean a misinterpretation or an untruth (and not as Barthes 1984 uses it to mean a form of communication or representation). Rape myths are then recognised as hegemonic ideas that result in placing the burden of blame on the rape survivor, and in journalism this may happen through articles that focus on the following details in the police report: what a survivor was wearing, whether she was drinking, and her previous sexual history (Serumaga 2007). Bonnes' concluding argument is that the presence of rape myths in articles "may have negative effects for victims of rape, as they create and sustain fear in women about reporting rape to the police" (Bonnes 2010: 44). This is because rape myths, by referring to stereotypical images or constructions of what it means to be a rape survivor, trivialise rape, and bring into question the legitimacy of the survivor's experience (Franiuk et al 2008). Not every article contained rape myths, but the presence of rape myths generally present in the reportage must still be problematised, especially in relation to the emphasis *Grocott's Mail* places on rape activism (Bonnes 2010: 45).

The presence of rape myths in *Grocott's Mail* "sits uncomfortably with the fact that the newspaper tries to promote rape activism in other articles" (Bonnes 2010: 41). In some ways, the paper is committed to "opposing rape myths while simultaneously perpetuating them in reports of rape incidents" (Bonnes 2010: 41). Bonnes gives the glaring example of an article, 'Creating a Safe Space for Rape Survivors' (6 February 2008) in which it is stated that many survivors withdraw rape charges because they fear being blamed for the rape. *Grocott's Mail* itself engages in victim blaming through emphasis on alcohol in rape articles, and de-emphasising the perpetrator. This serves to implicitly shift the burden of blame onto the survivor "because the absence of the rapist and his actions in a rape incident report encourages individuals to focus on what the victim could have done to avoid being raped" (Bonnes 2010: 42). Bonnes suggests that for *Grocott's Mail* to fully support or promote activism against rape, they need to "eliminate rape myths from their coverage of rape incidents. They should also try to target men in rape prevention articles" (Bonnes 2010: 42).

As shown by Bonnes, despite a commitment to highlight the issue, the newspaper has not changed its style of reportage. This situation of disjuncture between intention and action provides an opportunity for investigation and intervention. The Bonnes study analysed the discourses present in rape articles but did not emphasise production processes and journalists' pre-existing assumptions around rape that result in these discourses. Both the researcher of this proposed study and the newspaper staff have a mutual interest in understanding and exploring whether a different type of journalism on rape is possible through paying attention to production process and understandings of rape as a socially-embedded problem.

The methodological approach shifted during this study, initially a critical discourse analysis was intended for the research. The findings from the analysis of rape articles were to be used to design workshops to address: the paper's conception of its role as a community paper; to explore the form of reportage usually resorted to and to open the possibility of employing the journalistic roles outlined by Christians et al (2009); address the extent of knowledge among staff around rape; and, using feminist theory, explore whether an alternate way of viewing rape as an issue was possible. I then discovered Bonnes' completed study, which overlapped greatly with my proposed research, and decided that it was necessary to shift my approach. The shift in my research is done through engaging a different methodological approach, and emphasising the impact the newsroom processes and media roles have on rape reportage.

I brought forward the workshop process by employing participatory action research (PAR). It appeared to be a fitting methodology as it is a collaborative means of engaging with the issues raised by Bonnes' study, Lang and GAP's concerns around rape coverage, and the desire for a change in reportage (Koch & Kralik 2006). PAR works with the research community, in this case *Grocott's Mail* staff, to understand their environment, the issues that arise and possible solutions or "action" that may resolve or alleviate these problems (Greenwood & Levin 1998: 7).

This study relies on qualitative research methods, employed due to their “potential to show how broader structures constrain[ed] and shape[d]” the understandings of how journalists understand their roles in rape coverage (Reid et al 2006: 317). It further provides participants with the opportunity to “describe” these structures “while articulating changes” that could improve their coverage (Reid et al 2006: 317). This research is informed by a critical realist model which holds that actions be placed within the greater social and cultural structures that “envelop and shape” them (Deacon et al 1999: 10). In making these structures known, social actors come to understand the constraints they operate within, and begin the process to transform them, if this transformation is desired (Maguire 1987). The model identified as most useful for this process is that of participatory action research (PAR) which involves members of a community in the research process (Koch & Kralik 2006). PAR aims to foster a democratic process providing participants the opportunity to contribute to the construction of meaning around a particular issue. The process aims to encourage “reflection and reconstruction of experiences” to improve understanding at the level of the individual and the community (Koch & Kralik 2006: 5). PAR provides participants the means to envision an alternative reality or approach to a problem through the emphasis of collaboration (Koch & Kralik 2006). PAR is employed for this study as a methodology because of the participatory and “social change” elements considered useful in addressing the improvement of rape coverage. To be effective, the process must involve the journalists responsible for covering rape. Koch and Kralik argue that it is the “participatory ethos” of PAR which makes possible the “action towards social change” (2006: 12). The outcome which PAR envisages is “empowerment of people” through the use of their own knowledge or experiences to work towards a desired result (Koch & Kralik 2006: 14). Essentially this research is about involving the journalists at *Grocott’s Mail* in the assessment of what they perceive the role of the newspaper to be within a community and how they understand this specifically in relation to rape as a social problem.

Chapter II: Theoretical framework

This chapter will serve to lay out the theoretical framework informing this study. The framework consists of three areas. The first is that of feminist cultural studies. This body of theory is concerned with generation and circulation of meaning, and the concept of culture as a site of

struggle between those with and without power (Fiske 1987; Epstein & Jayarante Stewart 1991). Feminist cultural studies provides a critique of how reporting can serve to “decontextualise” rape, perpetuate stereotypes of women and rape myths, blame and stigmatise the rape survivor and absolve the perpetrator (Kitzinger 2004: 14). The reliance on “conventions of journalism” is seen as one of the causes producing this effect because focus is given to individuals and events, and overlooks “larger social forces” such as unequal gender-relations which underpin gender-based violence (Meloy & Miller 2009: 52). The second body of theory, sociology of news, is useful here because it describes these conventions and the constraints they place on journalists. Sociology of news is concerned with how journalism functions in the world, the internal processes and routines of journalism, and the ideology of journalism (Schudson 1991). One area in particular that needs scrutiny is the use of news values which may frame rape in ways that are critiqued by feminist theorists (O’Neill & Harcup 2009). When rape occurs, the news media focus on it as an event and may not necessarily handle it as an issue or a social problem (Boyle 2005). The news media then come to present rape as a “taken-for-granted fact of life” and emphasise “intervention” rather than a broad-based social solution to rape (Kitzinger 2004: 23). To shift how journalists routinely cover rape, changes need to be made at several levels: conceptual understandings of rape, news routines and processes, and professional ideologies. (Kitzinger 2004). In order to unpack professional ideologies, which in this study includes how *Grocott’s Mail* staff understand their role as serving a community, the thesis will explicate normative theories of the media. Normative theories are described as “instruments of emancipation from the status quo” (Christians et al: ix) In other words, they allow one to explain what practices exists and what other possibilities could be opened up. Christians et al present four roles for the media, of which this study will explore three in particular: “monitorial”, “facilitative”, and “radical” (Christians et al 2009: 125 -7) Working with the possibilities these roles present will allow *Grocott’s Mail’s* role to be re-imagined. Monitorial, otherwise considered the “watchdog” role, is the role most journalists identify with, and is concerned with collecting and circulating information to society (Christians et al 2009: 146). The facilitative role relates to the media adopting an approach that cultivates space for public opinion and debate. The radical role places its focus on bringing to the fore “abuses of power”, consciousness-raising, and is geared towards social change through supporting activist movements, such as GAP working against gender-based violence (Christians et al 2009: 126)

Chapter III: Research methodology

The research methodology chapter will serve to discuss participatory action research in-depth, and provide an overview of the research design. PAR is employed for this study as a methodology because of the participatory and social change elements considered useful in addressing the improvement of rape coverage. To be effective, the process must involve the journalists responsible for covering rape. Koch and Kralik argue that it is the “participatory ethos” of PAR which makes possible the “action towards social change” (2006: 12). The outcome which PAR envisages is “empowerment of people” through the use of their own knowledge or experiences to work towards a desired result (Koch & Kralik 2006: 14). The scope of this study did not allow for an extended PAR process. However, there is value in doing at least one cycle of reflection and exploration of what assumptions and understandings underlie rape reporting at *Grocott’s Mail*. This reflection and exploration took the form of workshops oriented around particular themes informed by the literature employed by the thesis on sociology of news, normative theories of the press, sex crime reporting; and rape as a social problem. These workshops were facilitated by the researcher, and participants were all those responsible for production at this small newspaper: the editor, news editor, sports editor, citizen journalism editor, sub-editor, designers, photographers and interns. In-depth interviews will be used to explore further and clarify issues where necessary. The participants’ knowledge of *Grocott’s Mail’s* rape coverage and production processes are important to this study and serve to contextualise matters that arose during the workshop stage.

Chapter IV: Discussion and explanation

This chapter will describe and discuss the participatory action research process; this includes the three workshops conducted with the *Grocott’s Mail* staff: sense of „community“, roles of the media, and rape and reportage. In addition, this chapter will discuss the subsequent interview process employed to elucidate issues that arose from the workshops. Primary matters for final analysis are pulled together in this chapter, and put forward for analysis in the final chapter.

Chapter V: Analysis and concluding remarks

In this chapter I discuss the key findings of the participatory action research process in accordance with the goals of the study which are to investigate:

1. *Grocott's Mail's* conception of its role as a community paper and how it understands this in relation to rape as a social issue; and to explore with the journalists the possibility of employing other roles in their news coverage, as outlined by Christians et al.
2. The extent of gender-based knowledge among the journalistic staff and to explore, by using feminist theory, whether alternate ways of viewing rape as an issue will affect their reporting.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter serves to lay down the theoretical framework informing this research process. It will discuss three areas: feminist cultural studies, sociology of news, and normative theories of the media. Feminist cultural studies provides the means for understanding how reporting results in rape myths, sociology of news discusses the conventions of journalism that result in this, and normative theories of the media explores current approaches employed and possible alternatives to rape reporting.

2.1 Feminist cultural studies

Feminist cultural studies provides a critique of how reporting can serve to “decontextualise” rape, perpetuate stereotypes of women and rape myths, blame and stigmatise the rape survivor and absolve the perpetrator (Kitzinger 2004: 14). This study employs this body of theory to inform primarily the workshop conducted with journalists around rape, because it is useful in highlighting the negative treatment of rape survivors by the media, the police and criminal justice system (Naffine 1997).

2.1.1 Rape definition

The definition of rape in South African law has shifted to a broader, more inclusive definition from the previous apartheid-era understanding of rape as the forced penetration of a penis into a vagina. This new legislation was a result of a strong feminist component among civil society and non-governmental organizations which mobilized around the formulation of the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act. The Act extends the definition such that the penetration of any genital organ or object into any genital organ, anus or mouth of another person is considered rape (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 2007:11). The Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 of 2007 states that rape occurs when “any person (,A”

unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant („B“) without the consent of B” (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 2007:14-15). The overwhelming nature of the rapes reported and covered by *Grocott’s Mail* are those committed by male perpetrators on female bodies. These cases were in the majority and therefore form the bulk of the types of rape that came up in the course of this study. The focus of the study is therefore restricted to the rape of females by male perpetrators.

Anderson and Doherty argue that rape, and the knowledge that rape happens, carries assumptions of what it means to be a woman or a man with regards to gender and sexuality, as well as a person’s agency regarding their body (2008). Feminist theory understands rape to be the consequence of a patriarchal culture or society in which men are afforded the right to dominate women. It is an act of possession and domination; desire or sexual satisfaction is not the primary motivating factor but rather the establishment of control over women is (Ellis 1989).

Patriarchy is a social system which privileges men over women; it is concerned with “power and authority” which are authorised through the social, economic and cultural “positions of men” (Cranny-Francis et al 2003: 15). Male hegemony is often used as an alternative term to „patriarchy“ which refers to men dominating the “social, economic and cultural spheres” of society (Cranny-Francis et al 2003: 16). It is through male hegemony that the subordination of women to men is made valid and legitimised. Sexual violence is a means through which this domination is maintained (Radford & Stanko 1996).

2.1.2 Rape as an outcome of patriarchy

Rape is understood as stemming from patriarchy, an ideology that asserts that men are dominant of women. Rape is protected by societal practices which work towards making invisible the violence of rape and by validating rape. The way that rape is spoken of serves to naturalise and legitimise it (Romito 2008). An example of this is the manner in which rape is spoken of as something a survivor desired, and sought out through dress or behaviour. This renders invisible

the gravity of the violence and the experience of the survivor while functioning as a measure to control all women in society. For an ideology, such as patriarchy, to be effective it must be founded upon real power. An example of this power of this ideology is that it is able to alter the way rape survivors think of themselves and react towards having been raped – they come to internalise society’s beliefs around rape, and shift blame upon themselves (Romito 2008).

Reporting rape and male violence to the police is a demoralising and frightening experience, so much so that some would rather avoid having to deal with the reporting of rape (Romito 2008). Most rape survivors opt to not report the crime because of the way society, the criminal and legal procedures and processes treat survivors (Romito 2008). Society is seen as consisting of a “rape-supportive culture” that is hostile towards the survivor (Anderson & Doherty 2008: 10). Rape trials are not rape survivor-friendly; in most justice systems the survivor bears the burden of proof to show evidence that she was in fact raped. The perpetrator is not seen to be the one on trial. This experience of burden of proof is often referred to as a second rape or “secondary victimisation” (Anderson & Doherty 2008: 18). Because the survivor is made vulnerable by the defence lawyers, and the judge, and the responsibility of the rape is placed upon her behaviour, her dress or her social standing (Cuklanz 1995). Lees argues that criminal justice systems generally have failed survivors, while legitimising sexual violence by men. A trial can be treated as a “barometer of ideologies of sexual difference, of male dominance and women’s inferiority” (Lees 1996:111).

Malunda argues that despite women’s awareness of their rights, rape and sexual violence are significantly underreported because of societal reactions, and the manner in which the criminal justice system handles rape cases. It is at the level of societal reactions and the criminal justice system that the media should be trained to identify problem areas (Malunda 2002). Rape is often treated as a women’s issue when it is a greater societal issue, and needs to be placed within the context of male hegemony when journalists consider how to cover it (Lowe-Morna 2002).

2.1.3 South Africa

In Grahamstown, and generally in South Africa, rape is a common but under-reported crime. Grahamstown is located within the Eastern Cape with an approximate population of between 76 500 and 124 700 people (Statistics South Africa 2001; Thornton 2008:246). Rhodes University is located within Grahamstown and “the presence of student life heavily influences the community” (Bonnes 2010: 2). *Grocott’s Mail* is a community paper produced in and for Grahamstown, it is owned by Rhodes University, and is the oldest independent newspaper in South Africa (*Grocott’s Mail* 2008).

Moffet argues that the link is often made between South Africa’s political history of apartheid and rape. She argues, however, that this simply serves to remove attention or focus from the greater role that the patriarchal system plays in rape and sexual violence (Moffet 2006). In South Africa, anti-gender based violence, domestic violence, and the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women campaigns tend to target women, this serves to encourage victim blaming and transfers responsibility to women, instead of focusing on the men and the overall patriarchal system responsible for this societal issue (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009).

Van der Bijl and Rumney feel that the reformation of South African rape legislation does not necessarily mean that the law will be actualised or implemented, and that it is unlikely that perceptions of rape will shift in society (2009). The overarching success of the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 32 2007 is dependent on the manner in which the criminal justice system implements it. The critical factor here is that most officials within this system carry deeply-ingrained stereotypes and rape myths that come to inform their work on rape cases (Van der Bijl & Rumney 2009:427).

In South Africa 71 500 sexual offences were reported in 2008/2009, and in the Eastern Cape, alone, 9 463 cases were reported (Serumaga 2007). Grahamstown falls within the district of Makana, in the Eastern Cape. Statistics from the Makana Rape Survivor’s Support Group

(RSSG) show that in 2009 an average of 12 rapes were reported per month in the district. South Africa has the highest rate of rape and violence against women for a country not engaged in war, and an exceptionally low conviction rate of seven percent (Soul City 1999; Serumaga 2007).

2.1.4 Rape reporting

The media are seen as one of the most powerful means of shaping societal perceptions around issues such as rape. This power can be employed to either shift deeply ingrained societal attitudes or to reinforce these mindsets (Lowe-Morna 2001). Media coverage not only effects how people understand rape, but also their response to survivors and perpetrators. This coverage also impacts on how survivors are treated by those who are meant to assist them, such as the criminal justice system (Soul City 1999). The manner in which the media report issues such as rape can serve to “decontextualise” the violence, perpetuate stereotypes of women, blame the victims and absolve perpetrators (Kitzinger 2004: 14). Benedict argues that it is through the reporting of sex crimes that one is most able to conceive of society’s understanding of violence and gender roles (1992).

The media are directly involved with how we come to understand the world we live in but we rarely question the way that the world is represented and the discourses that are involved in this representation of our society. The media construct events for the reader through selection and framing of stories. The increased “sexualisation of the news has marked the end of any genuine attempt to report sex crime as a serious problem” as stories tend to focus on the “bizarre or shocking case-histories” that detract from the seriousness of rape (Carabine 2008: 159). These stories are reported in order to serve public desire for sensationalism and the extra ordinary; this serves to restrict any understanding of the socially-imbedded nature of rape. Often sex crimes are used by the media to sell copy because of society’s interest in sex and violence. In order to sell copy successfully, the media call upon certain stereotypes of rape survivors and represent them by employing rape myths. Many stories rely on conceptions of what is appropriate in terms of the way women conduct themselves in the world (Carabine 2008).

Individual journalists and the news media organizations they find themselves working for understand gender violence and sex crimes as serious issues; however they focus their reportage on events instead of issues. This results in sexual violence being presented as a “taken-for-granted fact of life” and not a social problem that is worth analysing and combating (Kitzinger 2004: 23) Rape fits into the crime beat of newspapers and the reporting of these crimes rely on crime reports from police and the court proceedings of individual cases. Journalists often do not seek sources outside of these when reporting on rape. They also tend to report on stories that are extraordinary, and outside of the day-to-day violence that exists, such as gang rape, the rape of children or the elderly. In doing so they overlook and mask the “ordinary sexual violence endemic in everyday life” (Kitzinger 2004: 28). News stories on rape are selected and constructed according to news conventions, these often do not allow for the contextualising or reflection of the severity of gender-based violence (Meloy & Miller 2009). Through failing to contextualise rape within the circumstance that make gender-based violence possible, and in not emphasising the frequency of rape, they fail to assist their audiences in “gain[ing] an understanding of the structural explanations for rape” (Carter & Weaver 2003: 37).]

2.1.5 Rape myths

A rape myth, as understood by feminist scholars and activists, is an argument which places the sole responsibility of rape upon the survivor. It works in such a way as to absolve the perpetrator and detract from the gravity of the violence (Anderson & Doherty 2008; Serumaga 2007).

Examples of rape myths are discussed in a booklet produced by Soul City on Violence against women, there are eight common rape myths:

1. Women who dress in a particular manner (e.g. wearing short skirts) are asking to be raped. This suggests that rape is a crime of passion or lust when rape is a crime usually motivated by “anger, a desire for power and a sense of entitlement to women’s bodies” (Soul City 1999: 18)
2. Rape does not happen within marriage or relationships in which “consent has previously been given” (Soul City 1999: 18). Marital rape is a crime in South Africa, and “any form of

forced sex is rape regardless of whether consent was given on other occasions” (Soul City 1999: 18).

3. Rapists are previously unknown to their victims. Rape is predominantly committed by someone known to the survivor, such as a partner, family member, friend or community member (Soul City 1999: 18)
4. Rapists are “psychopaths” (Soul City 1999: 18). Research has shown that only “five percent of rapists can be classified as clinically insane” (Soul City 1999: 18).
5. It’s not rape if the survivor did not struggle. Most survivors “don’t fight back in order to protect themselves and stay alive” (Soul City 1999: 18)
6. Women are vindictive and will falsely accuse men of rape. Only two percent of women who report rape lay false charges (Soul City 1999: 18).
7. Women who don’t report rape immediately can’t be trusted. Most women don’t report rape because they fear being disbelieved, are in shock, or have had their lives threatened if they report (Soul City 1999).
8. It was not rape if there are no physical injuries. Lack of evidence of injury does not mean that it was not rape (Soul City 1999: 19)

The existence of rape myths in society which journalists may also hold, lead the media to report sex crimes in a way that is harmful and biased (Benedict 1992). Bonnes did a study on the *Grocott’s Mail* and the use of rape myths in its rape reportage (2010). Her findings are employed in this study to indicate to the journalists where *Grocott’s Mail* has previously failed and succeeded with regards to rape coverage.

Rape myths pertaining to the survivor tend to transfer blame to the survivor for the rape. In terms of the perpetrator, stereotypes relying on race tend to be invoked, whereby “black perpetrators are overrepresented in the media”, and this suggests that black people are rapists, and serves to maintain racial hierarchies in society (Hirsch 1994, Bonnes 2010: 17). If racial stereotypes aren’t invoked, the perpetrator is usually de-emphasised in the rape reportage; this is achieved through word choice or allotting blame to a factor other than the perpetrator, such as alcohol (Berrington & Jones 2002: 309-313; Bohner 2001; Hirsch 1994; Worthington 2008). An example of word choice that Bonnes gives is the statistic that one in three women will be raped in their lifetime,

this makes invisible the perpetrators, instead of saying “one in three South African women will be raped by a man in her lifetime” (Bonnes 2010: 18). The focus on a factor other than the perpetrator, such as alcohol, not only de-emphasises the perpetrator but shifts blame to the survivor (Van Der Bijl & Rumney 2009:422).

In South Africa, rape survivors are often raped by men they know. Hirschowitz presents the statistic that in 1998, 24.4% of survivors were raped by men unknown to them, 34.6% were raped by sexual partners; and 22.3% were raped by people known to them (Hirschowitz et al 2002:2). Despite these figures, the media pay attention to rapes committed by men unknown to the survivor, emphasising that most rapists are strangers to the survivors (Los & Chamard 1997:309; Reddy & Potgieter 2006:514; Worthington 2008: 362).” (Bonnes 2010: 20).

Rape cases that are extraordinary or “atypical” are seen as carrying more value in the media, and able to sell more copies (Berrington & Jones 2002:312). This means that the media come to report mostly on the extraordinary cases, and the everyday cases are often ignored such that the extraordinary become the „ordinary“ as they are given greater prominence. The media come to perpetuate the stereotype of who is a “typical” perpetrator or survivor (Bonnes 2010: 20). Atypical cases are usually determined to be such if they do not match the rape myths, such as stranger rape, that society circulates and adopts (Bonnes 2010: 20).

2.1.6 The Bonnes“ study

Bonnes analysed 16 rape articles in her study. She found that not every rape article in *Grocott’s Mail* perpetuated or employed rape myths, but a great majority did. She organised her analysis around five themes which emerged from within the articles: “de-emphasis of the perpetrator, victim blaming, gender-stereotyping, the perception of an atypical case, and the challenging of a rape myth” (Bonnes 2010: 26)

Bonnes argued that many articles supported patriarchy through the de-emphasis of the perpetrator. This was achieved through word choice, use of passive voice, and the use of labels (Bonnes 2010). In terms of word choice, the primary example in *Grocott's Mail* is the omission of the word „rape“ in the content of the articles, despite its appearance in the headlines. Bonnes argues that this serves to trivialise the rape, as well as positioning the reader to question the survivor's innocence. Articles usually contain details about the survivor but not the perpetrator or the rape. This de-emphasises the role the perpetrator played in the rape and makes active the survivor's actions and choices (Bonnes 2010: 26). *Grocott's Mail* tends to write rape articles in a particular style in which the phrasing “takes focus away from the actions done to the rape victim and focuses on what she has done to the perpetrator” (Bonnes 2010: 27). An example of this would be when it is reported that a woman “laid a rape charge” suggesting that she has accused someone of rape, not that she was “actually raped” (Bonnes 2010: 27). Perpetrators are also de-emphasised through the use of the passive voice, this serves to “remove the actor from the action, separating the rapist from the rape” (Bonnes 2010: 27). Doing so backgrounds the perpetrator's responsibility for the rape, Bonnes found that “thirteen out of the sixteen articles covering rape incidents used the passive voice when discussing and describing rape” (2010: 27). Often the rapist did not even feature in the article; the rape is treated as “something that just happened” to the survivor (Bonnes 2010: 28). In *Grocott's Mail* the “labels „victim“ or „survivor“” are often omitted with regards to rape, but in the case of other crimes, such as theft, people are labelled as victims or survivors. Fourteen of the sixteen rape articles examined described survivors as girls or women (2010: 29). In doing this the paper serves to set up the story in such a way that the audience may come to express doubt in whether the woman was raped, this is because she is not identified as a survivor but as a woman who reported a rape. The paper also fails to label the perpetrator or rapist, and often does not mention that he was involved in this event, this serves to delete the perpetrator from the crime, and shifts focus to rape survivor and her actions (Bonnes 2010).

De-emphasis of the perpetrator often works to blame the survivor because if the perpetrator is “directly blamed” or mentioned in the article, people “may associate blame with the victim” (Bonnes 2010: 32). Another means to blame the survivor is through emphasis on the role of

alcohol in the rape. In focusing on whether the survivor was drinking, blame comes to be shifted away from the perpetrator to the survivor because her behaviour is seen to be irresponsible (Bonnes 2010: 32). Eight of the 16 articles analysed mentions the use of alcohol. Bonnes found that *Grocott's Mail* "tends to focus on alcohol in its coverage of rape when the substance is present in a rape incident" (Bonnes 2010: 32). The focus on alcohol "both places responsibility for the rape on the victim as well as questions whether or not the rape actually happened" (Bonnes 2010: 33). Mentioning the use of alcohol indicates to readers that it was significant to the occurrence of the rape, shifting emphasis to the survivor and indicating that because she was drinking, she is "somewhat responsible for what had occurred" (Bonnes 2010: 34). Bonnes discusses the „O-week Aftermath“ article, and suggests that the title of the article "situates the alleged rape in the student drinking culture, suggesting that the rape was a part of the „O-Week Aftermath“" (Bonnes 2010: 35). The entire article focuses on students' experiences of the night, whether they were drunk, and draws the focus away from the alleged rape and places it on the student drinking culture (Bonnes 2010: 35). This article however, does not de-emphasise the perpetrator, in fact it is accompanied by an image of the alleged rapist on the front page, this serves to link him to the rape (Bonnes 2010: 36). Even though he is not de-emphasised, and is in fact fully identified (name, etc), the incident is still explained as a result of the student drinking culture (Bonnes 2010). It serves to suggest that the actions of the perpetrator are "an extension of student drinking culture", this shifts the blame from the individual and places it on the context in which the rape occurred (Bonnes 2010: 36)

The news media often do not report whether the survivor tried to defend herself (Bufkin & Eschholz 2000:1325). In 16 articles, only four mention the survivor's attempts at self-defence (Bonnes 2010: 36). Most of the articles "give explicit details about the threats, weapons and forceful actions that the perpetrator used against the victim while not mentioning the actions, reactions and self-defence measures of the victim" (Bonnes 2010: 37). In not mentioning that the survivors tried to defend themselves, *Grocott's Mail* perpetuates the myth that women are defenceless, and submissive (Bonnes 2010).

Bonnes describes the rape case reported in the „O-week Aftermath“ article (17 February 2009) as an atypical case, this case has come to be known as the Liddell case, named after the man accused of rape whose image was published by *Grocott's Mail*. This case received two pages of coverage, including the front page which is contrasted with most cases which appear in the „News in Brief“ section and are, on average, no longer than three paragraphs. With regards to the Liddell case, *Grocott's Mail* “clearly associates the perpetrator with the alleged rape, and names and pictures him before his trial”. The article further explains that the rape “as an extension of student drinking culture” (Bonnes 2010: 38). Bonnes continues to argue that the newsworthiness of this incident was that the perpetrator was a “white male student” which made this case atypical. It is understood as atypical due to the emphasis *Grocott's Mail* places on incidents of rape that occur in “the township context”, and are often placed in the news in brief section, and not given the space that the Liddell case was given (Bonnes 2010: 39).

Grocott's Mail employed a number of the rape myths discussed in the literature, however they didn't seem to “perpetuate the myth that rapists tend to be strangers to their victims” (Bonnes 2010: 40). In fact, the relationship between the survivor and perpetrator is the detail that is most often included in the majority of the rape articles. Bonnes concludes that the paper does not necessitate that “women need only fear strangers when it comes to rape” (Bonnes 2010: 40) Even though *Grocott's Mail* does not perpetuate the myth that perpetrators are strangers to rape survivors, other rape myths are present.

Bonnes argues that the presence of rape myths in *Grocott's Mail* sits awkwardly with the attempts to endorse activism around rape, such as focusing on the One in Nine Campaign protests (2010). *Grocott's Mail* is committed to activism but concurrently perpetuates rape myths in its rape reportage. Bonnes gives the glaring example of an article, ‘Creating a Safe Space for Rape Survivors’ (6 February 2008). This article states that many survivors withdraw rape charges because they fear being blamed for the rape. *Grocott's Mail* itself engages in victim blaming through emphasis on alcohol in rape articles, and de-emphasising the perpetrator. This serves to implicitly place “blame on the victim because the absence of the rapist and his actions

in a rape incident report encourages individuals to focus on what the victim could have done to avoid being raped” (Bonnes 2010: 42). Another glaring example is the rape activism article that appears in the 6 February 2009 edition, it discusses how to create support structures for rape survivors, at the same time it is followed by an information box entitled: “how to avoid rape” which shifts the responsibility of „avoiding“ rape onto survivors (Bonnes 2010: 42).

Bonnes“ concluding argument is that the presence of rape myths in articles “may have negative effects for victims of rape, as they create and sustain fear in women about reporting rape to the police” (Bonnes 2010: 44). Not every article contained rape myths, but the presence of rape myths must still be problematised, especially in relation to the emphasis *Grocott’s Mail* places on rape activism (Bonnes 2010: 45).

It is important to note at this point that for the purposes of this study Bonnes“ findings are addressed because they provide a discussion on the presence of rape myths in *Grocott’s Mail*’s reportage. However, this study seeks to emphasise the particular production processes and contexts which make possible the type of reporting that transmits such rape myths. It further seeks to understand and explore whether a different type of journalism on rape is possible through paying attention to production process and understandings of rape as a socially-embedded problem.

2.2 Sociology of news

It is important to note that individual journalists may be active in challenging rape and how it is reported but their efforts may be hindered by newsroom constraints which effect how the story is written, edited and published. Such constraints include deadlines, layout and subediting process, the instructions of news editors and editors, as well as “limited access to sources of information, as well as the laws surrounding what may or may not be reported in relation to court cases and rape survivors” (Soul City 1999: 4)

The Bonnes study analysed the discourses present in rape articles but did not investigate production processes and journalists' pre-existing assumptions around rape that result in these discourses. In order to understand the presence of rape myths, and the absence of transformation in how rape is covered, attention needs to be paid to production processes, conceptions of journalistic roles, and understandings of rape as a socially-imbedded problem. Sociology of news is employed in this study to explore how journalism functions in the world, the internal processes and routines of journalism, and the ideology of journalism (Schudson 1991). An area that requires particular scrutiny is that of news values, as the use of news values may frame rape in ways that are critiqued by feminist theorists (O'Neill & Harcup 2009).

When rape occurs, the news media focus on it as an event and may not necessarily handle it as an issue or a social problem (Boyle 2005). The media come to present rape as a "taken-for-granted fact of life" and emphasise "intervention" rather than a broad-based social solution to rape (Kitzinger 2004: 23). The shift needs to occur at the following levels in order to transform rape reportage: conceptual understandings of rape, news routines and processes, and professional ideologies. What follows below is a discussion of these levels that inform the workshops that form part of the research process.

2.2.1 The function of journalism

Journalism theorists posit the important role that journalism plays in the world. The function of journalism is understood as assisting citizens in understanding their world and their position within it (Harcup 2002). Further, Friend and Singer argue that the role of a journalist in a democratic society is to provide citizens with the information that will enable them to make informed decisions about the world they occupy (2007). Journalists themselves do not operate outside of society, they bring to their reporting the values and attitudes that they've acquired through lived experience, and are further influenced by the conventions in the newsroom (Friend & Singer 2007). If it is through the news that we come to understand what occurred in the world, how it affects us and our position in the world, then it is also through the news that a sense of community can be established. Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch describe these news stories as being "social glue" that "binds us together" (2009: 3). Through engaging with these

stories, and discussing them with those around us, we come to comprehend and construct our identities in relation to local, national and international events (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2009).

2.2.2 Internal processes and routines of journalism

Journalists work under immense pressure and constraints: journalistic codes, the economic market, professional culture, gender, race and class biases in the newsroom; time constraints, source and audience obligations. All impinge on their daily practice. The most prevalent of these constraints are deadlines and newsroom routines. Journalists are assimilated into the newsroom culture of each news organisation they work for (Harcup 2009). News is an individual product produced by an individual journalist, but is also an organisational product produced within a news organisation (Becker & Vlad 2009). Young or new journalists are inducted in newsrooms into the practices of understanding the concept of what news is, and what should be selected and produced as news, as well as what constitutes professional practice, such as the notion of objectivity (Harcup 2009).

Journalists stress objectivity in their reporting, and view their role as being a mirror on society (Keeble 1999). The notion of objectivity is contrasted with that of bias; the news can be understood to be biased in that certain stories, through the employment of news values, come to be given greater prominence (Starkey 2007). Thus, news can also be understood as ideological in that stories are selected and constructed along the lines of what is deemed newsworthy. Frequency, consonance, continuity and importance are some of the news values that inform the selection and construction of news stories (Harcup 2009). Journalists shape news from the “raw material” that they’ve gathered while following a story; the stories are constructed in such a way that the most newsworthy information is given prominence (Harcup 2009: 46).

The layout of a newspaper and the structure of a news story influence a reader’s understanding of an event. The significance of an event can be determined by how it fits into the newspaper layout; i.e. where it appears, how big the heading is, the size of the article, and whether it is accompanied by an image, all speak to the importance of the story as determined by the newspaper (Oosthuizen 2001). The structure of a story, usually follows a set method (although

this has begun to change), known as the “inverted pyramid”. This format is representative of the news genre known as hard news, of which a discussion follows (Oosthuizen 2001). Hard news is “an account of what happened, why it happened and how readers will be affected” (Richardson 2007: 16). Hard news is reporting by stating only verifiable facts and attributing these to sources. The form presents the most interesting or extraordinary facts first, and all information that follows is progressively of less importance. The reporter’s subjectivity needs to be removed, as well as description, comment, opinion and analysis (Keeble 1999). The inverted pyramid is a model for the writing of hard news, the most important information is placed at the top of the article, stories can be shortened by cutting the information at the bottom of the inverted pyramid, because these elements would be of less importance and one can risk cutting them without losing the most important information. This format was developed to save space and time, and is strongly affected by subediting processes (Brooks et al 2005).

News beats, as with news formats such as hard news, were established to solve the issue of creating a regular supply of news. Crime or court beats bring journalists into regular or daily contact with sources such as the police or court officials who already have a stockpile of events that have occurred, of which some meet the news criteria. Journalists then don’t have to actively seek out news but rather access the documents produced by the police or the courts to source their news (Machin & Niblock 2006). Crime news is written using the hard news model (Brooks et al 2005). Journalists rely on police reports and press releases issued by the criminal justice system – these are then reconfigured to represent news reports. In drawing on the police and courts as sources, they come to be identified as powerful persons by news readers; but they also begin to affect how crime is reported or discussed in the news. If they are the main sources of information, they thus have an opportunity to influence how the public come to understand and discuss crime (Oosthuizen 2001).

2.2.3 News values

News values are used to determine whether an event is newsworthy; they are meant to be the standards to judge whether an audience would be interested in knowing about an event. These

values are used daily by media practitioners in collecting, selecting and structuring news. They are not fixed but are liable to change depending on the news organisation and the perceived audience's needs (Richardson 2007). News values are a guide for journalists to determine what an audience would like to hear or read about.

Harcup and O'Neill suggested a series of 10 news values which would determine if an event is news: "reference to celebrity"; "entertainment"; "surprise"; "good news"; "bad news"; "magnitude"; "relevance"; "follow-up stories"; and "the newspaper's agenda" (Richardson 2007: 173-4). Galtung and Ruge developed a list of 12 factors which they identified as influencing the selection of news: 1) "frequency"; 2) "threshold", the greater the impact of a story, the more likely it will be carried; 3) "unambiguity", the clearer or simpler an event can be conveyed to an audience; 4) "meaningfulness", if the event makes sense or is familiar to the audience; 5) "consonance", the "forming of a „pre-image“ of an event" which increases the possibility of it being picked up as news; 6) "unexpectedness", an unexpected event will be selected above one expected; 7) "continuity", an incident already in circulation has a better chance of staying in the news as it becomes known or familiar to an audience; 8) "composition", if a story fits the newspaper's own make-up or fits the publication; 9) "reference to elite nations", powerful nations are given precedence over minor nations; 10) "reference to elite people", powerful people or celebrities are given more space than ordinary people; 11) "reference to persons", if an event has a face it stands a better chance of being published; 12) "reference to something negative", events that are negative, or „bad“ are more newsworthy (O'Neill & Harcup 2009:164-5)

By analysing news values theorists of journalism are able to understand the "wider role(s) and meaning(s) of journalism within contemporary society" (O'Neill & Harcup 2009: 162).

Journalists often don't explicitly use the terms theorists employ in discussing news values, but they regularly discuss the newsworthiness of events with each other, and whether these events should become news stories which feature in the newspaper (O'Neill & Harcup 2009: 162). It is through understanding the notion of news values that we are able to understand how occurrences

come to be seen as *events*, and how these events are then identified as news (O'Neill & Harcup 2009). We must also bear in mind though that meaning is carried in a text “as much by absence as by presence”; by that which is included and excluded from a text (Richardson 2007: 93). Galtung and Ruge (1965) argue that journalists can “counteract” existing news values by including the events’ contexts; reporting on issues rather than events; and focusing attention on “complex and ambiguous issues”; and by giving more space to the views of non-elites (O'Neill & Harcup 2009: 170).

Proximity and locality are very high news values in community journalism, as what is considered „news“ is determined by whether the event takes place within the community, and how it affects members of the community. McKane describes community papers as working with very tight definitions of what does and does not constitute news (2006). The categories of what is considered news is often governed by “unwritten rules” at the paper, and new journalists are expected to get a „feel for“ the news (McKane 2006).

2.2.4 Gatekeeping

Gatekeeping is the process of “selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news” (Shoemaker et al 2009: 73). The concept of gatekeeping brings to the fore the importance of understanding how institutional, organisational and professional factors affect the media environment (Shoemaker 2009). News is not that which happens out in the world and then is reported on, rather news is a selection of events that are considered newsworthy; if an event is not newsworthy in journalistic terms, then it does not become „news“(Oosthuizen 2001). An example of gatekeeping would be journalists determining whether to include a rape story in the paper, or which details of a rape they wish to include in a story. News is a “selective version of world events” which privileges the extraordinary above everyday events. Readers interpret news according to their own values, but these interpretations are still based on the processes by which journalists have written the news (Harcup 2009).

2.2.5 Journalism and objectivity

As mentioned above, objectivity is seen as the cornerstone of the journalistic profession. Objectivity is understood to be the balanced and unbiased reporting of “verifiable facts” (Christians et al 2009: 147). The journalist is seen to be “no more than an extension of the senses of the members of the public on whose behalf the press acts” (Christians et al 2009: 147). The audience wants the press to transmit value-free information about what is happening in society (Christians et al 2009). The neutral journalist understands that society contains competing views but that the media do not need to “take sides or have any vested interests of their own” (Christians et al 2009: 148). The public is seen as united with common values despite any conflict that may exist (Christians et al 2009).

All news stories have different angles from which they can be told, and each may offer up a different interpretation; it is up to the journalist to tell the story from as many of the viewpoints as is possible in a way that truthful, accurate and fair. Tuchman describes objectivity as a “strategic ritual” which is able to mask the biases of a newsroom or the misrepresentation of an issue through claiming that journalists are always objective (Brooks et al 2005: 14). In claiming objectivity, journalists are able to emancipate themselves from the responsibility of determining what is right or wrong when it comes to aspects of issues being reported on (Richardson 2007).

For a journalist to be objective, they must detach themselves from what they report or at the very least report in a balanced way. In demonstrating balance or absence of bias in ones reporting, one is setting oneself up as impartial or objective. However, there are certain issues which require a journalist to be partial and may be detrimental to an alternative perspective (Starkey 2007). Objectivity is in direct contrast to bias. Bias depends on how a story is told, and whether it is imbued with opinion; to rid one’s story of bias, one needs to be impartial in covering stories (Starkey 2007). A journalist may succeed in being impartial in their coverage, but their story may still contain traces of bias in terms of the opinions of a source. What the journalist considers as truth may still be informed by their life experiences and so carries traces of bias which impacts on “what they see as true and what they recognise as facts” (Harcup 2009: 81).

An objective story can never be truly neutral because value judgments are incorporated throughout the production process, such as when journalists determine whether a story is newsworthy or not. The news values employed favour a particular way of thinking about the world, and privileges sources that are elite, and, as Richardson states, the objective journalist position is decided against “a social and economic backdrop which values richer audiences more than poor ones” (Richardson 2007: 87).

The discussion of the function of journalism, news processes, news values and objectivity serves to establish the context within which journalists operate. It is important to bear this in mind when considering rape reportage, and how these factors influence or impact on coverage. However, these factors do not solely impact on rape reporting, the way in which journalists position themselves in relation to stories, the means by which they gather, and then construct stories, also needs to be taken into account. This can be achieved by turning to normative theories of the media as discussed by Christians et al.

2.3 Normative theories of the media

Normative theories of the media operate at the level of professional ideologies, and are thus employed to explicate the current role of *Grocott's Mail* and alternative roles that the paper could employ. Normative theories are described as “instruments of emancipation from the status quo” (Christians et al: ix) In other words, they allow one to explain what exists and what other possibilities could be opened up. Christians et al present four roles for the media, “monitorial”, “facilitative”, “radical”, and “collaborative” (Christians et al 2009: 125 -7). Monitorial, otherwise considered the “watchdog” role, is the role most journalists identify with, and is concerned with collecting and circulating information to society (Christians et al 2009: 146). The facilitative role relates to the media adopting a role that cultivates space for public opinion and debate. The radical role places its focus on bringing to the fore “abuses of power”, consciousness-raising, and is geared towards social change through supporting activist

movements, such as GAP (Christians et al 2009: 126). The collaborative role is concerned with forming a relationship between the state and the media, the role is not often referred to in theory on media roles because it impedes on the freedom of the press (Christians et al 2009). For the purposes of this study, three roles will be used: monitorial, facilitative, and radical. Collaborative does not speak to the context that *Grocott's Mail* finds itself in. The monitorial role appears to be the default position at *Grocott's Mail*, and facilitative and radical can be considered alternative positions to monitorial. These roles present possibilities for the re-imagining of *Grocott's Mail's* role as a community paper (Christians et al 2009).

2.3.1 Normative theories of the media and journalistic roles

Regarding normative theories of the media, the question is not simply what the role of journalism is in society but what that role should be (Christians et al 2009). This results in an examination of the values and objectives held by the media. Christians et al hold that these theories are culturally bound and not actual systems that exist, but that they are necessary as “cognitive maps for media professionals” (Christians et al 2009: viii). The authors put forward the notion that there are two levels of theories of the media: “real or descriptive and ideal or normative” (Christians et al 2009: ix). The first describes the existing roles of the media in society, and is concerned with the objective position of the journalistic profession as described by media sociology. The second prescribes the role of media in society, and is concerned with the values held by the media and journalists. (Christians et al 2009).

Central to the authors' concern is the contestation around whether the media are obliged to “serve society” or to stand detached from the society they operate in (Christians et al 2009: 124). It is difficult to state categorically what the role of journalists should be because there are diverse “interests and expectations on the part of those inside and outside the press”, and a free press cannot be forced to perform particular tasks/duties (Christians et al 2009: 121). There is division over whether journalists should be “mere “observers of events” or “participants” (Christians et al 2009: 30). In other words, whether the media should mirror reality or be an active in social change (Christians et al 2009: 30)

The role of journalists in society can be described as fulfilling several duties: 1) providing information regarding events that occur in society; 2) providing commentary on said events; 3) creating a forum for “diverse views and for political advocacy”; 4) creating a dialogical channel between the public and government; 5) adopting a critical or watchdog role in order to hold the state accountable (Christians et al 2009: 30). The consideration of journalistic roles brings to the fore the following: 1) whether journalists should adopt a neutral or participative role; 2) whether focus should be given to “raw facts” or to “providing interpretation and commentary”; 3) assuming the role of gatekeeper, or adopting a position or pushing an agenda on a social issue; 4) catering to the needs of one’s news organisation or endeavouring to realise a romanticised notion of what journalism’s role is; 5) choosing between media driven by the market or working for “social and nonprofit purposes ” (Christians et al 2009: 120).

The concept of a journalistic role is twofold: the actual tasks that journalists fulfil, and the “purposes or ends to be served and the relative value or importance attached to them” (Christians et al 2009: 119). For most journalists, their purpose is determined by the media institution they find themselves operating within, in the case of the staff at *Grocott’s Mail*, their role is determined by the fact that they work for a community paper (Christians et al 2009). As discussed above, this study employs the monitorial, facilitative, and radical roles as they are most applicable to *Grocott’s Mail* and re-imagining the role the paper plays in the community (Christians et al 2009).

2.3.2 The monitorial role

The defining attribute of journalism is the imparting of information to society. This task is self-assigned by the media, and seen to be the very foundation of journalistic practice. Journalism offers up its “own theoretical foundations” as articulated in the professional norms (Christians et al 2009: 143). These norms lay down preferred means of reporting, and to whom the press are

accountable, and through analysing these norms one is able to elucidate the ideology of journalism (Christians et al 2009).

This role is the least contentious in that it encapsulates the traditional concept of the media's role. It is concerned with the collection, processing and transmission of information on events that occur within society. The monitorial role exists on a continuum from that of inactive channeling of information to an active watchdog role. It stops short of adopting an advocacy role because it is constrained by notions of professionalism which maintain that opinion and comment should be separated from evidence and facts (Christians et al 2009).

This role is seen as one of a "vigilant informer": the collecting and publication of information that would be of interest to the audience; as well as the distribution of information on "behalf of sources and clients" (Christians et al 2009: 30). This role includes the provision of advanced information, "advice, warning, and everything of general utility for information seekers" (Christians et al 2009: 31). Journalists are seen as mediating between the events and news stories, and citizens of society. The content selected for news is done according to what the potential informational needs of society may be. (Christians et al 2009).

The monitorial role does the following varying degrees and forms: 1) it serves to record and publish events which take place in society; 2) be present at events of social, political and economic significance, and distribute any decisions passed; 3) circulating warnings to the public regarding threats from war to weather; 4) offering a guide to opinions citizens should hold regarding public figures, and major political issues; 5) indicate to the public which events and current issues should be considered relevant; 6) make available a balanced analysis of events and opinions; 7) adopt the role of fourth estate, and mediate between state and public regarding political matters; 8) engage in a watchdog role, holding the state and other organs accountable, in particular with regards to when they act against what is considered to be the public interest (Christians et al 2009: 145-6). The above tasks can be summarised into four broad categories: 1) receiving and transmitting notifications of events; 2) observing, reporting, and publishing

information; 3) warning the public; and 4) seeking, investigating, and exposing wrongdoings (Christians et al 2009).

2.3.3 The facilitative role

This role is linked to the idea of the media as the fourth estate which encourages debate, dialogue and citizens' decision making. Christians et al see the media as a means to improve public life, and play a role in deliberative democracy, promoting active citizenship, and facilitating civil society. This role is concerned with the concept of community, taking into account the interests of the larger body, and not only "individual rights and interests" (Christians et al 2009: 126). This role is in tension with media driven by the market, and requires "some subordination of typical professionalism" (Christians et al 2009: 126).

The news media are seen as reporting on civil society's activities, and in addition, under the facilitative role, as encouraging and reinforcing them (Christians et al 2009). In adopting this role, the news media are seen to advance dialogue among their audiences by exchanging ideas which engage them, and create the space for their active participation in resolving public issues. The media's role is not to create a uniform public but to create a medley of diverse opinions. They answer to the broad moral frameworks that guide the society in which they operate (Christians et al 2009).

The news media assist society's arbitration over social, political, economic, and cultural agendas. This deliberation configures the process as a dialogue among citizens who collaborate in addressing concrete issues. The media do not assume that society is homogenous but rather that differing viewpoints and positions exist. In adopting this stance, the news media do not serve to condense social issues, such as crime, to problems for political leaders to address, but facilitate the space such that citizens are able to engage with these experiences that occur in their environments. The media do not only wish to report on what occurs within society, but wish to endorse and advance the activities of civil society (Christians et al 2009).

Christians et al describe the facilitative role as a reaction to the complexity of human existence, and that the primary challenge of this role is for news media to create the space for citizens to realise that their “own voices” and participate in the transformation of their communities and society (Christians et al 2009: 176)

2.3.4 The radical role

The radical role is concerned with highlighting abuses of power and raising public consciousness around injustice, and the possibility of transformation. This role’s primary goal is the transformation of society through methodical and ethical engagement in agreement with a set of clearly defined values. In a democratic society, the radical role is executed by a handful of journalists who represent or support social and political movements. Focus is given to raising public consciousness of inequality, injustice and the potential for transformation (Christians et al 2009). The ultimate goal of the radical role is “fundamental or radical change in society” (Christians et al 2009: 126). This role is not incompatible with the concept of professionalism or market-driven journalism, although it cannot be subsidiary to “professional norms of market consideration” (Christians et al 2009: 126).

The news media are understood to adopt a radical role when they create space for positions which are “critical of authority and the established order” (Christians et al 2009: 31). They encourage fundamental transformation and restructuring of society. The role adamantly pushes for the unconditional equality of all citizens of society. It does not tolerate injustice, and journalists are called on to advance shifts in institutional bodies in order that justice, and human rights for all are recognised (Christians 2009). This role acknowledges that those in power hinder access to information, and that it is necessary to transform the “system of public communication” such that groups with little or no power are able to access the information they require (Christians et al 2009: 179). It recognises that if marginalised people are unaware of their positioning, or unable to instigate change, then it is up to activists and social movements to do

so, and so the radical role supports movements in order to the consciousness of marginalised people, and encourages their participation in civil society (Christians et al 2009).

The radical role's consciousness-raising agenda requires that the media play a more engaged role, beyond that of the facilitative role. The media's role is to make evident abuses of power, including "the causes and consequences of power concentrations, helping the public to see avenues of action to redistribute social power" (Christians et al 2009: 181). Here, the focus is on persuading all citizens to engage in transforming society. Radical is then about getting to the heart of power and how it is distributed in society, about confronting those who hold power, and providing an option which distributes power not among a few, but all of society (Christians et al 2009).

Radical journalism can be found in independent mainstream media. However, a distinction needs to be made between radical journalism and radical media. Radical media is scarce, but radical journalism is not and can't be found within mainstream media organisations (Christians et al 2009). The degree of radicalism will depend on the context in which the media is found, they could be mechanisms of considerable social change directed at major bodies which hold power, or operate on a smaller-scale, expressing alternatives to current hegemonic perceptions in society (Christians et al 2009: 189).

Christians et al views the radical role as one that is democratic and not oppressive, and note that it is important to make this distinction clear at a conceptual level. The radical role is understood as being closely associated with concepts of power and citizenship. It does not serve as an opposition to any party or political structure but rather serves members of society who are marginalised (Christians et al 2009). Both the facilitative and the radical roles work in favour of civil society, and promoting "people's power" and with regards to this, there is no distinction between the two (Christians et al 2009: 190). The dissimilarity that exists between them is the

objective they perform: facilitative promotes dialogue between citizens; radical mobilises against power structures (Christians et al 2009).

The adoption of a radical role by the media is a necessity as there exists no ideal democracy, and within a seemingly functioning democracy there ought to be a detached system which pushes the agenda of marginalised people within the debate and dialogue which occurs within society. The radical role can, in sum, be understood as defending democracy (Christians et al 2009).

Advocacy journalism is found in both radical media and in traditional or mainstream media. Advocacy is at the heart of the radical role, and journalists who challenge the injustices committed by the powerful on the marginalised, and support social movements who advocate against such injustices are understood to be advocate journalists (Christians et al 2009).

In order for an issue, such as rape, to gain public attention, it needs to be placed in the purview of the media (Dearing & Rogers 1996). Agenda-setting is a process of competition between advocates of societal problems to bring media, public and policy attention to their issues. Dearing and Rogers see agenda-setting as a political process with the media playing a central role in “enabling social problems to become acknowledged as public issues” (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 22). Dearing and Rogers consider „salience“ as being the key to agenda-setting (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 8). Salience is the value of importance assigned to an issue, if an issue has salience in the media for instance, it then issues the message to the audience or the public that this is an issue they should be giving consideration to (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 8). Salience of an issue in the media may usually result in the issue being advance on the public agenda because citizens take their cues from the media in terms of what deserves attention or what is considered important (Dearing & Rogers 1996)

Where an issue sits on the media's agenda is likely to influence where it sits on the public agenda. When the media "give heavy news coverage to an issue, the public usually responds by according the issue a higher salience on the public agenda" (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 92).

The media are distinguished according to how they relate to power in society, as well as the degree to which they participate as "actors in political and social events" (Christians et al 2009: 32). These roles offered by Christians et al are not fixed perspectives but rather alternative means to considering how journalism does and ought to participate in society (Christians et al 2009).

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has woven together the three theoretical strands of feminist cultural studies, sociology of news, and normative theories of the media in order to create a theoretical grounding for this study, and the research process. Feminist cultural studies enables a critique of rape reportage and the effects it has in perpetuating rape myths and stigmatising rape survivors (Kitzinger 2004). Sociology of news illuminates the conventions of the newsroom and journalism processes, and scrutinises the use of news values which may frame rape stories in ways that are critiqued by feminist theorists (Meloy & Miller 2009). Normative theories of the media allow this study to unpack professional ideologies, such as how the journalists understand their role in serving a community and addressing rape (Christians et al 2009). Tied together these strands allow this study to investigate and explore understandings of rape, newsroom routines, and professional behaviours in order to bring to the fore the complexities that exist for a community paper attempting to address rape.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This participatory action research process involved the journalistic staff at *Grocott's Mail* in exploring the paper's role within the community and how this role is understood in relation to rape as a social problem. The goals of the research were to: investigate *Grocott's Mail's* conception of its role as a community paper; explore with journalists the possibility of employing other roles in their news coverage, as outlined by Christians et al; examine the extent of gender-based knowledge among the journalistic staff; and to ascertain, by using feminist cultural studies, alternate ways of viewing rape as an issue, and how this would affect their reporting.

The process was informed by a research framework consisting of three areas. Feminist cultural studies, the first body of theory, provides a critique of how reporting can serve to “decontextualise” rape, perpetuate stereotypes of women and rape myths, blame and stigmatise the rape survivor and absolve the perpetrator (Kitzinger 2004: 14). The reliance on journalistic conventions is seen as a primary cause which produces this effect because focus is shifted to individuals and events, and overlooks “larger social forces” such as unequal gender-relations which underpins gender-based violence (Meloy & Miller 2009: 52). The second body of theory, sociology of news, was valuable in describing these conventions and the constraints they place on journalists. Sociology of news is concerned with how journalism functions in the world, the internal processes and routines of journalism, and the ideology of journalism (Schudson 1991). One area in particular that needs scrutiny is the use of news values which may frame rape in ways that are critiqued by feminist theorists (O'Neill & Harcup 2009). To shift how journalists routinely cover rape, changes need to be made at several levels: conceptual understandings of rape, news routines and processes, and professional ideologies. (Kitzinger 2004). In order to unpack professional ideologies, which includes how journalistic staff understand their role as serving a community, the thesis explicates normative theories of the press. Normative theories are described as “instruments of emancipation from the status quo” (Christians et al: ix) In other

words, they allow one to explain what exists and what other possibilities could be opened up. Working with these possibilities allows *Grocott's Mail's* role to be re-imagined. Monitorial, otherwise considered the “watchdog” role, is the role most journalists identify with, and is concerned with collecting and circulating information to society (Christians et al 2009: 146). The facilitative role relates to the media adopting a role that cultivates space for public opinion and debate. The collaborative role, not used in this study, pushed for collaboration between the state and the media. The radical role places its focus on bringing to the fore “abuses of power”, consciousness-raising, and is geared towards social change through supporting activist movements, such as GAP (Christians et al 2009: 126).

3.1 Participatory action research

This study used participatory action research (PAR) as its approach. PAR is an appropriate collaborative means to engage with the issues the study wishes to explore (Koch & Kralik 2006). PAR works with the research community, in this case *Grocott's Mail* staff, to understand their environment, the issues that arise and possible solutions or “action” that may resolve or alleviate these problems (Greenwood & Levin 1998: 7). *Grocott's Mail* reached out to GAP in 2009, when Lang, the editor contacted me with regards to assisting with the Orientation Week edition of the newspaper. This inclusion of GAP and subsequent, and continuing, conversations with myself indicated an attempt to involve the paper in a greater campaign against gender-based violence in Grahamstown, and to transform the paper’s rape reportage. This PAR process worked with the *Grocott's Mail* journalists to determine how they understood the role of the paper, and gave priority to their experiences at the community paper (Koch & Kralik 2006). Maguire views participatory research as a partnership: “we both know some things; neither of us knows everything” (Maguire 1987: 37). In this case, I have brought my knowledge of feminism theory around rape, sociology of news, and normative theories of the media to explore issues raised; and the production staff brought their knowledge and reflection on experience as journalists at a community paper, as well as their accounts of covering rape stories

PAR is concerned with concrete practice, and entails gaining knowledge of tangible and specific practices of a group of individuals within their community context. The outcome of PAR is

transformation in peoples' actions, relations, meaning, values, and interpretations of the world (Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998). In the case of *Grocott's Mail*, PAR was employed to work towards shifting the practice of journalism that results in the perpetuation of rape myths, and reporting which does effectively address rape as a social issue. Through PAR, the journalists were able to engage with their practices more fully by contextualising these practices in the real circumstances that shape their practices such as the newsroom, and the culture of violence in South Africa that results in the prevalence of rape. This allowed for their practices to be opened up to "reflection, discussion and reconstruction as products of past circumstances which are capable of being modified in and for present and future circumstances" (Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998: 25).

PAR entails a series of reflective cycles, which are: planning a transformation; "acting and observing the process and consequences of change"; reflecting on the processes and consequences; and then planning the next cycle of action, and so forth (Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998: 21). However, the process is not as clear cut as the cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The steps may overlap, and preliminary plans will shift as participants gain new insight. Success of the process is not dependent on whether the steps of the PAR cycle have been followed closely, but whether the participants have shifted "their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the situations in which they practice" (Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998: 21).

The "basic tenets" of PAR are:

1. Attend to concrete, tangible problems within a specific context, and endeavour to "seek and implement solutions within that context" (Koshy 2010: 33). Because the process is positioned within the newsroom, "the ownership of change is a priority and the goal is to improve professional practice" (Koshy 2010: 33).
2. Formulate knowledge to generate transformation, and understand that transformation will in turn create new knowledge.
3. Generates and incorporates transformation into the direct objectives of the process, and does not leave them to be put into practice after the research process.

4. It is collaborative, researchers and the community work together to generate change and new knowledge concerning the context they are working within.
5. The process is cyclical, and “takes shape as knowledge emerges. Cycles converge towards better situational understanding and improved action implementation, and are based in evaluative practice that alternates between action and critical reflection” (Kochy 2010: 33).

PAR falls within the boundaries of qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is employed in this study due to its “potential to show how broader structures constrain[ed] and shape[d]” the understandings of how journalists understand their roles in rape coverage (Reid et al 2006: 317). It further provides participants with the opportunity to “describe” these structures “while articulating changes” that could improve their coverage (Reid et al 2006: 317). This approach in social research advances the idea that researchers should provide an “insider perspective on social action” (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 270). This research is then concerned with understanding the point of view of the social actors, through their experiences or knowledge, and working with them to comprehend or describe this experience (Babbie & Mouton 2007). Further, this research is informed by a critical realist model which holds that actions be placed within the greater social and cultural structures that “envelop and shape” them (Deacon et al 1999: 10). In making these structures known, social actors come to understand the constraints they operate within, and begin the process to transform them, if this transformation is desired (Maguire 1987).

PAR is a research process that employs a “three part process of social investigation, education and action” to create knowledge with communities (Maguire 1987: 3). The process is explicitly directed towards exploring, collaboratively, the lived experiences of the participants in order to enact change. The three-part process is an approach which intends to bring about personal and social change through developing “critical consciousness” in order to transform the lives of those involved in the process, as well as the “fundamental societal structures and relationships” that surround them (Maguire 1987: 3). In relation to *Grocott’s Mail* this three-phase process was directed towards working with the staff to collectively investigate their experiences in order to make the steps towards transforming their practice; or made available alternative practices that they could incorporate into their current manner of covering news. The ultimate aim of the PAR

process at *Grocott's Mail* was to bring about “critical consciousness” in order to make a possible a different way of covering rape, as well as to have an impact on the greater “fundamental societal structures and relationships” that influence and are influenced by the community paper (Maguire 1987: 3). This process was about working with the *Grocott's Mail* staff to create the opportunity to engage in “critical reflection and analysis of their practice” (Maguire 1987: 38).

This critical reflection, and the overall PAR process is primarily informed by a feminist perspective, aimed at consciousness raising around an issue that the community identifies as needing attention. In this case, the community at *Grocott's Mail* identified rape as a social problem that needed to be addressed, their approaching GAP is indicative of this identification, and desire to transform their rape reporting. The „action“ component of PAR compliments feminist research“s political agenda of social change: not simply studying an issue but “facilitate[ing] the action necessary for change to occur” (Koch & Kralik 2006: 15). Maguire describes feminism as three things: a principle which recognises that women are oppressed; a duty to expose and understand the causes of this oppression; and a commitment to work to end all oppression (Maguire 1987). Feminist research is concerned with the liberation of women from all oppression, as well as the “creation of a just world for everyone” (Maguire 1987: 79).

PAR aims to provide participants with the opportunity to contribute to the construction of meaning around an issue that they have identified as requiring attention. The process encourages “reflection and reconstruction of experiences” to improve individual and community understanding around a particular issue (Koch & Kralik 2006: 5). Participants through the PAR process, are able to collaboratively envision alternative approaches to problems they have highlighted (Koch & Kralik 2006). PAR also aims to highlight that social science is not neutral, and that there is a political nature to all that we do (Maguire 1987). The process operates on the basis that “knowledge has become the single most important basis of power and control” (Maguire 1987: 35).

There is no concrete method or means to doing feminist research, instead the research needs to be informed by the desire to address power imbalances, women“s oppression, and to work towards social justice for all (Maguire 1987). The PAR process is similar in that there is no

concrete or fixed method of conducting the research, there is a loose set of guidelines. It is important to remember that the PAR process employed needs to be open to adapting to the context and needs of the community being researched (Koch & Kralik 2006; Maguire 1987). The nature of working with journalists to address their rape coverage requires a method that is collaborative and not prescriptive; it is a method that needs to be founded on the basis of dialogue with the journalists at *Grocott's Mail*. This dialogue will be an assessment of what they perceive the role of the newspaper to be within a community and how they understand this specifically in relation to rape as a social problem.

3.1.1 Why is participatory action research useful for *Grocott's Mail*?

PAR deals with practice within the context of a community, an example of this would be the *Grocott's Mail* staff, looking at their journalistic practice within the community of practice, and within the Grahamstown community (Koshy 2010). Koshy considers this method to be a “constructive enquiry, during which the researcher constructs his or her knowledge of specific issues through planning, acting, evaluating, refining and learning from the experience” (2010: 9). In this process, the researcher learns, continuously, and imparts the “newly generated knowledge” with others and those who will gain from it (Koshy 2010: 9).

PAR possesses five characteristics. The first characteristic is that an issue arises from within a community, and the researcher and participants form a partnership in addressing this issue, in the case of *Grocott's Mail*, this would be the need to address rape reportage and address the concept of community, and media roles in relation to this. The second characteristic is the use of knowledge generated from the lived experience of participants, and working towards creating real solutions that fit the context, here this would be drawing on journalists experience of reporting on rape, working at a community paper, and their understandings of the roles employed in their reporting. The third characteristic is empowerment, bringing the participants’ awareness to their abilities and their capacity to transform the current situation they find themselves in; here with *Grocott's Mail* this was about drawing the journalists’ attention to the roles they can employ to improve their coverage of rape. The fourth characteristic is consciousness-raising,

learning through bringing attention to an issue, such as rape, for both the researcher and participants. In the case of *Grocott's Mail* this was about raising the issue of rape reportage and the potential damage the current means of reporting has on societal perceptions of rape survivors, and in terms of the researcher, this was about understanding this in relation to the newsroom routines that create such an environment. The fifth characteristic is social change, the transformation of the participants' current situation, however, "this change may be restricted to raising awareness or capacity building" (Koch & Kralik 2006: 24). This was true of *Grocott's Mail* as the study consisted of one cycle, and was able to only, realistically focus on exploring and raising consciousness around community, media roles, and rape reportage.

As mentioned above, PAR is collaborative, with the researcher and participants working together in "cycles to explore concerns, claims or issues" and to "reflect" on possible solutions to the current situation and to "build capacity" among participants to tackle these issues (Koch & Kralik 2006: 27). With the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* these cycles took the form of workshops and interviews to explore matters, and reflect on solutions, the reflection took place primarily in the interview phase of the process.

3.1.2 Researcher's position

In a PAR process, it is important that the researcher is explicit about all choices made, her experiences, of the process and that these reflections are written in the first person (Maguire 1987). In adopting a feminist perspective, that emphasises power relations, the researcher is required to preserve a critical awareness of how she may influence the work (Koch & Kralik 2006).

The researcher in the PAR process was expected to "act as a catalyst" and help participants define the issue or problem and provide them with support in seeking out solutions (Koch & Kralik 2006: 100). In doing so, the following guidelines may be borne in mind: 1) incite, don't force, change – "encourage participants to change through addressing issues that concern them

now” (Koch & Kralik 2006: 100); 2) pay attention to the issues that arise during the process, instead of focusing on the outcomes of the process; 3) guarantee that “the process starts where people are” instead of where the researcher believes them to be (Koch & Kralik 2006: 100); 4) support participants in assessing their current situation, respect what they uncover, and help plan what aspects they would like to maintain/keep and what they would like to change (Koch & Kralik 2006).

The researcher was also the facilitator in this process. The facilitator was required to “respect and acknowledge the participants’ ideas” and not impose what should be kept or changed; it was also up to the facilitator to “enable participants to view several options and consider the potential outcomes or consequences of those options” (Koch & Kralik 2006: 100). The facilitator was expected to assist participants with implementing their decisions or actions by working out the positive and negative components, and then through assisting with locating the needed resources. The responsibility of the project/process rested on the participants, who had to feel that they own the process, so that they would invest in the process in order to bring about change. The facilitator ultimately “leads the group where it wants to go”, the end result of the process cannot be foreseen (Koch & Kralik 2006: 101).

3.1.3 Limitations, implications, and ethical considerations of PAR

Maguire lists the difficulties and limitations of conducting participatory research. The first is that the process demands a great deal from the researcher; secondly, the transference of control over the process to participants – making sure participants are capable of holding the process and what it entails; the third difficulty is maintenance of the process’ planning and organisation; fourthly, the limitation of time; and lastly the assessment of whether the process has been successful in accomplishing the research goals set out by the group (Maguire 1987).

Although PAR aims to “redistribute power”, there is no guarantee that it will do so beyond a temporary basis; and in order for it to do so, processes and organisations need to be set up to manage this (Maguire 1987: 198). It is important to note that power is not distributed in a

moment, but that it is a struggle and requires time, energy and great sacrifice (Maguire 1987). In PAR it is easy to want to dismiss or undervalue the efforts of all participants (including the researcher) because they don't seem "long term, transformational, radical, or important enough" (Maguire 1987: 199). The true challenge of the process is celebrating each collective success of the group, and to nurture each participant as the process moves towards "the direction of change for social justice" (Maguire 1987: 199).

In the case of *Grocott's Mail*, the PAR process was limited to one cycle due to the nature and scope of the study. This cycle consisted of both the workshop and in-depth interview processes. PAR processes aim to shift consciousness around particular issues in order to bring about change through eventual action. This study is unfortunately limited to just the exploration of understandings around rape reportage and potential roles for reporting (Maguire 1987: 199).

Koshy argues that ethical considerations are of distinct importance in PAR processes due to the nature of the research, being the size it is, and working with a small group within their context. And, offers up ethical guidelines: make clear the point of the research, such as improving practice; keep the identities and names of the participants private and unidentifiable; when gathering data, be as "non-intrusive" as possible; and share the results of the final report with the participants (Koshy 2010: 82).

3.2 Research design

The PAR process, is a combination of Koch and Kralik's three phases (2006), "look, think and act" – these phases are cyclical and will, at times, overlap (2006: 28). „Look“ provides the space for the research group/community to describe their situation: "people live stories, and in their telling them, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones" (Koch & Kralik 2006: 29).

Through this phase, the issue or context is determined. (Koch & Kralik 2006). The „think“ phase is prompted by the researcher's facilitation in asking the participants to consider their context, and why things are as they are (Koch & Kralik 2006: 29). All participants (including the researcher) go about creating a shared meaning of the context through conversation. Briefly, the

„think“ process is concerned with “exploring, analysing, interpreting and explaining events, story lines and interpretations” (Koch & Kralik 2006: 29). The „act“ phase asks that participants consider and query what is significant to them, and the choices available to them. Action is a collaborative undertaking that all participants decide on. It is important to bear in mind that critical reflection, through the „look, think, and act“ process is important. The reflection component is concerned with understanding situations, as we attempt to generate meaning “out of the experiences and situations of which we are a part” (Koch & Kralik 2006: 30).

At a theoretical level, there is an abstract difference between the „look, think, and act“ components. However, this difference dissipates and fuses because participants undertake multiple cycles of reflection when considering their situation, issues, solutions, and potential actions. The plan to undertake action is not something that happens at the end of the cycle but something that is borne in mind throughout the process (Koch & Kralik 2006). The reflection-action framework of the PAR process sees participants and the process as consistently moving between reflection and action as issues come to light (Maguire 1987).

Informed by PAR, the research design took the form of workshops oriented around particular themes informed by the literature employed by the thesis on sociology of news, normative theories of the press, sex crime reporting; and rape as a social problem. These workshops were facilitated by the researcher, and participants were all those responsible for production at this small newspaper: editor, news editor, sports editor, citizen journalism editor, sub-editor, designers, photographers and interns. Further, in-depth interviews with individuals were used to clarify issues and deepen the researcher’s understanding. The participants’ knowledge of *Grocott’s Mail’s* rape coverage and production processes were important to this study and served to contextualise any matters that arose during the workshop stage.

This research process consists of two phases: workshops and one-on-one interviews. The three workshops of approximately 90 minutes in length occurred from 23 August to 13 September

2010. The first workshop looked at *Grocott's Mail* as a community paper, how it functions, and how the staff understood the paper's role in the community. The second workshop explored newsroom processes, and roles of the media. The third workshop worked to address rape reportage specifically, and to understand it within the context of the content of the first two workshops. It worked with the knowledge the journalists possessed, as well as reflecting on Bonnes' findings, and feminist cultural studies theory on rape and rape reportage. One-on-one interviews were employed to explore any issues that arose as a result of the content of the workshops, and to deepen the researcher's understanding of processes and understandings among the staff at *Grocott's Mail*.

3.3 Conclusion

PAR was an ideal method in addressing rape reportage at *Grocott's Mail* due to its concern with practice and emphasis on collaboration. The exploration and analysis took place within the community of practice in order to investigate the processes and understandings which impact on their reportage. It drew on the knowledge of the researcher, and the knowledge of the journalists gained from their lived experiences to address the issue of rape reportage, and to begin transforming the newsroom routines, journalism processes, and professional ideologies that impede rape reporting. It must be borne in mind that this transformation occurred at the level of exploration and consciousness raising around the understanding of the paper's role in the community, newsroom routines, professional identities, and rape reportage.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter reports on and discusses the three workshops I conducted with the staff which dealt with: sense of „community“, roles of the media, and rape and reportage. It uses the three themes of the workshops as an organising outline. Each section will contain a discussion of the workshop for that theme, and the subsequent relevant interview content that corresponds with the theme. The interviews were employed for further exploration of issues that arose from the workshops. I will then, once the discussion is complete, pull out the primary matters for explanation and final analysis. These are what I have distilled from the process as having a significant impact on rape reporting at *Grocott's Mail*

In total, five *Grocott's Mail* staff and two student journalists took part in the workshops, however not all seven participants were present at every workshop. It must be borne in mind that the research sample is affected by the nature of community papers, such as *Grocott's Mail*, which are typically small. The five *Grocott's Mail* staff members were: Steven Lang, the editor; Abongile Mgaqelwa, the news editor; Prudence Mini, the municipal affairs reporter; Kwanele Butana, the citizen journalism editor; and Khanyiso Tshwaku, an intern. The two student journalists were Thomas Holder, and Bradford Keen.

Steven Lang is 56 years old, and was born in Johannesburg. He moved to Grahamstown in 2008 to take up the post of editor at *Grocott's Mail*. He received his journalism training at the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

Abongile Mgaqelwa is 25 years old, and was born in Umtata. She received her journalism education at Walter Sisulu University in East London and worked as a media manager for a

communications company after graduation. She moved to Grahamstown in 2009 to take up the post of news editor at *Grocott's Mail*.

Prudence Mini is 24 years old, and was born in Grahamstown. She is the municipal affairs reporter at *Grocott's Mail*. She received her journalism education at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, and completed an internship with *Grocott's Mail* in 2008. She has worked for the paper for 13 months as their municipal affairs reporter, This entails following the happenings and decision-making procedures at Makana Municipality.

Kwanele Butana is 32 years old and was born in Grahamstown. He has lived here his whole life except for the period in which he studied at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He began working for *Grocott's Mail* in July 2006 as an intern on a year-long contract. He then freelanced for five months before being given a permanent post, and was appointed as citizen journalism editor in April 2010. As indicated by the *Grocott's Mail* website, the citizen journalism unit was developed for “encouraging and empowering all citizens of Grahamstown to more actively engage in debates and discussions about important issues in their lives their producing and publishing their own original content” (<http://www.grocotts.co.za/cjnr>).

Khanyiso Tshwaku is 22 years old, originally from Mdantsane, and moved to Grahamstown in 2010. He has worked at *Grocott's Mail* for six months. He received his journalism education at Walter Sisulu University. He began as an intern and is moving towards becoming a junior reporter.

Thomas Holder is 24 years old. He was born in Grahamstown, and has recently completed his postgraduate diploma in journalism at Rhodes University. He interned as a student journalist at *Grocott's Mail* for six weeks, the newsroom is an experiential one which provides practical experience to students during their studies.

Bradford Keen is 27 years old. He was born in Johannesburg, and moved to Grahamstown to obtain a postgraduate diploma in journalism at Rhodes University. He interned as a student journalist at *Grocott's Mail* for six weeks.

The first workshop was concerned with understanding *Grocott's Mail* as a community paper, its role within the community and how it functions, and the staff of *Grocott's Mail* as forming a community of practice. There were four staff members present at this workshop: the editor, the news editor, an intern, and a student journalist. Initially, the participant group was supposed to be larger, consisting of all production staff at *Grocott's Mail*. However, when I arrived I discovered that while the session had been scheduled on the editor's diary for three weeks, the day-to-day manner in which the newsroom operates had overridden this long-term commitment. Lang had informed his staff that the session would be happening on this date, but as is a normal day-to-day occurrence within this newsroom, staff were making phone calls, and some were out of the newsroom following up on stories and were unable to make the scheduled session. This is important to note as it has a bearing on the relationship between day-to-day activity and long term reflection on their practice. I will pick this up later in the chapter. As a result of this experience, I made a point of scheduling the subsequent sessions with the staff that were present, and then, on the morning before the diary meeting of the scheduled session, I would go to the newsroom and confirm, in person, with each participant that they would be present at the day's session. This did ensure that they attended, but did not ensure that they were punctual, and would often be up to half an hour late for the session, due to sourcing stories, or other meetings that came up between the time I had seen them that morning and the time of the session. Lang explained that due to the nature of the newsroom, and the constraints on producing journalism that exist therein, I could not expect all participants to be present. This position on the nature of the newsroom and what it meant to practice journalism overshadowed the PAR process.

Nevertheless, the first workshop produced rich material regarding ideas around the paper's "personality" and Grahamstown as a community. The workshop did not reveal how the staff

thought of themselves as a community of practice, and this needed further exploration through one-on-one interviews. I suspected that the idea around being a community of practice was something understood by the journalists, and that they in fact thought of themselves as a community, but that it was not articulated or consciously expressed in these words.

The second workshop sought to move from the understanding of how *Grocott's Mail* operated in Grahamstown and the journalists understanding of their role at the paper and in the city to an exploration of the nature of the newsroom. In particular, it set out to investigate the news routines and constraints that impact on journalists. It also explored the four roles, as outlined and discussed by Christians et al, with focus being given to three of the roles: monitorial, facilitative, and radical. Present at this workshop were Lang, the editor; Butana, the citizen journalism editor; Tshwaku, the intern; and Holder and Keen, the two student journalists. In this workshop, it was difficult to get the participants to give in-depth responses to the questions posed but there were moments of significant insight that are put forward in the discussion of the second workshop.

The third workshop had to be split over two days because of the amount of discussion that was generated around the reporting of rape. The news editor, the citizen journalism editor, the municipal affairs reporter, and the intern were present for the first half of this workshop which dealt with rape as a social problem. This segment of the workshop generated noteworthy dialogue on rape among the participants, and provided some of the richest material out of the entire PAR process. I had not anticipated that this workshop would create such content due to the sensitive nature of the issue of rape, and I had expected that the participants would not be comfortable discussing it. It was not an easy discussion, and tensions were present among participants but there was significant development in relation to the previous two workshops. The editor, the news editor, and the intern were present for the second half of the workshop. This segment of the workshop also offered up strong material, and was the most telling with regards to what occurs in the newsroom and how it impacts on rape reportage at *Grocott's Mail*.

In reviewing the workshop content and discussions, I realised that some areas required further exploration. I spoke to the staff who agreed to extend the PAR process to include a one-on-one interview session with each of the permanent staff: the editor, news editor, citizen journalism editor, municipal affairs reporter, and the intern reporter. The interview schedule was the same for each participant, broken down into questions that arose as a result of the three workshops, and then general questions on what had informed their understandings of rape, or notions of professionalism, these questions were more concerned with their histories and what had led them to their current understandings on roles of the media, rape reportage, and working for a community newspaper.

4.1.1 Workshop 1: Understanding „community“

The first workshop set out to explore whether the staff have a coherent sense of community both in terms of the Grahamstown community which they serve, and the “interpretive community” of journalists that work at *Grocott’s Mail* (Zelizer 1993: 223). The notion of community of practice comes out educational theory but has been useful for theorists of journalism too. Theorists like Zelizer use the language of “interpretive community” and “community of practice” to describe a coherent set of professional behaviours that journalists adopt, and which impact strongly on the way that they practice journalism (Zelizer 1993; Smith 2009). In probing „community“ I was trying to assess whether they had a conscious sense of this, and to gain an understanding of how the journalists at *Grocott’s Mail* situate themselves both within the Grahamstown community and within the newsroom. This will give me insight into whether they see themselves as distant from or embedded in the greater community and whether they possess a coherent and collective identity as journalists.

4.1.1.1 Community

The workshop set out to determine how the staff defined community in relation to the citizens of Grahamstown who are their readers. They seemed to use the term, as in South African common speech, to mean referring to township residents “without voice” (Holder) as well as those

“people in society around you” (Tshwaku). The discussion was steered towards thinking of the staff as forming their own community, looking to explore how they understood themselves through their “shared interpretations of reality” (Zelizer 1993: 223). The way they speak of news stories, and the processes involved in producing them, is indicative of how they generate meaning and understand themselves as journalists (Zelizer 1993). I expected a discussion around community of practice and a common sense notion of professionalism that resulted in a collective identity. What occurred was that the discussion was steered towards the role of the paper as a whole within the community; I highlighted this absence of discussion around community of practice for further exploration through the interview process.

Regarding the role of the paper, Mgaqelwa, the news editor, raised the idea that the paper does “cater for everyone in Grahamstown” and that it was “where everything converges”. This led the group to explore whether they saw themselves as integrated into the Grahamstown community. There existed a general sense of the paper participating in the community and that it was not “detached” from the community (Tshwaku). Holder argued that regardless of how objective a journalist or the paper attempts to be, there is “a part of you that’s invested in a story”. His sense of attachment may stem from his roots in the community, having been born and raised in Grahamstown.

Holder said that Grahamstown was divided between West (more affluent, and urban) and East (mostly impoverished, townships, and informal settlements). This led the discussion to *Grocott’s Mail’s* role in bridging the two communities into a greater whole and whether the staff saw themselves as belonging to this broader community.

Lang explained that the paper attempted to unite Grahamstown “West” and Grahamstown “East” through its coverage. He acknowledged that *Grocott’s Mail* didn’t address issues such as language - the majority of Grahamstown citizens speak isiXhosa and the paper publishes almost entirely in English. The staff spoke of language, class, and education as barriers, or factors that

hinder the communities being united. They felt that it was the responsibility of both Grahamstown West and East communities and government to bridge the divide. The staff argued that their role in fostering social inclusion lay in their coverage of particular issues, such as service delivery, and education.

In concluding the discussion on community, it is useful to note how the staff describe the personality of the paper in order to get a sense of how they think of its role in the community. Lang described it as a “busy body” and “nosy parker”, wanting to “know everyone’s business”. Mgaqelwa agreed but suggested that it was a “kind-hearted busy body”, while Holder described it as “fighting for the little man”.

4.1.1.2 How *Grocott’s Mail* functions

Included in workshop one, for the purposes of understanding *Grocott’s Mail’s* community of practice, we explored how the paper functioned. This was mostly descriptive due to the uncomplicated, basic nature of the paper’s daily functioning. Every morning there is a diary meeting where the staff pitch stories they would like to cover or follow up on. When the pitches are approved by the news editor or editor, they collect content or data through face-to-face or telephonic interviews. The journalists construct their stories, and then file them for checking either by the editor or the news editor. Once this is done, the stories make their way to the subeditor, and then they move to layout, and then to proofreading. The pages then go to the editor for sign off, and then printing.

Usefully, this description provoked a discussion on what the staff considered „news“ to be, and how it came to be that a particular story would be considered newsworthy enough for pitching at the diary meeting. Holder suggested that it was “whatever the public interest is”. Tshwaku described a story as requiring “newsworthiness, timeliness,” and to be newsworthy “the impact it could have on people” needed to be considered. Mgaqelwa insisted that something was newsworthy if it was “relevant to the community”.

4.1.1.3 Key areas for further investigation

From the above discussion, I sensed that the interview process would have to explore further the ideas of how *Grocott's Mail* catered to the communities of Grahamstown West and East, and its role in creating a sense of community. It would also need to explore the notion of a “community of practice”, and whether the journalists, individually, had a sense of belonging to a collective professional identity (Smith 2009). In exploring these areas, I would be able to get an impression of their professional identity and reporting attitudes that impact on their rape reportage.

4.1.2 Interviews

4.1.2.1 *Grocott's Mail* as a community of practice

I attempted to unravel whether the staff felt a sense of professional identity at the paper. If the staff at *Grocott's Mail* believe they are a community of practice based on profession, this may assist with the adopting of a strategy around rape coverage. Initially, during the workshop phase, they did not respond to the notion of a community of practice, but this shifted as I explored the concept one-on-one. There appeared to be a general sense of a community among staff that was different from the Grahamstown community. Lang said that “in the newsroom there is a separate community”. He elaborated by saying that when the student journalists arrive for newsroom experience it is as though “a new community is being formed. A temporary community exists for a certain amount of time, and then mutates into something else”. In terms of permanent staff, Lang believes that they possess a cohesive sense of identity and “identify with the institution”.

Mgaqelwa felt that the paper was both separate from and embedded in the Grahamstown community. Separate because the journalists are “the communicators, we bring news to the people”, and so must to a degree be removed from the community in order to report on it. She

found that reporters, when initially joining the paper “come here with the idea „I’m the reporter” and the community is there. But as they learn to work with the community, they become part of the community”. Mgaqelwa’s observation makes evident that the *Grocott’s Mail* journalists consider themselves detached from, and at the same time, embedded in the Grahamstown community.

Butana didn’t feel that the staff form their own community, but did feel that a community of journalists exists “but it’s not only made up of Grahamstown or *Grocott’s Mail* reporters”. He sensed the staff considered themselves part of the larger Grahamstown community because “our coverage of news in this community responds to the rhythms of the community”. He explained that the staff have a clear understanding of “what is expected of them in terms of their work ethic, and their general conduct at work”. Tshwaku reiterated this, explaining that the staff work as a team in the newsroom, with “a common goal, where you put aside your differences and focus on what’s at hand”.

Bearing in mind the notion of a common objective, I explored with each participant how they thought of their function at the paper. Each participant spoke to catering to the needs of the citizens of Grahamstown. Lang, the editor, saw his role as both thinking of the paper as a business, and at the same time having an “obligation to attend to the needs of the broader community”. He described the Grahamstown community as being diverse, with a “wide range of people with different cultural backgrounds, different interests, different concerns”, and felt that it was his responsibility to ensure that “they have a voice in the newspaper”.

Mgaqelwa, the news editor, described herself as dealing with “the managerial side of things” and handling “the flow of news”. She described herself as being “the mother [of *Grocott’s Mail*], I assist reporters with story ideas, with angles and everything like that”. Butana saw himself as a bridge “between citizen journalism and professional journalism”, turning what citizens journalists “produce into marketable news products”. Mini understood her position as “reporting on everything that happens” while Tshwaku adopted the stance that he is an informer of the people, providing them with information about what is happening in Grahamstown.

4.1.2.2 Creating a sense of community in Grahamstown

There is a desire at *Grocott's Mail* to bridge the divide that exists between Grahamstown West and Grahamstown East, and to create a sense of belonging to a larger whole while repairing the divisions of the past. Lang believes that *Grocott's Mail* creates a sense of community and attempts to bridge the divide through the content it publishes. He says that the paper creates a “platform” for the “voiceless” to articulate their needs and views, and suggests this is done through the letters section, sms section and the citizen journalism unit at the paper. Butana explains that with the citizen journalism unit, citizens of Grahamstown East are more comfortable approaching the citizen journalists that reside in their community and this assists in giving them voice.

The staff spoke to catering to all members of the greater Grahamstown community through their coverage of different stories and issues that are important and relevant to different groups that exist in the community. Mgaqelwa described the paper as being “the heart of Grahamstown” and that everything converges at *Grocott's Mail*. Butana doesn't believe that this is the case because of the location of the paper in Grahamstown West, in the central business district which is situated far away from the population living in Grahamstown East. He did feel that it was a worthwhile “thing to aspire to”, and that the paper should be “the mouthpiece of the community” and “reflective of the activities, of the plight of the Grahamstown community. It must talk on behalf of their fears and dreams”.

4.1.3 Pulling primary points together

What I discovered was that the staff understood *Grocott's Mail* as positioned in the Grahamstown community but that they adopt an interesting approach to this understanding of community. They adopt both a distanced and embedded approach to it. Their journalistic socialisation, informed by notions of what it means to be a professional journalist allows them to step back and create a distance from stories. However, the size of the town, and the fact that some members of staff are from Grahamstown results in an embeddedness in the broader

community. They are confronted with this tension between embeddedness and professional detachment when covering stories.

Their own understanding of themselves as a community of practice was not initially articulated in the workshop phase. Through one-on-one interviews this sense of a collective identity became more apparent as they articulated common goals and understandings of their work at *Grocott's Mail*. One such common objective is bridging the divide between Grahamstown West and East, a divide that they are exceptionally aware of. They hold strongly to this and that they have a responsibility to the citizens of the town to unite the two communities. The staff indicate that the paper works towards creating a difference in the community through reportage on certain issues. The issues that they note are those of service delivery and education. However, gender-based violence, although pervasive in Grahamstown, is not raised as an issue that needs to be addressed to serve and unite the community. What issues they have on their agenda are important to note as this will relate later to rape reporting, in particular regarding the complexities around sourcing information and approaches to reportage.

4.2.1 Workshop 2: News routines and the roles of the media

This workshop set out to explore the newsroom routines and approaches to stories that theorists point out as impacting on rape reporting. In the „community“ workshop the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* had indicated a strong desire to make a difference in the community, and saw themselves as having a role and responsibility in addressing the issues that they believe divide the community. However, again, it is important to note that gender-based violence did not feature as an issue on their agenda during the „community“ workshop. This section seeks to understand why this is the case through interrogating newsroom routines and role of the media with the participants.

Theorists of sociology of news point out that while individual journalists may actively challenge rape, their efforts are hindered by newsroom routines and constraints that impact on how the

story is constructed. These constraints include deadlines, instructions of news editors and editors, and “limited access to sources of information, as well as the laws surrounding what may or may not be reported in relation to court cases and rape survivors” (Soul City 1999: 4). Journalists rely on police and court reports for information regarding rape cases, and come to identify these sources as authorities on the matter, and this affects how rape is reported and discussed in the news (Kitzinger 2004). The use of these sources and their supply of verifiable facts speaks to journalistic emphasis on objectivity. In claiming objectivity, journalists release themselves from the complexity of reporting on issues and the circumstances that result in them, such as rape and gender-based violence (Richardson 2007).

Newsroom routines and the notion of objectivity do not exclusively impact on rape reporting, in addition, the way in which journalists position themselves needs to be taken into account. This can be investigated through discussing normative theories of the media and the employment of the roles that the body of theory presents (Christians et al 2009). The purpose behind opening up the facilitative and the radical roles is that they provide alternatives and a basic guideline for the paper. If they do not have these, they will continue to routinely lean on the monitorial role which theorists point out as not being effective in addressing issues such as gender-based violence (Christians et al 2009).

Under the monitorial role journalism is defined as imparting information to society, and is seen to be the very basis of journalistic practice. This role is the least contentious in that it is the traditional role of the media, concerned with the collection, processing and transmission of information on events that occur within society. The monitorial role moves between an inactive channeling of information and an active watchdog role, but stops short of an advocacy role due to the constraints of the notions of professionalism. These maintain that opinion and comment should be separate from evidence and facts (Christians et al 2009). The alternatives of the facilitative and the radical role encourage opinion and comment. The facilitative role pushes the media to improve public life and play a role in facilitating active citizenship and civil society. It is concerned with the concept of community, and addressing issues that impact on communities.

The radical role's primary objective for the media is the transformation of society through raising public consciousness around abuses of power and injustice, and supports social movements that provide possible transformative actions (Christians et al 2009).

The purpose behind interrogating routines and roles with the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* is that theorists point out that these impact on journalists' abilities to address issues and transform society. In pulling the strands of sociology of news and normative theories of the media together this study is able to investigate and explore understandings of rape, newsroom routines, and professional identities in order to bring to the fore the complexities around addressing rape.

4.2.1.1 Constraints and sources

The discussion explored the constraints that staff at *Grocott's Mail* faced in producing news stories. The journalists didn't feel that anything in particular impacted or restricted their reporting, except for those constraints which were self-imposed. Student journalist, Bradford Keen felt that journalists restricted their reporting due to the size of the town, because "harmonious living with the people you're reporting on" had to be considered. This meant that in telling a story, "you have to think of the implications in a far more, immediate, personal way". This discussion on the implications of reporting in Grahamstown led to a discussion on sources, with Keen commenting that the size of the town was also "advantageous" as "your sources are largely the people directly involved. You're encouraged to get information from the people affected rather than the authorities".

4.2.1.2 Objectivity

The notion of objectivity had a strong presence in the workshop. It was generally understood as "balancing your story with two sources from opposing sides" (Holder), and "worth aspiring to" (Lang). Holder argued quite strongly that he thought "pure objectivity... is probably crap" and that he pitches a story because he has an invested interest in it. Tshwaku differed here, stating

that “any story should not reflect your opinions. Use the information you’ve gathered to tie the story together, but not your personal opinion”.

Lang commented that objectivity is something “one should strive towards”. He argued that “we’re not always totally objective. And in some cases, it’s not even desirable”. He provided an example on service delivery, that the side of the community is taken in terms of their needs being met. He argued that when it came to determining blame, then the reporter needed to be “objective on deciding where the fault lies”. This links back to the point raised in workshop one on the detached and embedded relationship the journalists have with the greater Grahamstown community.

4.2.1.3 Roles of the media

For the discussion on roles of the media I presented the participants with a summary of three of the roles explored by Christian et al: monitorial, facilitative and radical; and then pursued a discussion of the roles which they thought *Grocott’s Mail* fulfilled or engaged in.

Butana felt that the monitorial role was most evident in *Grocott’s Mail’s* “coverage of the affairs at Makana Municipality. We try to attend all their meetings and monitor their reports that get tabled”. Lang felt that in terms of the facilitative role the paper provided the community with a “platform for other people to talk”. He pointed to the letters page, the sms facility, and the „your say” section in the Friday edition. He said that “we make an effort; there is space to use *Grocott’s Mail* as a platform to air other views”.

I asked the staff which roles they felt most comfortable with *Grocott’s Mail* adopting, and they argued that it was “always beneficial” to have multiple roles because “different issues require different approaches”(Keen). Butana felt that most of his reporting fell under the monitorial role, although he had, at times, engaged with other, “I think it’s a matter of coincidence, but I do identify with all these roles”. The overall position regarding the roles was that “different

circumstance, different story ideas, we have different roles” (Lang). In terms of which role better served the community, the staff felt that it was, again, about the circumstances, and whether the roles were applicable. Lang suggested that it was conceivable to “have a combination of both”. He provided the example of a vox pop where the question would be “is the municipality doing a good job?” He describes this as being, “a monitorial thing, but at the same time it’s facilitative because we’re facilitating community, and also in selecting that question, we’re actually being quite activist about it”.

4.2.1.4 Key areas for further investigation

This workshop produced some insights into the newsroom routines and the roles that impact on journalists and their reporting. The participants were open to alternative roles and indicated that they were circumstantially employed in their reporting. However, they continue to have a very traditional and routinised sense of how they should be reporting on issues. The interview process sought to further explore the roles of the media as presented by Christians et al (2009).

4.2.2 Interviews

4.2.2.1 Preferred roles

The participants and I explored the roles which they were most comfortable employing. Lang argued that when stories are conceptualised, he doesn’t think about which role they fall under, and believes that at *Grocott’s Mail*, “we cover all three aspects”. Butana identified closely with the monitorial and facilitative roles. Mini felt at ease with “hard news” - the monitorial role – she places this due to her position as municipal reporter, “sitting in all those council meetings to find out if they are doing something”.

Tshwaku preferred working with the monitorial and facilitative roles. On the monitorial role, “basically the way I’ve been taught is that the media is the watchdog, it speaks for the people. If there’s something the people can’t say, you need to speak on their behalf”. And in terms of the facilitative role, “you facilitate change, you are the catalyst, you speed up the work” (Tshwaku). Mgaqelwa believes that with regards rape a radical approach needs to be adopted. She believes *Grocott’s Mail* does this, explaining that “we’re focusing on one thing, that is, expose the perpetrators, and what the police are doing about it”. She suggests they adopt the facilitative role when following up on stories, and work with “different powers that be and the community at large”.

4.2.2.2 Incorporating roles into the paper’s newsroom routines

I explored through discussion whether there was space at *Grocott’s Mail* to actively incorporate the roles in the newsroom such that the journalists would not routinely lean on the monitorial approach if not presented with alternatives. Lang stated upfront that he did not “have any plans to make our process more structured or formalized when making these different roles”. He had no desire to take “it any further or develop a methodology on how we should deal with such stories”. Tshwaku suggests that incorporating the roles into the paper’s routines is dependent “on the reporter itself, the thinking capabilities and what mind the reporter has”.

A key argument surfaced that the circumstances of an event or story determined which roles would be employed. Lang put this down to “the news business” being “influenced by external factors and we have to just report on what happens”. Butana states that “some circumstances only allow you to approach the story in one way and no other way, so circumstances play a huge factor in determining whether I go monitorial or facilitative or even radical”. Tshwaku, in relation to rape stories, suggests that “sometimes you need to be more monitorial or radical – it does depend on the circumstance of the story”.

4.2.3 Pulling together key points

The purpose behind interrogating routines and roles with the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* was because theorists indicate that these impact on journalists' abilities to address issues and transform society. Sociology of news illuminates the conventions of the newsroom and journalism processes, and scrutinises the use of news values which may frame rape stories in ways that are critiqued by feminist theorists (Meloy & Miller 2009). Normative theories of the media allows this study to unpack professional ideologies, such as how the journalists understand their role in serving a community and addressing rape (Christians et al 2009). Discussing newsroom routines and media roles allowed this workshop to investigate and explore how these impact on the paper's desire to create a difference.

I discovered that at *Grocott's Mail* there exists a very broad notion regarding the roles employed, but that there exists no concrete or conscious decision to approach a story from a particular role. Instead, it is said by the journalists that the circumstances of a story will determine the roles employed, this is a non-committal approach to media roles. In order to make the difference that the staff spoke of in the first workshop, an active employment of roles is necessary. From the „community“ workshop the staff indicated a strong desire to take seriously the issues that arise in the community, which did not include gender-based violence. I opened up the possibilities presented by Christians et al because they did not have an approach for dealing with rape that was anything beyond monitorial.

This is significant because theorists point to the fact that the routinised nature of doing hard news and monitorial approach means that journalists may not stop to consider the aspects of issues that do not fit into hard news frames. Despite the possibilities being opened up, the journalists present a nervousness that comes to be presented as a resistance around employing alternative roles. Having brought the above points to attention, we move on to look at rape reporting. Gender-based violence, which rape falls under, was not raised an issue on their agenda and this serves to mitigate against a different approach to the monitorial manner of reporting on rape. This prevents the journalists from creating the difference in Grahamstown that they speak of as desiring.

4.3.1 Workshop 3: Rape and reportage

This final workshop sought to interrogate individual understandings of rape as a social problem, and the journalists' individual approaches to rape reporting. It also presented Bonnes' findings on *Grocott's Mail's* complicity in perpetuating rape myths, and explored the circumstances that resulted in this. Lastly, the workshop explored the roles of the media and their potential employment in relation to rape coverage. The issue of rape is complex and is caught up in the experiences of the journalists, this includes their experiences of the justice system and being reporters within this community where gender-based violence is so prevalent.

Theorists from feminist cultural studies show how rape reporting not only effects how people understand rape but also their responses to survivors and perpetrators (Kitzinger 2004). The media are powerful in addressing societal perceptions of rape, this power can be employed to either shift deeply ingrained societal attitudes or to reinforce them (Lowe-Morna 2001). Individual journalists may understand gender-based violence as a serious issue, but the newsroom they operate in and the approaches they employ in their coverage may not represent this understanding (Kitzinger 2004).

Approaches, such as the monitorial role, may result in particular information being employed, such as whether alcohol was involved, and this may serve to perpetuate rape myths. A rape myth is an attitude held by society regarding rape, and is an argument which places responsibility on the survivor (Anderson&Doherty 2008; Serumaga 2007). Bonnes' showed that at *Grocott's Mail* there was a strong presence of rape myths in articles and that this needed to be problematised, in particular relation to the emphasis that the paper places on rape activism (2010).

The journalists at *Grocott's Mail* approach the stories with a great degree of nervousness partly because of their experiences in the past, such as with the Liddell case. I also sense that the prevalence and magnitude of rape in Grahamstown means that they are unsure of how to manage it, and so resort to employing a monitorial approach, a position that they are certain will not

result in complexities such as legal ramifications. In light of the above, this workshop seeks to explore understandings of rape, the complexities around rape reportage, and the potential employment of alternative approaches in order to open up possibilities for reporting that are not presented by the monitorial approach.

4.3.1.1 Understandings and responses to rape

The workshop began with a discussion on how staff understood rape. Different understandings of rape surfaced, from clear understandings of what rape is to confused and bordering on misogynistic understandings. Amongst these were also responses which spoke to how the issue of rape affects journalists who may not necessarily know how to deal with it.

Tshwaku described rape as being “like theft, you’re taking something that does not belong to you”. Butana explained that he understood “rape as sexual intercourse between two people with no consent”. Mini explained that her response to rape was determined by whether “the girl was drunk” and that she needed to remain objective for fear of running the risk of treating her like a victim.

Tshwaku argued that the scene at which the rape occurred determined whether it was in fact rape, “if it was at the guy’s house, you start to ask the question: was she forced or did she actually agree on going there? If this happens in the bush, it’s forced”. Mgaqelwa responded that “a woman can leave a party with a man she doesn’t know, go into his house” and that this didn’t “give him the right to rape her”. Mini explained that people perceived things this way, especially if “someone was raped after a party”. Mgaqelwa, again, responded with “that’s exactly the type of stereotype that we need to change, because even if someone walks in naked, it’s her own body, so why rape her?” Tshwaku said he understood this, but that he “felt that men have been on the receiving end in rape trials”.

Mgaqelwa moved this discussion along by discussing the rape of children which led to a discussion on the primary cause of rape. She argued that it may be sexual in nature, but that essentially it was about power. This observation on power hinted at the presence of a feminist consciousness in Mgaqelwa. Tshwaku said that men “feel power” when they have had sex, and that “when you get used to it, and then you don’t get it, you find that there’s something short”. Butana asked whether “a potential rapist is somebody who has low self-esteem, and then they overpower members of the opposite sex to regain some standing with men?” Tshwaku and Mini affirmed this.

4.3.1.2 Handling rape stories

In discussing the handling of rape stories, I signalled in particular an overreliance on police reports, and the nervousness and insecurity expressed by the journalists regarding rape reporting. This nervousness is due to previous incidents where *Grocott’s Mail* had found itself in legal trouble when attempting to handle rape cases in a non-monitorial manner, as with the Liddell case. The journalists also realise the problems with police reports and how they represent rape, but they are not sure of, or cannot see an alternative to these reports.

Mgaqelwa indicated that the majority of rape stories come from the reports that the police send to *Grocott’s Mail*, and estimates that these contribute 30% of the stories that feature in the paper. We then explored whether there were other sources the paper could turn to, Mgaqelwa explained that other sources came to them through “just chatting with people”. She provided an example of an elderly woman who had been raped, “the reporters were doing another story when they heard people talking about it, they asked them about it and that’s how they got to interview”. However, the police are generally their primary source of information on rapes that occur in Grahamstown.

Mgaqelwa also indicated that there is no journalist dedicated to covering gender and related matters. Regarding rape stories, “the person who pitches the story will cover it, unless they say it will be too emotional for them”. There exists no assessment as to whether the journalist is

sensitive to the issue and whether they understand the law around rape, in fact, none of the participants had read the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act (2007). Lang explained that if any stories were “legally sensitive” they were sent to Robert Brand, a lecturer in media law, for his opinion. If they do not contact Brand, they call the police to find out whether they can go ahead and publish a story. This results in legal trouble, as with the Liddell case. The police had indicated to Lang that he could legally publish Liddell’s image as a charge sheet existed. This was not the case.

Mgaqelwa explained that *Grocott’s Mail* handles rape stories differently to other stories, and that they have “to be careful”. Lang explained that due to the sensitivities and difficulties around rape reporting, such as legal ramifications, rape stories often appeared in the news in brief section on page two. He explained that he went through rape stories with greater care than other stories, and that if he found that if something was “vaguely risky, I remove it”. He reiterated that this was due to “different laws that protect the rapist and not so many laws that protect journalists”. Lang provided the example of a 15 year old who had raped an 11 year old, and that the perpetrator had not been charged. He described the law as being in “his favour” and that the “school was very unhappy that I mentioned it, they expressed great concern about their reputation, they didn’t express concern for the 11 year old child that was raped”. He explained that school had called him and “shouted at me because we reported on that story, because it’s tarnishing the image of that school. That’s not an unusual situation”. And that this made him “very reluctant to do anything”.

4.3.1.3 *Grocott’s Mail’s* complicity in perpetuating rape myths

I shared Bonnes’ findings, as discussed in the theoretical framework, and presented her arguments around rape myths. This included how they are perpetuated through word choice, use of passive voice, deletion of rapist, placement in news in brief, and decontextualisation. I also included Bonnes’ finding that at *Grocott’s Mail* there existed a contradiction in having „activist“ articles, while not actively improving daily, run-of-the-mill rape coverage. Lang argued that *Grocott’s Mail* was “guilty of deleting the rapist because we need to protect ourselves” and that

this was done due to the complexities around the law, and the protection around the publication of information. This means that the paper then focuses on the information that they can use, which often contains details of what the survivor was wearing, and whether she had been drinking. Mgaqelwa argued that the perpetuation of rape myths wasn't intentional but was as a result of an obligation to include what "the police give us in the report". She argued that "it's all about putting the facts in, it's up to the reader, they make their own judgment".

I brought out a few editions of the paper to point to examples of rape myths and asked whether the paper was aware of the value judgments they placed on articles by including details of where women were drinking or whether they were walking alone at night. Mgaqelwa explained that what they put in the articles is "mostly stuff they [the survivors] say to the police, it's what the police ask them, it's right there in the police report." Lang continued that "you have to put in some kind of context. It's not a judgment that going home from a tavern is a bad thing, what do you do? Do you just say a woman was raped?"

4.3.1.4 Roles of the media in relation to rape coverage

The discussion moved to applying the monitorial, facilitative and radical role to rape reporting. Lang argued that his "current policy on covering rape is minimalist and it's definitely monitorial". He argued that occasionally they would "do something with a little more depth". Lang explained that "a rape case happens, we report as best as we can, and go through it very carefully so as not to get into legal trouble". He explained that this was as a result of the Liddell case because he found that "society and the legal system support rape. They do not support the media". The paper does not consider alternative approaches such as the facilitative and the radical roles discussed by Christians et al (2009). These approaches could be employed in rape reporting in such a way that the paper could address rape reporting differently. The facilitative approach could be employed to invoke discussions in the community around rape and gender-based violence, and the radical role could be used to push a particular agenda, such as improving sensitivity of the police in dealing with rape survivors. Both of these roles can be used in such a

manner that *Grocott's Mail* does not get itself into legal trouble, it remains up to the paper to carefully explore the possibilities and the means of these approaches (Christians et al 2009).

4.3.1.5 Key areas for further investigation

The material on rape and reporting was rich, and brought to light several areas that hold *Grocott's Mail* from actualizing their desire to make a difference in the community. These include the pervasiveness of rape and gender-based violence in Grahamstown; the complexity around reporting on rape, which includes sources and legal ramifications; journalists' attachment and responses to rape; and approaches to rape reporting, such as Lang's minimalist approach, and Christian et al's facilitative role which emphasises community and deliberation and the radical role which stresses highlighting injustice and placing issues on the public agenda. Interrogating these four areas will give this study a strong and coherent grasp on that which hinders *Grocott's Mail* journalists from effectively addressing rape as a social problem.

4.3.2 Interviews

The interview process investigated the four areas highlighted as being able to provide a grasp on what occurs at *Grocott's Mail* that holds journalists back from addressing rape effectively. In addressing the pervasiveness of rape we are able to understand how this overwhelms and leaves journalists unsure as to how to address the issue. The complexity around addressing rape will bring to the fore two primary issues: *Grocott's Mail's* sources and the legal impacts on reporting. Journalists' attachment will raise issues around how rape impacts on individual journalists and prevents them from being able to report on rape. And lastly, the approaches as indicated by Christian et al's media roles will discuss the current minimalist and monitorial approach, and the alternative possibilities presented by the facilitative and radical roles.

4.3.2.1 Pervasiveness of rape

The journalists explained that the prevalence of rape in Grahamstown impacted on how they cover rape. Lang said that on average the paper receives reports on “2 or 3 rapes every week” but that he is sure that this is only “a small percentage of them”. He argues that “there’s so much rape it’s impossible to cover each case properly”. It is not only the pervasiveness of rape that impacts on rape coverage but also the brutality of the crime, the carelessness and casualness in which the police treat this crime, and the fatigue that journalists may experience in being confronted with rape on a day-to-day basis. This social problem permeates the Grahamstown community, is complex with regards to societal causes, and has to be handled sensitively with regards to the law. It is no wonder that some journalists do not cover rape as it is an issue that due to its magnitude and nature appears to have no resolution. The paper does, however, when it can, highlight particular cases but due to the shortage of staff, this is not always possible.

4.3.2.2 Complexity of reporting on rape

In terms of the complexity of reporting on rape, Butana suggests that the “sensitivities surrounding rape” result in journalists not being “comfortable in taking a stand either against or for rape”. He says that journalists usually prefer to remain silent on the issue due to the complexities and, in addition, they may feel that due to its “sexual nature” it is a “matter between two people”.

Lang holds that the police reports and the legal pitfalls around rape reporting contribute to the difficulties the paper experiences in covering this issue. Mgaqelwa further explains that one of the problems with the police reports is that the police select which cases they send to the paper, they’re “very selective... They don’t give us all the information”. Butana believes that “relying on the police does not do justice to rape coverage” because he feels that at *Grocott’s Mail*, “if the police say it, then it’s the gospel truth because that’s what’s in the police report”. This reliance on what is in the police report results in the paper’s complicity in perpetuating rape myths as they tend to focus on the details that the police emphasise, such as the presence of alcohol. Lang

argues that *Grocott's Mail's* reporting relies on these details for context, and that “most of the rapes do occur in situations like that. And that’s not a value judgment. This is factually what happens”. Mgaqelwa reiterates the “factual” nature of the police reports, and that “it’s a part of journalism; you’ve got to write where this happened, where was she going, who was there”. Butana believes that “if you feel the urge to include that information then you need to give it a full report not just as a brief because there’s more context than you’re near a tavern”. He also thinks that “there are other things you can mention for context”.

Mini felt that the language around rape such as how to name a rape survivor or the alleged accused was a constraint on reporting that, “I had to check up on certain words that I am not supposed to use, and then the deadlines, and you need the comment from the police and if there isn’t any comment, you can’t really put the story forward”. Butana finds that “not revealing the name of the survivor, not saying who the culprit is if related to the survivor” constrains the writing of a story. However, he believes that it should be kept this way, “in terms of balancing people’s rights to freedom of dignity”. He didn’t see the constraints as a “deterrent for people who report and cover rape issues, they make rape coverage dignified”.

It is here that complexity around rape reporting is compounded. This is because not only is reporting affected by the police as sources, the legal-criminal process, and the language that can be employed but it is also affected by a journalistic approach. This approach emphasises objectivity, and the use of what “factually” occurred. However, if *Grocott's Mail* is focusing on the “factual” details around rape cases, then it could be argued that they could also comment in their reporting on the issue they raised of the police selecting which cases to put forward. It is something that is known to them and can be reported on in a manner which is objective, and carries no judgment.

4.3.2.3 Journalists' attachment

In speaking to the emotional impact of rape reporting, Mgaqelwa said that she had “no words to describe how this whole thing involving rape affects me”. She explained that she did not like to cover rape stories because “I get too attached, I get too emotionally involved and that is really bad for the reporting”. Mini reiterated this and argued that with regards to attachment “you just have to know where to draw the line when reporting”. She advocates objectivity because she doesn't trust her “feelings”, arguing that this may “cloud my judgment”. She also explained that she chose to remain silent on the topic of rape because she found it to be “a traumatic thing”.

Lang explained that the “legal ramifications” of rape reporting scared him, and that “the whole Gareth Liddell story was in many ways quite traumatic”. He explained that rape stories in general are “very hard to deal with” and that having to “deal with emotional trauma on what is essentially a job” is “not nice”. Lang continued to explain that with a rape case “the minute you get close to it, it becomes an emotional minefield”. He also speaks to the affect that dealing with rape survivors has on journalists, “if you've seen someone who's been raped and think about what actually happened, it's a terrible thing”. He says he doesn't know how to “make it not terrible, it is terrible. It's very difficult”.

4.3.2.4 Approaches to rape reporting

The staff at *Grocott's Mail* indicate that rape needs to be taken seriously as an issue but there exists a strong divide on which approaches should be employed for rape reporting. The approaches that they call for are those of the monitorial and the radical role.

Lang had previously indicated that his approach was a minimalist one in that he reports on the basic facts of what occurred around a rape. However, he doesn't believe it is an answer to the constraints on rape reporting. He does feel that it is a “practical” and “doable” approach. He provides the example of a student journalist who spent two weeks covering a case, and argued

that this wasn't a practical means of managing a newsroom with a small staff. He argued that even if he did have "a massive staff" he would not have "case studies of all the rape cases because there's just, quite frankly, too many". He explained that to say that *Grocott's Mail* adopts a monitorial role in relation to rape reportage is overstating their role, because he feels that the paper is "just regurgitating police reports". With regards to facilitative rape stories he said that the paper didn't attempt these as they don't feel that the Grahamstown community is "speaking about it". I suggested that perhaps *Grocott's Mail* could begin this conversation, he responded with "possibly, I'm not quite sure how. It's not inconceivable". Lang felt that the radical approach would result in articles that explained "how to deal with it, how to avoid rape, how to avoid gender violence". He said that "at one stage last year we put in quite a few articles, but since then we've done virtually nothing. Those articles didn't provoke much reaction".

Mgaqelwa argues for the radical role because "rape cannot be condoned in any community" and that *Grocott's Mail* should be "pushing an agenda that this is totally unacceptable". She believes that the paper can improve their reportage, "because we usually put it in news in brief because it's a very hard thing to tackle every day. So maybe make the stories bigger". Tshwaku suggested that due to the prevalence of rape, "you need to be radical". Butana called for a radical approach as a counter to Lang's current minimalist approach because it could "uncover some aspects of rape that would normally be concealed". He continues that "we need a radical approach to drive home those truths that are seldom uncovered". These "truths" he speaks of are those such as the gender relations and misogynist attitudes that are present in society.

Butana believes that editors and newsrooms need to invest "resources into rape coverage" and this includes hiring a reporter specialised in handling rape and gender violence. He explained that this wasn't happening at *Grocott's Mail* due to it being a small community newspaper with few resources. He argues that in addition to adopting a radical approach, *Grocott's Mail* needs a rape coverage policy that will "inform how we cover rape issues". He believes this policy would provide the means to "make an impact because whenever rape would be covered in the newspaper it would be covered in a formal and consistent kind of manner". Butana doesn't

believe that he can place the need for a rape coverage policy onto the agenda, but that the editor has the power and responsibility to do this. I asked why he thought that this hadn't been done, his response was that there may be "more pressing issues than this issue" at *Grocott's Mail*. I suggested that this policy was necessary and that rape was a pressing issue, he avoided engaging on this by stating "I don't think we should be having this conversation because I don't think that's my territory".

Butana concluded that at *Grocott's Mail* he had "detected there's a lot that we don't know about rape" and that "the onus is on journalists" to raise societal awareness around rape. He believes that rape and gender violence needs to be addressed because "you can't justify why we have these things". In concluding he calls, again, for a policy that "favours a radical approach towards rape coverage" and that *Grocott's Mail* needs "to move away from relying on crime briefs to report, I think we need to go all out".

4.3.3 Pulling primary points together

I discovered that there exists at *Grocott's Mail* an understanding of the very real and serious nature of rape as a social problem. There is a desire among the staff to report on rape in a way that addresses the seriousness of it, but that this is countered by: the pervasiveness of rape; the complexities around reporting on rape; the journalists' attachment; and approaches to rape reporting.

The journalists argued that due to the prevalence of rape they did not know how to cover it adequately. The complexities such as the sensitivities around rape, in addition to the police reports and the legal ramifications, prevent journalists from effectively reporting on rape. The staff spoke of the personal impact that rape stories have on them, and that they adopt objectivity as a shield to protect their emotions from influencing their coverage. Lastly, they spoke to the adoption of monitorial and radical approaches to rape reporting. They indicated the inadequacy of the monitorial approach while also expressing a nervousness about adopting an alternative

approach such as one informed by the facilitative or the radical roles presented by Christians et al (2009). Some staff called for a radical approach and a rape coverage policy to provide a guide for journalists to address the seriousness of rape.

4.4 Conclusion

The first workshop brought to light the understanding the staff at *Grocott's Mail* have regarding their positioning within the community, as well as their role and responsibilities to greater Grahamstown. They also presented themselves as both detached and embedded in the community. The journalists articulated an understanding of forming a community of practice through their common objective of creating a difference in the broader Grahamstown community through addressing and covering issues that are of concern to the community. It is important to note, again, that while they raised social problems such as service delivery and education, they did not raise gender-based violence as an issue on their agenda, and that this has a bearing on how they consider and address rape in their day-to-day reportage.

The second workshop revealed that the journalists have a broad but not specific notion of the roles and approaches they could employ in rape reporting. While they were aware that there are other ways to do journalism, their inexperience and lack of experimentation with these alternative approaches results in their desire for change not being actualised in the Grahamstown community. Additionally, not exploring alternative approaches results in an overreliance on the monitorial approach. This impacts on how rape is reported as an issue.

The third workshop exposed a very real understanding of rape as a social problem, and at the same time a nervousness as to how to address this. The pervasiveness of rape in the very community that they are trying to serve and to build as one community means that journalists often do not know where to begin in addressing the severity of this issue. The complexities around rape reporting hinder the paper from covering this issue in a manner that is anything but minimalist as they have a very real fear of the legal implications. The impact of encountering

rape cases on a day-to-day basis results in a level of trauma in each journalist, trauma that is not being addressed and is simply left to build up. In not addressing this emotional impact, *Grocott's Mail* is not only affecting how rape is reported but also the wellbeing of its staff who are having to do this reporting. Lastly, a lack of a flexible approach to rape reporting means that *Grocott's Mail* is stuck in an approach that cannot, due to its structuring, shift societal understandings of rape. All of the above factors have a very real impact on rape reporting, and need to be addressed if *Grocott's Mail* wishes to improve their rape reportage and begin to shift the community's understanding of rape.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to get to the heart of the difficulties that the *Grocott's Mail* staff face in addressing their reportage of rape cases. Several threads were pulled together in chapter four as having the potential through further investigation to unravel what happens at the paper to result in the current manner in which the journalists handle rape.

The participants indicated that they were both detached and embedded in the Grahamstown community. In speaking to their detachment they spoke to the professional ideology which calls for the employment of objectivity to protect their reporting from any emotional influences or bias that they may bring to their coverage. They invoked the notion of detachment in relation to rape in particular. This desire to be detached speaks quite clearly to their journalistic socialisation and what it means to be operating as a professional journalist. However, when addressing issues such as service delivery and education they explained that they were invested in stories, and that objectivity was not necessarily observed or employed as such a high priority in these cases. They spoke of being embedded in the community they report on, and that they desire to build this community and use communication to improve the lives of the citizens of Grahamstown.

5.1 Gender-based violence is not an issue

But when they focus on how their journalism builds community, they raised several issues such as service delivery and education as needing attention and effort in order to unite the community. However, they didn't raise gender-based violence as an issue that affected the community, and needed addressing. This is a glaring absence for two reasons: 1) gender-based violence is one of the most prevalent problems affecting the Grahamstown community across geographic and class divides; it is an issue that national government has prioritised and is frequently raised in policy as a social problem; and 2) their initial engagement with GAP was on the basis of bringing this

issue to light. This raises the question, why is gender-based violence no longer considered an issue, and not on the agenda at *Grocott's Mail*?

Dearing and Rogers (1996) argue that it is through media coverage that an issue such as gender-based violence comes to be brought to the public's attention. Agenda-setting is the means by which societal issues are brought to the attention of the public and policy makers, it is understood to be a political process in that it "enabl[es] social problems to become acknowledged as public issues" (Dearing & Rogers 1996: 22). They argue that the key to agenda-setting is "salience", the value or significance that an issue is given (1996: 8). If gender-based violence is given salience in the media, it signals to the public that this is an issue they ought to give meaningful consideration to. This attention given to gender-based violence in the media could result in it being advanced on the public agenda as citizens often take their cues from the media with regards to what deserves attention and action (1996: 8). If *Grocott's Mail* does not give space to gender-based violence it signals to the public that this is not an issue for their consideration and does not affect them. However, given the magnitude of gender-based violence in Grahamstown, and the participants' acknowledgment of this, gender-based violence ought to be on their news agenda. There is a discrepancy here in *Grocott's Mail* speaking of making a difference in the community and improving the lot of the people, and then rendering invisible one of the issues that deeply affects this community.

The media is understood as having great influence on how people consider themselves and the world around them, and can thus be understood as having "a critical role to play in processes of transformation: (Inter Press Service 2009: 11). The manner in which the media report on gender-based violence may contribute to the normalisation or downgrading of gender-based violence as a societal issue. In placing gender-based violence on their agenda, the media assists society in acknowledging that it is an issue of importance and one which needs attention and addressing. This does not necessarily have to be relegated to the crime beat, moving gender-based violence to features or analysis pieces can help members of the community understand the circumstances

around gender-based violence, as well as societal actions or responses in relation to this issue (Inter Press Service 2009).

5.2 The pervasiveness of gender-based violence and the Grahamstown community

In speaking to the prevalence of gender-based violence, emphasis is placed on rape in particular. Rape is a widespread crime in Grahamstown, and in South African society. The Makana Rape Survivors' Support Group (RSSG) indicated that in 2009 an average of 12 rapes were reported per month in the district. South African society has the highest rate of rape and violence against women globally for a country not engaged in war (Soul City 1999; Serumaga 2007). This speaks to the pervasiveness of gender-based violence in society, as do the journalists' responses during the PAR process. They are acutely aware of the severity of rape, and the extent of gender-based violence in this community, and this is why the absence of gender-based violence from their agenda is so concerning.

The reason for not addressing gender-based violence seems to lie in the fact that it is a very complex issue to approach journalistically. In addressing gender-based violence journalists would have to address the complexity which includes the conditions within the community that make it prevalent. This would require acknowledging that the community they serve is one affected by gender-based violence, and includes this includes acknowledging the presence of perpetrators of this violence within the community. It may be far simpler to consider the community as one in which issues such as service delivery and education need attention. I believe that *Grocott's Mail's* self-assigned task of uniting and building the community is manageable if gender-based violence does not feature as a factor which impacts on this community. It is relatively undemanding of journalists to think of the community they serve in broader terms sans criminal elements. Communities are generally spoken of as consisting of generally good people who are in need, not people who exist in contexts which result in gender-based violence, or are the people who perpetrate gender-based violence.

5.3 The monitorial approach to gender-based violence

Newspapers, such as *Grocott's Mail*, allocate rape to the crime beat. This has particular effects on how it is reported and subsequently understood by the community. In particular, this results in the problems highlighted in chapter four regarding sources and legal ramifications. Within the crime beat all violence and criminal actions which result in criminal prosecution are reported on as an event. This event then comes to be decontextualised from the social conditions it arose out of through the manner in which journalists package it as news. In failing to treat this crime as resulting from within particular conditions with this community, they neglect to address the attitudes and behaviours that create the climate for gender-based violence, and in doing so they are not working towards creating a difference or uniting the community. In fact, the crime beat allows journalists to separate rapists from the community in decontextualising their criminal actions. In moving them out of the community, they indicate that they do not serve them as members of the community, and have no obligation to them as they do to the members of the community that were affected by their actions. However, I would argue that treating gender-based violence as an event also serves to render invisible the experience of the survivor because it is treated as an occurrence removed from context, and without social implications for both the survivor and the community. Stone argues that the crime beat is a central aspect of newspapers, and that the media rely on the police and courts as sources (1993). This is because these groups are able to provide them with information on newsworthy events, and are also considered to be “credible sources” (Sacco 1995: 144). Sacco argues that the relationship between the media and the police allow the gathering of information to be “routinised” for effective news reporting (1995: 144). The frame for a crime story is relatively simple, and offers only bare details such that journalists do not have to presuppose that readers need context in order to grasp the story. The „simple“ nature of a crime story results in journalists being able to write and edit it with very little effort. This can also be allocated to the reliance on news values such as “unexpectedness” and “reference to something negative” (O’Neill & Harcup 2009: 164-5). This reliance on news values shapes what journalists can draw on from a rape case in determining whether it should be reported on. Crime reporting employs a stereotypical approach to the cases reported on, describing them in the same manner time and time again, with words such as „horror“, „tragic“, and „senseless“(Sacco 1995).

The paper sources primarily from the police and courts, and treat the case as an event. The nature of the crime beat means that journalists are then obligated to adhere to the legal ramifications and prescriptions of the law surrounding the case — what can and cannot be reported during a trial. This leads journalists to adopt a monitorial approach to avoid flouting the law. This results in them being caught in the crime beat's structuring created to handle rape cases and manage any potential legal ramifications.

The journalists in discussing rape stories indicated that the majority of their stories came from the cases that the police sent to the paper, these cases are sent via fax from the police station to the newsroom. They signalled that there was in fact an overreliance at *Grocott's Mail* on police reports, and that there were problems present in the reports sent to them. One such problem is that the police are selective over which cases they send to the paper. However, when challenge on this overreliance and the issues with the reports, the journalists were uncertain as to which bodies to approach as alternative sources. The journalists signal that due to the manner in which the police select cases that they are in fact acting as gatekeepers. Gatekeeping is the process of determining what is of importance, through “selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating, and otherwise massaging information to become news” (Shoemaker et al 2009: 73). This is what the police do when they document what the rape survivor says, writing what they believe to be significant in her statement, and then putting together a report to fax to *Grocott's Mail* of the cases they deem of significance to the paper. *Grocott's Mail*, as stated by Lang, “regurgitate[es] police reports”, they do not add to the report, and so because of this the police determine what the paper will publish regarding rape cases. This unquestioning adoption of the details in the police report makes the paper complicit in perpetuating rape myths as they focus on the details that the police emphasise. Lang argued that *Grocott's Mail's* reporting relies on these details for context, and that “most of the rapes do occur in situations like that. And that's not a value judgment. This is factually what happens”.

In drawing on the police and courts as sources, *Grocott's Mail* indicates to its readers that these are authoritative bodies who provide verifiable facts. Society views the police as “apolitical crime experts” and this “imbues police-generated crime news with authority and objectivity” (Sacco 1995: 144). However, in South Africa not many citizens trust the police and so by depending heavily on them as sources may result in the community being uncertain as to whether the paper’s reporting is credible. Berrington and Jemphrey present Hall et al’s (1978) argument that media dependence on police resources result in the police becoming “primary definers” of the news (2003: 226). This relationship with the police means that if the journalists were to criticise or question the nature of the reports they could be denied access to information in the future. Given *Grocott's Mail's* overreliance on the police as their primary source this could drastically affect the content of the paper, especially taking into consideration that they have given very little thought to alternative sources.

A further issue is that, like many other newspapers, *Grocott's Mail* does not have a journalist dedicated to covering gender issues such as gender-based violence. Instead, as Mgaqelwa explains, the journalist who “pitches the story will cover it, unless they say it will be too emotional for them”. There is no assessment as to whether the journalist is sensitive to the issue and whether they understand the law around rape, in fact, none of the participants in the workshops had read the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act (2007).

The prevalence and magnitude of rape in Grahamstown means that the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* are unsure of how to manage it, and so resort to employing a monitorial approach, a position that they are certain will not result in complexities such as legal ramifications.

Journalists, like Mini argue that the monitorial role is the only appropriate role for rape reporting because she believes “you have to just write what you see and that’s it”. Christians et al explain that the monitorial role is the least contentious role as it is concerned with the professional norms of collecting, processing and transmitting information in an objective and neutral manner (2009: 125). The monitorial role cannot be employed for the purposes of placing an issue like gender-

based violence on the agenda as it is constrained by notions of professionalism, such as the separation of comment from facts.

Objectivity is seen to be the foundation of the journalistic profession. In order for a journalist to be objective, they must detach themselves from what they are reporting on or report it in a way that is balanced. In demonstrating an absence of bias in their reporting, they present themselves as objective (Starkey 2007). In claiming objectivity, journalists are emancipated from the responsibility of determining the positive or negative aspects of an issue they're reporting on (Richardson 2007). The journalists at *Grocott's Mail* speak of being afraid that their emotions will taint articles, and they call for objectivity and a monitorial approach as a means to avoid this.

Rape and gender-based violence need to be understood as complex issues, complex in ways that service delivery and education are not. Journalists may find it easier to hold bodies such as local government accountable for problems around service delivery and education, but may find it difficult to hold an institution or group of people accountable for gender-based violence. The prevalence of rape may be so overwhelming that journalists cannot foresee a resolution, and so feel that they can do nothing to shift the current situation, and so choose not to attempt to shift things. Journalists need to understand that even if rape is more complex, prevalent and overwhelming than service delivery and education, it is still an issue that impacts on the community, and requires the same sort of agenda-setting and salience.

The key to the trouble around using the crime beat is that as journalists they cannot loosen themselves from relying on the police and the courts as sources, and this indicates that they cannot loosen themselves from the legal prescriptions or ramifications. They then cannot loosen themselves from the monitorial approach which protects them from the complexities and legal ramifications around rape reporting. However, if they could see outside of the crime beat, then they could conceive of alternative sources, and in loosening themselves from the monitorial

approach, they could also conceive of alternative approaches, such as the facilitative and the radical roles.

The gender coverage policy that Butana called for during the PAR process could provide the means for *Grocott's Mail* to address the complexities around sourcing, legal ramifications and approaches. In addition, the policy could make provision for a dedicated reporter and support structures for journalists traumatised by the cases they encounter in their reporting. Such a policy could alert journalists to the greater social causes and implications of gender-based violence, while providing clear steps that reduce the trauma of reporting on rape, and works towards uniting the community.

5.4 An alternative approach to gender-based violence

Grocott's Mail is in need of an alternative approach to rape and gender-based violence reporting. This approach would require that they place gender-based violence as an issue on their agenda for community development. The first step in shifting how they handle rape reporting is to move it out of the crime beat and place gender-based violence on their agenda, seeing it as an issue that impacts on the community they serve. Doing so would open them up to assessing which beat it should fall under, what sources they can approach, and which approaches to use to best achieve community building. Loosening it up solely from crime reporting opens up the issue to analysis, and includes the community and community organizations as potential sources.

A further step would be the development of a gender coverage policy as the one that Butana calls for. A policy that would inform how *Grocott's Mail* covers rape, the sources available or to be considered, the laws around gender-based violence and other gender issues, and a set of best practices for journalists. This policy, as Butana indicated would provide the means for *Grocott's Mail* to ensure that gender-based violence is “covered in a formal and consistent kind of manner”. He also argued that the policy should favour a “radical approach towards rape coverage” one which would raise societal awareness around rape.

I would argue that the facilitative and the radical roles need serious consideration as approaches to rape reporting. Approaches such as the facilitative and the radical roles would result in articles which acknowledge that gender-based violence is “tool” of domination, investigate how gender-based violence comes to be hidden in society, and supply information that contributes to citizens’ understandings of gender-based violence and its impacts on their community (Inter Press Service 2009: 23).

The facilitative role is seen as a means to improving public life and promoting active citizenship, and is primarily concerned with the concept of community. The media is seen to report on the activities of civil society in a manner that encourages and reinforces them. In adopting this stance, the news media do not condense societal issues into simple formats or beats such as the crime beat. Instead, they facilitate the space such that citizens are able to engage with what happens in their community, and can make decisions on matters that affect them, and push for action that results in the transformation of their community (Christians et al 2009). The radical role is concerned with raising public consciousness around injustice and working towards the ultimate goal of “fundamental or radical change in society” (Christians et al 2009: 126). The news media are understood to adopt a radical role when they encourage fundamental transformation and restructuring of society. The role does not tolerate injustice, and journalists are called on to advance shifts in institutional bodies in order that justice and human rights for all are recognised. The radical role’s consciousness-raising agenda requires that the media play a more engaged role, beyond that of the facilitative role. The media’s role is to make evident abuses of power, including “the causes and consequences of power concentrations, helping the public to see avenues of action to redistribute social power” (Christians et al 2009: 181). Both the facilitative and the radical roles work in favour of civil society, and promoting “people’s power” and with regards to this, there is no distinction between the two (Christians et al 2009: 190). The dissimilarity that exists between them is the objective they perform: facilitative promotes dialogue between citizens; radical mobilises against power structures (Christians et al 2009).

Grocott's Mail should perhaps consider reflective practice regarding their reporting, in addition to placing gender-based violence on their agenda, deliberating over a gender coverage policy, and adopting alternative approaches to their reportage. The day-to-day routine of gathering and following stories presents very little time for journalists to consider and discuss with each other the stories they have written. The space for reflection could open up for the journalists the consequences of their reporting and the issues they may wish to address in subsequent articles. The Liddell case is a crucial indication of the absence of reflective practice. This case and its legal ramifications haunt the newsroom, and is a painful reminder of a failed attempt at an alternative approach to rape reporting. In not revisiting the case for the purposes of assessing what it was about the coverage that resulted in legal action, the paper is unable to utilise this experience in a manner that is positive for the paper and its future reportage. Incorporating reflective practice as part of the daily newsroom routine could assist journalists and the paper as a whole in knowledge production.

5.5 Conclusion

This research process employed a participatory action research approach informed by a theoretical framework consisting of feminist cultural studies, sociology of news, and normative theories of the media in order to interrogate *Grocott's Mail's* coverage of rape. This allowed for an exploration into paper's understanding of itself as serving the community, and of the journalists as a community of practice. In addition, it investigated roles and approaches to journalism, understandings of rape, and approaches to rape reporting that impacted on *Grocott's Mail's* rape reportage. It also sought to explore with the journalists alternative approaches to rape reporting.

This PAR process enabled us to explore the issues which impacted on rape reporting. Through this process we identified the pervasiveness of rape, the complexities that surround rape reporting, journalists' attachment, and approaches to rape reporting as having an influence on how the journalists at *Grocott's Mail* reported on rape. However, these appeared to stem from a deeper cause identified as gender-based violence not being an issue on the paper's agenda. This

study, due to the time the journalists were able to give to the process, was unable to enter into the reflective aspects of PAR, as well as planning for the next cycle of the process.

I recommend that on the basis of the primary finding of this study that the PAR process be taken further to successful shift rape reportage at *Grocott's Mail*. I believe the study initiated a shift in consciousness, understandings and possibilities for rape reporting. However, the limitation of this study is that it was a single cycle in what should be a greater PAR process. Further cycles need to be implemented to take further establishing gender-based violence as an issue on *Grocott's Mail's* agenda, as well as experimenting with alternative approaches, in particular those offered by Christians et al's facilitative and radical roles (2009). In addition, support structures for journalists traumatised by rape cases they've encountered, and the notion of a community of practice need to be explored further for the greater benefit of the journalists, the paper itself, and the community they serve.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Schedule for workshop 1

1. Introduction
 - a. Names, positions, etc
 - b. Outline and by-in for research

2. Community
 - a. Word association – community
 - b. What kind of person do you think the paper would be?
 - c. Contextualise *Grocott's Mail*
 - d. How is *Grocott's Mail* a community paper?
 - e. Who is the community/
 - f. Do you think of yourselves as a community? (community of practice)

3. Newsroom
 - a. How does *Grocott's Mail* work?
 - b. What are the routines?
 - c. What makes something “news” – criteria, etc? Are you conscious of this?
 - d. How do you collect and put your story together?

Appendix 2: Transcript for workshop 1

Nicolene McLean (N): Basically, I need to explain what the process is first. That I'm doing my thesis on GM as a community paper...through participatory action research...so it's working with production staff at the paper (explain the workshops)...introductions

Abongile Mgaqelwa (A): I'm Abongile (surname?), the news editor

Steven Lang (S): Steven Lang, editor

Khanyiso Tshwaku (K): I'm Khanyiso, junior staff writer

Thomas Holder (T): Thomas Holder, Pg dip in journalism, intern

N: In terms of community, what's the first thing that pops into your head?

K: well, it's usually the people in society around you

T: I seem to associate community with more like those without a voice kind of thing...when I think community newspaper; I generally think township rather than west Grahamstown. I don't know where that comes from, I suppose it's some sort of conditioning somehow, I guess.

A: what comes into my mind is just the whole community from the rich, the poor, the illiterate, the literate, businesses and those that are unemployed...just basically, the people around you, the society

N: in terms of G, do you see G as a community?

A: of course...this is where everything comes together. G, as a community paper, we cater for everyone in Grahamstown, be it a young person, an elderly, a professional, a scholar, or an illiterate person. This is where everything converges

T: it really is a point of different people, different ideas, different backgrounds, all coming together...I mean in a news meeting you have people coming with all aspects of the community

K: sometimes the stories that are covered do seem like a social responsibility because the people come with their problems, in terms of personal problems, problems with the municipality and we report on that. And most of the time there are certain frictions, with the paper and with the...?

N: and then reporting on the community, do you see yourself as part of the community?

K: in terms of the stories you find that we are participating because everything that happens in Grahamstown happens around us. We are not detached from what happens within the Grahamstown area. So in our style of writing we are part of the community but still we remain a neutral stance even though we are part of the community

T: I can definitely say I've never felt detached from anythingfrom any story I've ever covered, not 100% probably more like 80% detached. There will always be an issue that either touches me or impedes upon some sort of belief system that I have. Something that will always touch me personally. Like just the other day, there was some kid who stole something and hitec wanted to smack him about – part of me goes: smack him about, he's not going to get a jail sentence, he's not going to get anything; the other part of me goes: you can't really do that because it's against the law. There's always some part of you that's invested in the story ...so I don't think you can ever feel detached from a story, not entirely....I mean like the water story I reported on, it was ridiculous, I was absolutely disgusted

S: and the fact that you are from Grahamstown

T: there's a lot of things that go on that I learnt from Grocott's ...the reason I said that when I think of community newspaper I think of townships is because I think people in the township

can't vocalize their issues as well as people in the west. I think they're very unspoken for. Being from Grahamstown west, I definitely feel distance from Grahamstown east. So as part of the community, I feel part of two different communities. Although it is one of my strongest desires to be acknowledged in the township. Yesterday some kid recognised me from reporting on a story and that made my day. I definitely want to be that reporter, I definitely want to be part of both communities, but I still feel very separated.

N: is there a chance we could make it one community?

S: I think the barriers are still very big. There are considerable barriers; I think one of the most important barriers is just language. The minute I go into Grahamstown east, I don't understand the language, so how can you properly interact within a society if you don't speak the language

N: what's G's role...

S: I think in terms of our coverage we do try and integrate the community as a whole. We don't address issues like the language issue, so, we're always aware of these barriers. We cover stories on both sides of the Kowie Ditch. And we try and be as representative of the general population as reasonably possible. But the barriers are still very much there

N: name the barriers?

A: language, education, poverty levels...Grahamstown west, of course, is more affluent and then you go into Grahamstown east and you find the poorest of the poor, - someone who lives in a shack that's got huge holes in it, you just cannot understand how this person can live there. And it's those things that actually divide the two communities. But at some point of course, you would have to work together but it will take some time

N: do you think it's like civil society or a newspaper's role or the community itself's role ...

A: well it first starts with the community, that if you're willing to reach out to the person on the other side then to some extent the divisions might come to an end. But then it is also the duty of the public service to ensure that the differences within this community are actually bridged together. Because if the government is not doing anything to assist the people on the other side of the bridge

N: but it's also hard to get government to do things...

T: I think it's very important, I think a newspaper does play a very important role in including people into a certain community and I think Grocott's does do that. We're constantly running stories about Grahamstown east, and it is very much this kind of divide...this like Berlin Wall divide and I think people feel that. People definitely feel that. Going into the township, at first you're met with this huge resistance, particularly being a white guy in the township...either you're just a journalist and you're coming here to do your story and then you're going to leave; or you're just another Grahamstown west. As soon as you break down that barrier, people are very very open, people want to talk to you, people want to discuss the issues. I think what G does well is that we do report a lot those issues ...bringing those people into the greater community, including people, I think that's very important

K: East London example of community newspaper...

....

A: government also responds to our stories, like this one, it wasn't government, it was Rhodes University...ex-offender started a business, RU donated 3 computers...it's that kind of interaction that G strives for

N: imagine G as having a personality, what or who would it be?

K: you could basically say G is the mediator between, for the people and the municipality, and the bridge between Grahamstown east and Grahamstown west. It serves the needs of both

S: as a journalist you have to be a busy body you have to want to know everyone else's business. If someone says you're a nosy parker, good, that makes you a good journalist...I'm a journalist, I want to know things

A: ja, busy body, kind hearted though

T: I suppose I can echo that, it's just; I don't think that what anyone does here is intentionally malicious. I definitely get the feeling, the sense of trying to serve somebody or something, even if it may be someone idealistic that whole serving the truth ... fighting for the little man. I know it sounds really ideal but ... this isn't a big budget newspaper, it's not scandal that it's reporting. But definitely serving a purpose. And I particularly enjoy the serving of the little man kind of aspect

N: how does G work?

A: from news diary meeting, reporters pitch stories. The editor, news editor comes with story ideas, everyone actually. In terms of story ideas, everyone contributes. If there are angles, which angle are they going to take, stuff like that, and of course they get advice during the meeting. They do their stories through making phone calls, visiting the areas or whoever they're going to interview. They file their stories, stories go to the news editor and editor, I check them while they're on news desk and Steven moves them from news desk to subbing, where they are subbed. From subeditor it goes onto layout, once they're done it goes to the subeditor again for proofreading of the pages. Then from the pages, the final sign off is the editor, if he's not here I do the sign off.

N: duration

A: depends on the flow of copy, if the stories are filed and subbed on time ...there's always that rush even though it's a bi-weekly paper...diary meeting's everyday at 08h30...dummy, you have to work around the ads every time you assign stories

N: what do you think makes “news”

T: public interest, whatever the public interest is

K: newsworthiness, timeliness, when the event happened, look at what impact it could have on the people. Will it make news? Will it be able to inform people? Would the story be informative? This is one of the facts you have to put across before you actually do a story

A: it’s got to be newsworthy but it depends on the community, it might be news at a national level but it might not be relative to the community ...you have to know what the people, that are your target audience, want. ...if it’s happening now, that’s news. If it happened five months ago, it could be news, depends...

N: when you’re pitching a story, are you conscious that it’s newsworthy?

T: ja, if we’re doing a feature piece, it would be like „people might find this interesting“...

A: like a murder story, its hectic, you don’t want to read about murder every day but if it happens, it happens, it’s in the community, people have to know...global warming....localise it. You have to find a local angle

N: if you have a story idea, how do you go out and collect it?

K: before you pitch your story, you need to have your contacts, you need to have prepared the background information...you need to backup your idea...

T: ja, come with a story idea, a source is always good and the more sources you have, is obviously better

A: you have to go to an assignment with an open mind, not just focusing on your angle...you have to look at the finer detail...the small things, it's about listening

Appendix 3: Schedule for workshop 2

1. Introductions
2. Summary of first workshop
 - i. First workshop dealt with GM as a community paper, the community it serves, the idea of a community of practice, and began looking at news routines/how GM operates.
3. Sociology of news
 - a. What kind of constraints affect reporting? e.g. deadlines, advertising, etc. And how?
 - b. How do you determine your sources?
 - c. Do journalists use or work within particular beats? What are they? Do they help your work or constrain you as a journalist?
 - d. News routines/rooms – does the current news diary meeting suit you? Are there other ways of doing this?
 - e. Do you think of news as a service or a commodity? Are you informing people or trying to sell something to them?
 - f. What do you think of objectivity? Does being objective mean you're more professional? What makes a story objective?
4. Journalistic roles
 - a. Normative theories of the press
 - i. Monitorial, otherwise considered the “watchdog” role, is the role most journalists identify with, and is concerned with collecting and circulating information to society (Christians et al 2009: 146). The facilitative role relates to the media adopting a role that cultivates space for public opinion and debate. The radical role places its focus on bringing to the fore “abuses of power”, consciousness-raising, and is geared towards social change through supporting activist movements, such as GAP (Christians et al 2009: 126).
 - b. Monitorial role

- i. This role is seen as one of a “vigilant informer”: the collecting and publication of information that would be of interest to the audience; as well as the distribution of information on “behalf of sources and clients” (Christians et al 2009: 30). This role includes the provision of advanced information, “advice, warning, and everything of general utility for information seekers” (Christians et al 2009: 31).
 - ii. Can you think of examples of monitorial reporting at GM? E.g. Reporting on corruption, drought etc?
- c. Facilitative role
- i. This role is linked to the idea of the media as the fourth estate which encourages debate, dialogue and citizens’ decision making. Christians et al see the media as a means to improve public life, and play a role in deliberative democracy. Journalism is seen as promoting an active citizenship through debate and participation, as well as facilitating civil society. A primary role of the media is to develop a collective moral framework for the community it operates within, and not only considering the rights and interests of individuals. This role is difficult to resolve in relation to professional ideologies surrounding a market-driven media (Christians et al 2009). The facilitative aspect of this role is to engage and promote the conditions for an active civil society (Christians et al 2009). This role is concerned with the concept of community, taking into account the interests of the larger body, and not only “individual rights and interests” (Christians et al 2009: 126). This role is in tension with media driven by the market, and requires “some subordination of typical professionalism” (Christians et al 2009: 126).
 - ii. Adopting this role, the media advance dialogue between their audiences through the exchange of idea that engage them, and create the space for them to “actively participate” (Christians et al 2009: 158). The media are seen as supporting and strengthening “participation in civil society outside the state and the market” (Christians et al 2009: 158). The media do not only report on civil society’s activities but “seek to enrich and improve them” and engaging citizens in “clarifying and resolving public problems” (Christians et al 2009: 158). The media’s role is not to create a uniform public but rather to “promote a mosaic of diverse cultures and worldviews” (Christians et al 2009: 159). The media are

then “accountable to the widely shared moral frameworks that orient the society in which they operate and give it meaning” (Christians et al 2009: 158-9).

- iii. Can you think of facilitative reporting at GM? E.g. Pieces that encourage dialogue – features pieces which encourage thought and response?

- d. Radical role
 - i. The radical role is concerned with highlighting abuses of power and the raising of public consciousness around injustice, and the possibility of transformation. The role involves “systematic and principled engagement according to clearly stated values. The goal is fundamental or radical change in society” (Christians et al: 126). In a democratic society, the radical role is executed by a handful of journalists who represent or support social and political movements. This role is not incompatible with the concept of professionalism or market-driven journalism, although it cannot be subsidiary to “professional norms of market consideration” (Christians et al 2009: 126). This role is established from the “social and political purposes” that are beyond the range reach of the media institution (Christians et al 2009: 126). Focus is given to raising public consciousness of inequality, injustice and the potential for transformation (Christians et al 2009). The ultimate goal of the radical role is “fundamental or radical change in society” (Christians et al 2009: 126).
 - ii. The media adopt a radical role when they create a space for “views and voices that are critical of authority and the established order” (Christians et al 2009: 31). The media provide encouragement for “drastic change and reform” (Christians et al 2009: 31). The media may also adopt or become a “voice of criticism” (Christians et al 2009: 31). The radical role “insists on the absolute equality and freedom of all members of a democratic society in a completely uncompromising way” (Christians et al 2009: 179). A media that adopts this role makes “every effort to ensure that no injustice is ever tolerated” (Christians et al 2009: 179). Journalists are called on to support/advance “changes in the core of the existing social institutions” with the long term goal being a “society of universal recognition of human rights for all” (Christians et al 2009: 179)
 - iii. The radical role’s consciousness-raising agenda requires that the media plays a greater “participatory and dialogical” role (beyond that of the facilitative role) than mainstream media (Christians et al 2009: 181). The media’s role in a “truly democratic system” is to

make visible power abuses, including the “causes and consequences of power concentrations, helping the public to see avenues of action to redistribute social power” (Christians et al 2009: 181). The focus is not on having a few voices doing so but to encourage “society at large, with prospects for structural change” (Christians et al 2009: 181). Radical is, in this sense, about going to the “roots of the power relations in society, challenging the hegemony of those in power and offering an alternative vision not just for some building blocks but for the whole structure of society” (Christians et al 2009: 181).

- iv. Can you think of examples of radical reporting at GM? E.g. Stories which put forward the agenda of groups or social issues...covering the 1 in 9 Silent protests? Stories which highlight injustices?

- e. What are the options for GM?
 - i. Which role are you more comfortable with?
 - ii. Which one/s do you think better serves the community?
 - iii. How could you go about incorporating the others or all of them?

Appendix 4: Transcript for workshop 2

N: journalistic roles are how about you going about practicing it...

S: we're not practicing it, we're doing it for real (humourous)

N: what kind of constraints do you think affects your reporting at GM?

Kh: advertising, you never see them as a problem because advertising pays bills. Without advertising there's no paper. In terms of space, yes because they limit the amount of stories. Another constraint would be how you deal with people and the contacts that you have, you'd find that there would be some contacts who would not be willing to part with information. Which is the public's right to know, which is basically the interest of the journalist is to actually make people aware of what is happening around them

N: with advertising, do you find that you're reporting on something in a particular way that won't upset an advertiser

T: I don't care

Kh: in terms of the way I report, I always try to be objective

T: I haven't experienced any kind of clash...as a reporter you field a story idea and if it gets ok-ed, then you do it. The editors probably have it in the back of their mind what's good, what's not. I don't even know if you have that problem? (Directed at S)

S: as an editor my goal is to be as objective as possible and not to take advertisers into consideration at all. But in reality you do take advertisers into consideration in subtle ways. But I can't say that I treat all advertisers and all stories exactly the same because at the back of my mind I do know who pays the bills and who doesn't. It's not a subconscious thing, I'm very conscious of it. It is an ethical issue that I have to be aware of. But I am aware of it, and the very fact that you are aware of it means that it is an issue but I try not to transmit that and I think that at any news meeting there has been any pressure.

B: I think a constraint that is more self-imposed by the journalists themselves, because the town is so small it's like you have to also think about harmonious living with the people you're reporting on. You want to tell a story but you have to think of implications in a far more, immediate personal way

S: so if you write an article about a supermarket that you think their food is not so good but then you go and shop at that supermarket...

T: more than likely people will know who you are, even if you don't remember them

N: how do you decide on your sources?

S: multiple sources

Kh: you need to look at what kind of answers you'll get from your sources with an open mind, but you need to try and keep your sources objective, to equalize the scales, not to be biased.

T: there are some sources that you're forced to deal with, for example at the municipality we have to deal with the communications officer. But if you're out on a story and someone comes up to you and offers you more information, you must always consider who the person is and what their invested interest may be. ...perhaps they want to victimize somebody else, but you always go with the person who is going to give you the most information and the most accurate information

B: also advantageous of a community paper is that your sources are largely the people directly involved – you're encouraged to get information from the people affected rather than the authorities – first-hand sources...it makes things far more personal, which is nice

N: and beats, are there any at GM?

S: we have a sports reporter and we have a municipal affairs reporter. And then you have with the interns, they tend to make their own beats ...

N: how did you come up with the current news diary meeting style?

S: I think it was similar to this but I actually used a system that I used at SABC...its pretty generic

N: do you think of news as a service or as a commodity?

Kh: it's a bit of each

B: for me I think there's definitely an information factor involved. The drive must be to get your story out...you're not thinking, oh is this paper going to be bought, is your story going to sell. I mean, I'm not. I'm sure other people are actually trying to get their news across

T: it's not something you worry about

S: I think about such issues too but I think of the readers and the people in the community as clients. I think, what do they want? What is of interest to them? I am acutely aware of that. I don't base all my decisions on what I think will sell the newspapers because I could put gruesome stuff and sex stuff on the front and that would improve sales, I don't do it from that point of view. I think of a generic resident of Makana, I think these are my customers I've better serve my customers otherwise they're not going to buy my newspaper

N: you kept raising the issue of objectivity

T: objectivity is balancing your story with two sources from opposing sides. Pure objectivity, from a journalist's perspective I think is probably crap.

S: worth aspiring to

T: I have a personal interest in a story and that's why I pitch the story. I then probably take a certain side in the story, for example a story I'm doing at the moment, people who haven't had their toilets emptied in ext 6. It's only human to side with that. I've still gone to balance the story with what the municipality has to say, but in terms of being objective...

B: there's got to be different narratives of the truth and multiple strands – ones that connect and ones that dissect

Kh: if I refer to a science term, I always say objectivity is like an ideal gas, it doesn't exist. As much as you strive to be objective, there will always be a slant – it may be 5 degrees or 95 degrees. Because someone else might read that story and say no this is subjective and someone else may say this is objective – it's always in the eyes of the reader

N: why do you think objectivity is linked to being a professional or a good, solid journalist?

Kh: any story should not reflect your opinions. Use the information you've gathered to tie the story together not your personal opinion. That's why opinion pieces are there, to reflect your own opinion.

S: objectivity is something one should strive but we're not always totally objective. And in some cases, it's not even desirable, like the case with the toilets that are filled up – you do take sides on a story like that. And that's fine. The side you would take is that you want those toilets emptied, there's no two sides to that. Who's to blame for it, you can have various options – then you can be objective on deciding where the fault lies. The fact that those toilets are bad and you need them to be emptied; you don't need alternative viewpoints on that. There are other stories

where I take an editorial decision that we are going to support one side or the other. For example this story of moving the high court out of Grahamstown...it doesn't mean we're ignoring the opponents of that, if they have an argument, we will display their viewpoint as well but we've taken a decision, we want the high court to stay in Grahamstown. There are other issues like environmental issues, I've decided that we need to support green issues...on the media tribunal; we have a very strong standpoint on that. We're dead set against that. If someone would like to write a letter and argue in favour of it, fine we'll publish that letter. But as a newspaper we're against it. But I do believe in the right of reply, I have never refused a right of reply to anyone – I'm not saying that I will never refuse it

N: journalistic roles – introduce them, what their characteristics are...I think GM does all three

Kw: ja, I think so too. For the monitorial role, I would point to our coverage of the affairs at Makana municipality. We try to attend all their meetings and monitoring the reports that get tabled...we often publish what was covered at those meetings but sometimes we do ask critical questions of certain developments that we're not sure of and then we need the municipality to contextualise

S: in terms of the facilitative role I presume you are talking about instances where we provide a platform for other people to talk. We have the letters page, we have the sms facility and every Friday we have a your say section, a vox pops. We make an effort; there is space to use GM as a platform to air other views. And even on regular stories I encourage journalists to get opinions of other people. So, it's not just reporting „this toilet is blocked“ but it's what do people think about this?

B: here anyone can come off the street and they've got a direct channel to getting their story heard or just generating knowledge about an issue, that's a small town that allows you to do that.

T: I don't know how accurate this is, but that citizens journalism happening downstairs is largely facilitative

N: Radical?

S: I think radical; a nice example has been our views on the media tribunal and the information act. An issue that hasn't been widely debated in broader Grahamstown. But we've put it in the newspaper and we've taken a very strong position on it, very radical position on it and we're pushing it on the papers. To a degree on the high court story as well, there is a group we're working with and I worked with this group to set up a front page picture...we were making the news there, we weren't simply reporting on it. We were being activists. Because we want this high court to stay here.

N: which role are you most comfortable with GM adopting?

B: I think having multiple roles is always beneficial...if you're thinking social change, you're always writing something with the intention of improving somethingthe way reporting is done, I think different issues require different approaches

Kw: I agree with Brad, but I find that most of the tasks I do they fall into monitorial but that doesn't mean I've never engaged with others...I think it's a matter of coincidence (that his stories fall under the monitorial role)...but ja I identify with all these three roles

S: I think that different circumstances, different story ideas, we have different roles

N: which one do you think better serves the community?

S: I don't think in my mind, hmmm, we're going to do this story, this is a monitorial role story...in different circumstances one applies and the other doesn't and sometimes conceivably you could have a combination of both. Sometimes you can have a very simple thing, let's take a vox pop "is the municipality doing a good job?" In a way, it's a monitorial thing but at the same time it's facilitative because we're facilitating community, and also in selecting that question we're actually being quite activist about it

Appendix 5: Schedule for workshop 3

Rape as a social problem

1. How do you understand gender?
2. How do you understand rape? What is your definition of rape?
3. When you hear about an incident of rape, what is your first reaction?
4. What do you think the primary causes of rape are?
5. Share the Bonnes' study and discuss rape myths

Rape reporting

1. How do you go about pitching a story?
2. How do you handle the stories that are pitched?
3. How do you decide who's covering a story?
4. Primary sources?
5. Are rape stories handled differently to other stories?
6. Have you read the Sexual Offences Act?
7. Rape myths
8. Is there a way of thinking about rape reporting via monitorial, facilitative or radical roles?
9. What would the effect of these roles be?

Appendix 6: Transcript for workshop 3

N: rape coverage workshop – bring everyone up to speed. What do you think about gender?

Kh: gender is just male and female

A: in terms of coverage, or?

N: just in general

A: Gender...its quite complex, it could mean a man or a woman. Because these days we have people who would regard themselves as men, or regard themselves as women even though they were naturally born as men. A friend of mine, he is a gay guy, he was born a man but he regards himself as a woman and he's going to have a sex change at some point but what do you say at that?....well it is a complex problem, well a complex issue you cant say that it is a problem. I think most people have a problem or are faced with the problem of not understanding what gender is all about

Prudence: men and women, its straightforward

Kw: like these guys, men and women

Kh: the differentiation of sexes

N: how then do you understand rape? What is your definition of rape?

Kh: rape is like theft, you're taking something that does not belong to you, just that rape is sexual, it's a sexual abuse...you have no permission to do what you're actually doing.

A: you're taking it by force without permission. It could be a man, it could be a woman, it's both ways, it can't just be a man that rapes, women also do that – they can do it to another woman, they can do it to another man. Of course we have different words for those things but it is still rape at the end of the day

N: (gives new SOA definition of rape)

Kh: I don't think I'd see a man admitting to being raped by a woman.

A: well, they will, it's just society today

Kh: I think it would also stop at the police station...if the government could have specialised rape centres where they deal exclusively with rape cases because if you're a man and you go to a police station and you've been raped, they'd never take you seriously. ...with police who are trained to deal with that trauma, because if you've seen a rape victim, it's like they've come from mars

A: it's terrible, even if it happened when they were young...

Kh: it would be like it happened yesterday

A: I had to deal with, last Sunday, she was raped when she was very young. I think suddenly it all came back during our church service. And as I was talking to her she just kept crying because she remembers like it was yesterday. It's a life-changing situation.

Kh: if I make an example...my baby mother she was raped at a young age, at 13, and she has a hatred to men who rape. She could strangle and kill a man who rapes...

Kw: I understand rape to be sexual intercourse between two people with no consent...I've never heard of a male complainant (raped by a woman)

N: when you hear about an incident of rape, what is your first reaction (as a citizen or journalist)?

P: it's very difficult...what if the girl was drunk...I need to remain objective, because I would treat it like she was the victim...

A: the first thing that comes to my mind is how is she? How can this guy or these men do this? That's the first thing that comes to mind, the story comes later. Then I get the rest of the information...she could be lying because you have those cases...I think that would be 2% of the cases...but most of them don't...its devastating

Kh: (interrupts discussion between A and N) I see things a bit differently, first I ask the question, where did it happen?

P: yes

Kh: it's always where.

N: does it matter?

Kh: for me it does, because if it was at the guy's house, you start to ask the question: was she forced or did she actually agree on going there? If this happens in the bush, its forced. And then there's the question of lying, there's this other dude, he is just being released now (throughout this he is speaking over A and N trying to correct some of the assumptions he has, he gets more and more agitated). It's a sad example, this guy fell for something that he did not do. This guy went out with a friend and his friend picked up this chick and they all drank and had fun and stuff like that. And what happened was that the chick woke up the friend was gone and this guy was leaving. The woman had no recollection of what happened the previous night, she went and pressed rape, the guy got 15 years.

A: no, no, 15 years. The courts cant just rule, you press charges and the police investigate. You go to jail, you appear in court, you get your lawyer..

N: and there's a forensic kit...

A: he's not telling you the truth, he cant just get 15 years...he's not telling the truth. Anyway, about that part, if its in the bush then its rape. A woman can leave a party with a man she doesn't

know... go into his house, that doesn't give him the right to rape her even if she will sleep on top of him. If she says no, then no

Kh: it's understood (defensively)

P: but its people's perceptions, if someone is raped after a party...

A: that's exactly the type of stereotype that we need to change...because even if someone walks in naked, she comes in naked, its her own body so why rape her? You need to deal with your own hormones

Kh: that's understood, but you find that there might be some sort of ...some women will agree to this and then the next moment they cry rape

N: you can stop halfway through it

Kh: during the act its quite difficult to do that

A: if she says no, then no

Kh: I do stick by the word no. but this is a new case to me. So lets say you started, she then says no, you stop. Can she then press rape afterwards?

A: that's for the court to decide

Kh: a lot of people are not educated in that, you just stop, that needs to be taken into consideration.

A: if you cant educate a man to have sex with a woman you cant educate them to stop during a sexual act. If she says no, or she starts crying, of course you're supposed to ask what's going on, you don't just carry on (its about pleasure – N). ja, yourself or the woman?

Kh: There are some men who actually deserved their sentences, I do not condone rape. But I have always felt that men...have been on the receiving end (in rape cases)

N: women are on the receiving end of...

Kh: I know, but

A: look at the Jacob Zuma case...

Kh: you might do all your shit on the outside, but if you do what's right in the eyes of the people...they'll see you as a favourite...

Kw: this subject is very difficult for me, in 1992 some idiots tried to rape my mother but weren't successful, and now my brother's doing time for rape behind bars..it's too much for me

Kh: I was at the courts this morning where they mentioned how you cover a case that you need to get permission from the magistrate, you cant just walk into a rape case.

A: ...with minors its different, I took a picture of a guy who raped two children but of course it's a relative you cant print it...we're talking about reacting as a journalist or a citizen, I cried my eyes out. I was at the high court...in a 5 year old kid...I couldn't take it, I just started crying.

Kh: you do it to my daughter, I'll slit your throat...in terms of that rape issue, people aren't educated in terms of what to do when you're raped...from what I know is, you do not wash and you do not change, rape cases are reliant on forensics tests...you cant rely on word of mouth because its his word against hers...

N: P, any thoughts?

P: on this topic, no

N: what do you think the primary causes of rape are?

Kh: I always say, as a guy, if you cant get it, you always find it for R50 at the corner. That's consensual...you cant take something if its not yours. If you can buy it, then so be it, it's no problem

A: I don't understand, there's different kinds of rape, what do you see in a minor, a 5 year old child? She doesn't even have pubic hair or boobs, what arouses a man...or that 8 month old kid in Kimberly? What would possess a grown man to even think of sleeping with a child?

N: do you think its not sexual then, its power?

A: It is about power, that's what its about. For some it might be sexual, like 5% but for others its about power. Or maybe someone was abused by his mother and all that anger is inside his head and he just wants to make someone else feel that pain.

Kh: in a relationship, the sex determines who wears the pants in a relationship...whoever has power inside the room, its almost always the man. And you do find that when guys have had sex they go around boasting that they feel powerful. There's a sense of power, ja, I've done this and I can do it again and again and again...and when you get used to it, and then you don't get it, you find that there's something short...

Kw: so you're saying a potential rapist is somebody who has low self esteem and then they'd do anything to overpower members of the opposite sex to regain some standing with men?

Kh: yes

P: to be a man you have to take it whenever you want...

Kh: yes, I've heard that a lot, its taboo where I've heard it (initiation school), unfortunately its true

Kw: in the township, this is how young boys are socialized. Boys approaching adolescence are under severe pressure to deflower, to lose their virginity. So if you are 14 years and you go to high school and you are still a virgin...your friends look down on you...you grow up under such immense pressure and I don't know what that does to somebody who already has low self esteem...

Kh: at initiation schools, it becomes an issue...

N: share Bonnes' study and discussion of rape myths...passive voice, deletion of rapist...news in brief section...decontextualisation...(Kh interrupts me!!!!)

Kh: there's an issue you raise about the o-week aftermath thing, that there's a white boy...it's a case of perception and race, its like white people don't rape...black people are expected to rape...the broad spectrum needs to be applied...

P: ...it's a story, oh, a white boy who went to Rhodes was accused of rape...

Kh: I would gladly put my job on the line for such an issue,

N: info about word choice, i.e. not using words like rape survivor or victim, that Gm uses, girl, woman or gogo, or granny...contradiction of activist articles but not improving reportage...

A: the problem in Grahamstown, is that every weekend you have a rape case and its always in news in brief...sometimes we'll do a follow up, it all depends on the victim, the survivor and the family...in those cases where they are willing to talk, we cover it ...and unfortunately, we are partly guilty for just doing it as a brief. We've discussed it with Saskia...

N: how do you go about pitching a story?

A: most of our rape stories will come from a police report saying maybe that a woman was raped on her way from a tavern or something, or someone broke into a woman's home, or someone broke into someone's home and raped kids...or you know, a woman or a man. So its usually like that, there's no specific way really

Kh: its basically the same, not a lot of people will come out and say that someone got raped. Its basically because rape is a sensitive issue, its very strange to hear someone say that someone got raped.

N: do you follow up with what you hear from the police report?

A: ja, well we'll follow up with most of the stories but if the family's willing to talk then we'll talk to them. If they don't want to talk about it then we don't even tread on that. 30% of our rape stories come from police reports and the court

S: I don't pitch stories.

N: how do handle storeis that are pitched?

S: very carefully, with kit gloves. I am aware that there are many different laws that protect the rapist and not so many laws that protect journalists so I am very carefully about anything that I do like that. We had an example where a 15 year old boy raped an 11 year old child, and the cops have not charged him because they have to have a social worker, there is no social worker so this kid is carrying on with life. He brutally raped an 11 year old, absolutely nothing is happening to him, he is not even being charged. Everyone knows that he did it, he bragged to his friends, and the law is totally in his favour. The school that he goes to was very unhappy that I mentioned it, the school expressed great concern about their reputation, they didn't express concern for the 11 year old child that was raped. They were worried about us tarnishing the image of the school. Nobody, the police, the social workers, the rapist, the school, nobody cares about the 11 year old child that was raped. Very worried about the image of the school... Mary Waters School... they phoned us up and shouted at me because we reported on that story, because its tarnishing the image of that school. That's not an unusual situation, like Rhodes University for example. So yes, I'm very reluctant to do anything

N: are there any other primary sources?

A: just chatting with people, like a story a few weeks ago about an old woman that was raped in the township, the reporters were doing another story when they heard people talking about it, they asked them about it and that's how they got to interview...

N: how do you decide who's covering that story?

A: the person who pitches the story will definitely cover it unless they say it will be too emotional for them then they would give it to someone else.

N: do you assess whether that person should be covering that story or is it..?

A: well, generally, ja, if there are students you have to assess whether this person will be able to carry out their assignments (not what nyx meant!!!). they might have a problem so you'll ask someone to accompany them

N: what if they're not necessarily sensitive...

A: of course you groom them, they would know that before they even go to the assignment how they are going to handle it, especially in cases like that...

N: do you handle rape stories that are different from other stories? Or do you treat it as news?

A: well no, we have to be careful, of course it's a very sensitive issue, we cant treat it as news or as a normal story...we have to be sensitive

N: is it because its so sensitive and difficult to deal with rape stories that the stories are so small?

S: absolutely. The stories are small because there are so many rules against the media publishing any details...there are of course sensitivities, you don't want to make the family of the person suffer any more than they already are. And on the second case there are lots of legal regulations that you cant do this and you cant do that. And really you can only say something once a person has been convicted ...the legal system tries very hard not to convict rapists, so

Kh: well I haven't done any rape stories, not because I'm avoiding them, so I don't think I'd be able to comment

N: have you read the SOA act?

A: no

Kh: no

S: what we also do when we have stories that are legally sensitive, I send them to Robert Brand and ask him for his opinion, he is a lecturer on media law...so when we have issues like that we just ask him...as it is, now I go through rape stories much more carefully than I go through other stories, I think about it a lot more and if there's something that I think is vaguely risky, I remove it..as a general rule of thumb, I'll just take it out

N: and then as a journalist...(tape ran out here...so the following are my notes)...

A: as a societal issue...then as a story

S: society tolerates rape, and that's why it happens...

N: perpetuating rape myths

S: we're guilty of deleting the "rapist" because we need to protect ourselves

Note: perpetuate myths because of the laws that don't allow the publication of information, so they focus on info that can be used...

(tape's back)

A: you know, we have to report the facts. If the police give us a report saying that a woman was raped at half past midnight or when she was walking from a tavern, we have to put that in, even when they say she was at home...so its all about putting the facts in, its up to the reader, they make their own judgment. Its not what we promote but you have to put the facts out there under these circumstances

N: is there a way of thinking about rape reporting via monitorial, facilitative, or radical?

Kh: I've never seen a story where its seen from the eyes of the perpetrator, I've seen many from the eyes of the victim. They might be constrained by the laws..it might be able to give people insight into what drives a person to

N: what do you think the effect would be?

Kh: it will help people to understand because someone people who have a certain way of thinking about rape...like have a story where the person express what they were thinking before the act, during the act and after the act, what was going through their mind, it will give people more clarity as to how rapists think.

A: most rapists don't just do it, they think about it for days beforehand. Especially child molesters, they take days, weeks...they think about it, its terrible...when the one in nine campaign has events, of course we cover those...but I've never spoken to a rape counsellor when doing a story, I don't think I've done that

S: what's the question? ...my current policy on covering rape is minimalist and its definitely monitorial...occasionally we'll do something with a little more depth...when I pushed for advocacy, I actually discovered that most people actually support rape..in Grahamstown they actually think rape's cool. And the law will support the rapist

N: how has that impacted your policy on reporting?

S: minimalist. A rape case happens, we report as best as we can, and go through it very carefully so as not to get into legal trouble.

N: is that a consequence of the Liddell case?

S: Ja

N: prior to that how you have handled a case?

S: well, I think you wrote articles for the newspaper...but I found that if you're against rape they can come very close to closing this newspaper, and there are cases, that is one particular case that had ramifications but there are cases all the time. There was that girl that was gang raped. There was the 15 year old that raped the 11 year old. Not one person is lifting a finger to help the 11 year old...but they're all there to help the rapist. The society we exist in made it very clear, the legal system supports rape, there's zero chance that these rapists will get convicted...you see the number of rapes that occur in Grahamstown, and then you see the number of convictions that are secured...its not 4% its much less, there's zero percent...what happened to the five that gang raped that girl? They're heroes. The fact of the matter is that society and the legal system supports rape. They do not support the media. And what I've told you now is the toned down version of what I think

N: can you give an example where you've given it an expanded space...

A: the one with the 15 year old child...and most of our court cases because we go in depth

N: please repeat the bit about society tolerating rape

S: I think that the society that we live in tolerates rape, there is outcry against the rapists. The rapists commit their crimes and they're just accepted back in school and the school gets very upset because we publish the story. They don't get upset with the rapist they get upset with the media..Rhodes University when we reported on rape they get cross with us they don't get cross with the rapist. They shout at me, they write nasty emails to me because I report on rape. ...my view is the schools support rape, the judicial system definitely supports rape, they will not do anything to catch rapists

N: why do you think they support it?

S: they tolerate it! I don't know why, because they're fucked in the head!

N: examples...

S: I'll tell you what happens. People read this thing, they read it not because they think not about there beign a rapist, they think oh fuck how can we sue the newspaper, that's the whole thing....rape is just rampant, if you cant find a 11 year old, rape a granny, rape anyone, you know.

A: in the headline you have to emphasise who the victim is...

N: taverns...value judgment you place on these articles...

A: its mostly stuff they say to the police, its what the police ask them, its right there in the police report...they don't send us the whole report, but just the important facts

S: what she was doing is not relevant to the gravity of the crime, a crime's a crime.

N: then why do you think those things get emphasised then?

S: you have to put in some kind of context..its not a judgment that going home from a tavern is a bad thing...what do you do? Do you just say a woman was raped?

A: you have to put the facts in, it would be unethical to not report on that because they will come up in court

N: why does society place that sort of value there?

S: because a lot of ppl who think rape is cool think its not cool to walk around at 2am in the morning...you have a lot of your tanies in society here who think young women shouldn't be walking around at 2am and if you do don't come crying to me if you get raped

N: safe space and contradiction with telling how not to be raped...burden on women, another way of doing it?

A: I think it would be difficult to write articles about how not to be a rapist. Most people think they are not potential rapists until they do it because they don't know what its all about...it could be someone's girlfriend...

N: the Liddell case...consequences for the survivor (your handling of the case)

S: ja, the survivor left town..we got shouted at...but obviously the survivor was the one that was really short changed

A: ppl felt sorry for this boy

S: they didn't feel sorry for him, they think he's a big hero...

N: that's it

S: why don't you or someone from the university do nice happy stories that we do at Grocott's?

Appendix 7: Interview schedule

1. How do you think of your role at this community paper?
2. Do you think of the journalists at GM as being part of a community?
3. Do you think there's a cohesive sense of identity among the staff at GM?
4. Is there a desire at GM to make a difference?
5. How does GM cater to all members of the community?
6. What's GM's role in creating a sense of community in ght?
7. How does GM give voice to the voiceless?
8. How does everything converge at GM?
9. Which role do you prefer working with?
10. How to incorporate roles into the paper's routines?
11. You say that circumstances determine the role to be used, expand?
12. What roles should be adopted for rape reporting?
13. What would a monitorial rape story look like?
14. What would a facilitative rape story look like?
15. Radical rape story?
16. Do these roles threaten the way things are done in the newsroom?
17. How do you think journalists' perceptions affect rape reporting?
18. What do you think of some journalists' silence on the topic of rape?
19. What should your role at GM be in relation to rape coverage/stance on rape?
20. Do you think of the broader or immediate consequences?

21. What are the constraints on writing a rape story?
22. Do you think that minimalism is the answer to these constraints?
23. “tavern, etc” about context – but these reinforce stereotypes?
24. How can you write these stories differently?
25. Write in personal capacity?
26. If you feel the paper gets mistreated for its coverage then how do you go about interacting with the community to correct or address this?
27. Heavy reliance on police reports – what are the problems with this?
28. Responsibility is often shifted away from GM, why?
29. What’s your toned up version – Steven ?
30. Different type of journalism?
31. How do you deal with the complexity of the issue and the community?
32. What scares you about rape reporting?
33. What are your/Steven’s responses to rape reporting so personal?
34. Are newsroom routines stopping GM from making a difference?
35. Additional comments?

Appendix 8: Interview transcript

1. How do you think of your role at this community paper?

Steven

it's a multifaceted role that I have to produce material that would encourage sales...make this business reasonably profitable or at least sustainable...and at the same time there's an obligation to attend to the needs of the broader community to see that the community is represented and that they have a voice in the newspaper...and so they can see themselves reflected in the newspaper. And issues that concern the broader community are reflected in the newspaper...and it's a very diverse community where there are a wide range of people with different cultural backgrounds, different interests, different concerns...but I try to make sure that they're all represented...at the same time I'm acutely aware of the educational aspect of this institute...I think it might not even exist if it were not for the educational aspect of it. So, I have to ensure that it is viable and that it works as a teaching platform and that it's productive, and that at the end of the day I can see some students that have left here and felt that they have learnt something...

Abongile

my role of course is important. I mostly deal with the managerial side of things, I have to handle the flow of news and everything. But we work together. I assist reporters with story ideas, with angles and everything like that...basically I am like the mother (of GM)

Kwanele

bridged between CJ and professional journalism. CJ should be marketable so I see my position as turning whatever they produce into marketable news products...I see myself as having a continuous mentoring role because I want them to be able to produce at first attempt a marketable news product

Prudence

I'm Prudence, I started off here as an intern...then left, came back as the permanent municipal affairs reporter...Just getting out what needs to be said. Reporting on everything that happens, almost like you are the eyes and mouth of people that don't have a way to go see something, especially when it comes to municipal meetings...

Khanyiso

my role is basically to inform people and tell them what's happening and give them information and educate them without being biased and without having any sort of leaning towards anything

2. Do you think of the journalists at GM as being part of a community?

Steven

you mean that in the newsroom there is a separate community? Yes I think so. Its interesting that when we have different students who come in here its almost like a new community is being formed...a temporary community that exists for a certain amount of time and then mutates into something else...

Abongile

yes, definitely but most of them come here with that idea „I'm the reporter“ and the community is there. But as they learn to work with the community and get to know the community much better they become part of the community (GM community) yes definitely, we're different but not too different from the whole Grahamstown community because we're the communicators, we bring news to the people. We take what the world out there says and bring it to the people, and we take what the people say to those in power. As reporters of course we're one family, we're part of that family and we're part of our broader family which is the community of Grahamstown

Kwanele

I think they view themselves as part of the larger Ght community in the sense that our coverage of news in this community responds to the rhythms of the community...I wouldn't say that they constitute their own community...there is a community of journalists but its not only made up of Ght or GM reporters...even the daily despatch guys we meet at court form part of the community of journalists

Prudence

yes, of course, we are alike most ways. I used to work at Rhodes...it's just weird how different the environment is from there to here...I'm still at entry level in journalism but I'm surrounded by so many people that have been in the field for so long and then you also get newbies that come in and then they also brush up on my skills...I do feel like it is a home in some sort of way...I feel like I am serving a function in Grahamstown...when you go outside to collect information sometimes it's quite hard to face hardships but then you come back to your nest...you feel that they understand, and that they understand each other...we talk and get some feedback on things you might be facing

Khanyiso

we feel that we are part of a community because we deal with all sorts of issues because you find that some people come here with municipal problems...and ask us to write something on that...we actually fulfil the role of counselling or some sort of a social worker role...(community or family) you can say both because if you find that a bad thing happens to somebody, it affects everyone..within the family

3. Do you think there's a cohesive sense of identity among the staff at GM?

Steven

yes I believe so, I think that within this organization, within GM I think its reasonably cohesive, there's a sense of identity...people identify with the brand, people identify with the institution and there's a large degree of loyalty as well... I think there's more loyalty at GM than at the SABC where I worked before...I think there is a definite identification with the brand, with the institute.

Kwanele

I think that people are clear as to what is expected of them. ...the other people do everything ranging from sports to politics, in as much as that is the case, people have a clear perspective of what is expected of them in terms of their work ethic, their general conduct at work...

Prudence

yes, I should think so, I do feel like we are, I wouldn't call it a family but I do feel that support. I don't feel that I am just alone on an island

Khanyiso

yes, they should...as much as people would have their individual thoughts and individual ways of thinking, when we work as a team, in a newsroom...everyone has a common goal where you put aside your differences and focus on what's at hand

4. Is there a desire at GM to make a difference?

Steven

yes, our aim is to improve the lot of the people of the community, we are acutely aware of that. Even though grahamstown is an educational town, the majority of the schools are falling apart, the teachers in the schools aren't very serious about teaching...we are aware that the municipality reads the paper quite closely and they react to the things we do...we do have agendas in that we are looking out for the wellbeing of the grahamstown community...

Abongile

that's the heart of GM, to make a difference in Grahamstown.

Kwanele

yes, very much so. I know that SL for example he has an ambition of unifying the communities in the western suburbs and the eastern township...I told him that I think it's a

noble goal... since I started working at GM five years ago I think we are a step closer to achieving that. ..

Prudence

oh yes, I think so...it's probably a personal thing, because I come from, you know when you have that passion and where you want to do something better with your life. If I had the brains I would have become a scientist...but all I have is a notepad...in that way if I can change, if I can bring light to a situation...I don't have a mayor tag or the brains or...I don't have the powers that be but at least I can spread the word that this situation needs to be addressed... When you scout for a story you go "oh my gosh I cant believe that happened" but you've also got to be careful not to put your personal feelings in front of it. Your job is just to report on what's happening and you have to get opinions from other people to hold up the story. Really it isn't anything that comes from you but you're just kind of putting it out there.

Khanyiso

yes, because the majority of the stories that are covered are in the grahamstown area...

5. How does GM cater to all members of the community?

Steven

I don't think that we do so perfectly, I don't think that every group in this town can feel „yes everything about my community is reflected here“. I don't think we're even close to the goal of achieving full representativty but I think nobody feels compeltey left out. We try and cater to the farming community, the hindu community...all different types of people. I'm sure the hindu people would like more on their community, but its usually related to a festival, but we try and do our best...

Abongile

ja, we strive to cater for everyone...because that's what we're all about...we cover different stories, we cover stories that are meant for academics and we'll simplify some of the complex stuff for a person on the street, an ordinary person...

Kwanele

I think GM tries to cater to everyone...there are resource constraints, there are time constraints... a lot can go wrong because we cant be everywhere at once...we operate on a limited budget so there are such constraints...I think in due time it will be possible for everybody to be served by this community newspaper

Prudence

with high school maybe (ref: upstart publication)

Khanyiso

media debate...if people do read the paper then people would have been there...

6. What's GM's role in creating a sense of community in ght?

Steven

I think that if people can read about what is happening in other parts of the broader community, they can see how close to home it is, and they can see that if this doesn't effect them directly, it effects them indirectly...and in that way they can share a concern and an interest in a particular area, and in that way, they can come closer to having a shared value that you would have in a single community.

Abongile

we try to bridge that gap of Gtown east, gtown west and the academics, it's a very divided community, Grahamstown...we try by all means to bridge that gap through the content we publish in Grocott's

Kwanele

I think the CP should be the mouthpiece of the community, it should be like a platform where the ght community interacts with each other...I think GM should allow them the space to do that...GM should be reflective of the activities, of the plight of the ght community. It must talk on behalf of their fears and dreams...

Prudence

reporting on community news...

Khanyiso

well its basically when you cater for all the needs of the residents of the town...because you don't get people with the same set of issues, you get people with different sets of issues...

7. How does GM give voice to the voiceless?

Steven

the voiceless I am presuming are people who wouldn't normally have a platform to express their views so every week we have a vox pops where people go out onto the street and ask a representative section of the Grahamstown community for their views...we have a letters section...we have an sms section...we also have a CJ unit where people in the community are actually working for us as CJs...these are people who are almost all of them are unemployed...we're giving them employment but we're also giving them a voice...so that these people in the deepest reaches of the community do have an opportunity to speak out and have their voices heard...so then again, we're not perfect in this aspect by any means but we certainly do have lots of opportunity and places where the voiceless can have their views expressed...

Abongile

the voiceless are the poor because their voice is never heard, they could be poor in the white community, the black community, the coloured community, but the voice of the poor is never

heard...you will notice that we mostly have stories about service delivery ,how the people have been treated badly by the government or the municipality...

Kwanele

I think it does because now we have the CJ project where we recruited and trained ordinary citizens to become journalists, given the high unemp rate in ght, the CJ project has given these guys some hope...ordinary people who are not cjs find their voice in the paper because they know of cjs in their areas and they can find it easier to talk to those people...so I think they do get a voice from GM

Prudence

)...businesses, focusing on articles like that, you're trying to get the word out that there are people out there trying to change the situation (entrepreneurship)...

Khanyiso

...most of the material is from the ght area, we don't purchase stories

8. How does everything converge at GM?

Steven

I'd like to believe that. I can strive towards that. Whether we're successful, sometimes we are, sometimes we aren't

Abongile

I cant remember my exact words...this is where it all comes together...we're the communication nerve centre of the whole of Grahamstown...all the news comes here...we're the heart of Grahamstown...

Kwanele

no I don't think so. But I think that's a good thing to aspire towards achieving because ...it should be a place where everybody finds it easy to come to and rant out whatever they have to say. I think its mainly because of the newspaper's location...we are in the CBD so probably for somebody who is in ward 4 they may find it difficult to come here or worse to read about news...the other reason may be of course the newspaper's history. Some people still perceive it as that traditional white newspaper that caters to white interests...

Prudence

...so we're like the middleman...ja, I think so, that's true. Whether people like it or not, GM will be there to report about it, even if they don't want it to be in the newspaper, it's going to be there...and that's one of the issues, you get people that are just so against journalists...but yet when you don't report on something, „where was GM?“.

Khanyiso

in a sense yes...

9. Which role do you prefer working with?

Steven

when we conceptualise stories and do them and then publish them, I don't think of them in those terms like that. We do believe that we cover all three aspects of them, we monitor very closely what's going on in the municipality...at the same time we do have agendas, and we push these agendas quite unashamedly. We do have an agenda that we would like improve the educational quality in Grahamstown...things like that we do publish opinions that are against our viewpoint...we publish that as well. Yes, there is an agenda and in my view it is quite clear but it doesn't mean we disregard all viewpoints... on the facilitative we have that type of role quite often, a nice example was the media tribunals and protection information bill... had quite a radical position on that as well...

Abongile

all of those are important. We get information, we disperse it to the public. Sometimes the radical stance, which was the high court, and education. Our stance there is clear. We don't

want the high court to be moved to bisho, and education, we want education to be improved...when it comes to rape issues, we're focusing on one thing, that is, expose the perpetrators, and what is the police doing about it?because we always cover the stories and maybe in three months time we go back, what have the police done? So we do that as well. And that is the facilitative part where we work together with the different spheres of, the different powers that be and the community at large. So, ja, all three.

Kwanele

I think monitorial and facilitative, I identify with those...(incorporate) I think we do already...lets talk radical now, if the paper sees a violation on the part of government or any violation then the newspaper will seek to expose that violation...we're using a human rights based approach in justifying the radical stance...

Prudence

I think it would be hard news (monitorial)sitting in all those council meetings to find out if they are doing something...I guess, pushing an agenda when it comes to say water problems...(call to action) I think maybe when I write about a story that is going to get some response...people can respond to articles...

Khanyiso

it's monitorial and facilitative...basically the way I've been taught is that the media is the watchdog, it speaks for the people. So if there's something the people cant say, you need to speak on their behalf. And to facilitate change...you are the catalyst, you speed up the work.

10. How to incorporate roles into the paper's routines?

Steven

I don't have any plans to make our process more structured or formalized when making these different roles. I tend to drive the editorial agenda more than anyone else and in my mind I take conscious decisions, are we merely going to report on an issue or are we going to take a stand? That's a conscious decision...i don't intend on taking it any further or developing a methodology on how we should deal with such stories...

Khanyiso

hard question that, it depends on the reporter itself and the thinking capabilities and what mind the reporter has because we have reporters who think on different waves lengths so you may find a colleague of mine may have a more radical role while I may be more facilitative...

11. You say that circumstances determine the role to be used, expand?

Steven

circumstances and what the issue is...the news business is very much influenced by external factors and we have to just report on what happens...

Abongile

it really does depend on that

Kwanele

yes I do think that circumstances do dictate, some circumstances only allow you to approach the story in one way and no other way, so circumstances play a huge factor in determining whether I go monitoiral or facilitative or even radical...

Prudence

oh yes, because in council meetings all you can do is just sit and listen...you can monitor it but you can take out of that meeting what they say and use a different form....

Khanyiso

yes it does, in terms of a rape case sometimes you need to be more monitoiral, or radical...it does depend on the circumstance of the sotry

12. What roles should be adopted for rape reporting?

Steven

it's a very difficult question that because there are so many different, conflicting viewpoints on it and people don't always say what they think, they say what they're supposed to think...my personal viewpoint is that there is far too much gender violence in this country as a whole, and in this Grahamstown community as a microcosm ...I think we are a representative microcosm because I don't think that we're any different from the country as a whole...for some reason that I don't understand our society is a lot more tolerant of gender violence than it admits to...I think if you went out onto the street and interviewed people they'd say they don't tolerate it, they don't accept it but factually they do accept it because every week in the newspaper there are rapes cases. And it's almost routine. I don't think that's a good idea, I would very much like it to change...but it's also extremely hard to report on rape because the legal system is set up to actually protect rapists...and anyone who practices gender violence is protected by the law...(legally ...).I think those circumstances all end up favouring the rapist...we had a very practical case, a month ago...[15 year old raped 11 year old]...he was never charged...that's a case of the circumstances protect someone, he's protected...the 11 year old person who was raped has zero protection. Whether you want to say it's the law or the lack of the law or social workers..it's a combination of all those factors...they all combine to protect the rapist...you can see this very clearly if you look in GM, we only get 2 or 3 rapes every week, but I'm sure we only get a small percentage of them because we base our reports on information from the police...I don't believe the information from the police, I believe they just suck out anything they like...I have absolutely no confidence in those figures...I know that there were at least 2 rapes but there could have been 20 or 50, who knows?...how many convictions for rape, one a month and it's normally from somewhere else, not from Grahamstown...you have these figures, one percent conviction, I think that's conservative, there's almost no chance of being convicted...when we had that issue with Gareth Liddell, the people who attacked me worst were women, they're all in favour of the rapist, so I don't know...

Abongile

that one is a little tricky. Monitorial and also take a radical stance, rape cannot be condoned in any community...pushing an agenda that this is totally unacceptable...I would like the coverage to be more about the victim or the survivor...what she has gone through and how

she has overcome that and exposing the perpetrator and not really looking at why he did it, because it is very complex. It could be more about being sexist, more about power or maybe because he was abused as a kid or something like that. That's why I say it's very tricky. But we can improve on this side because we usually put it in news in brief because it's a very hard thing to tackle every day. So maybe make the stories bigger...I've covered those stories before and it's really emotionally draining. It needs someone, I don't want to say cold, but someone who will cover the story but take themselves out of the whole situation...

Kwanele

I think given the seriousness of the crime we need a radical approach...I think editors need to be very radical about covering rape...(what would it look like?)first and foremost I think that editors and newsrooms need to invest a lot of resources into rape coverage, you need to hire a reporter who is going to look into issues of gender violence, and that person should be trained thoroughly you know, in terms of the applicable laws in that environment, and the kind of gender analysis/analysts that he or she could use. And I think that would be a good start...a rape and gender violence reporter who is well-resourced and that would be a good start...(why not happening at GM)pretty much the same story, we're a small community newspaper and we only have that amount of resources. Like I said, the only specific beat reporters we have are sport and council (why not put out a call or ask somebody to volunteer?)I don't know, really, but it hasn't happened...you would also appreciate the fact that until recently at GM we started talking about having a gender kind of coverage policy, how do we cover gender issues, how do we cover rape? How do we cover aids? It was only in 2007 when we started talking about those things, and there's no promulgated policy at GM that says this is how we should cover rape, this is how we should cover aids...if it was up to me, I would have that policy, and have that policy and in that have a place for appointing somebody who only covers these issues, and have a dedicated reporter for those issues.

(anyway you could push that agenda?)maybe at a staff meeting but I guess there are more pressing issues at GM than having a rape and aids coverage policy (but those policies...)but I don't think we should be having this conversation because I don't think that's my territory

Prudence

I think it's just basically the monitoring role, you have to monitor, you have to just write what you see and that's it. You don't want to put any sugar and spices in it (note, interesting reference). It's almost like hard news, just take the story, see what it is and just go with it... (alternative articles) maybe there are certain areas where a lot of females are raped, why is that happening, you know? (kind of role) facilitative, I guess... (Radical?) you just want to push that agenda, why are these rapes occurring in the same place all the time? You'd want to try and investigate that and try and show people that there really is a problem.

Khanyiso

the way rape is so prevalent and the way it has been so accepted, you need to be radical but then if you as a newspaper is radical then certain sectors of society will think that you have an agenda and someone behind you... we actually have to be facilitative to speed up justice processes because the more we talk about it, the more it will ingrain to people's psyches

13. What would a monitorial rape story look like?

Steven

to say monitorial, we're even inflating our own role there because all we're doing is taking the police report and putting it in more or less English... we're not even monitoring there, we're just regurgitating police reports...

Khanyiso

basically, what happened, where it happened, how it happened, what are the outcomes, where's the victim, where's the perpetrator ... basically the 5 w's and h.

14. What would a facilitative rape story look like?

Steven

we don't, not because we don't want to its just one of those things that people are not talking about, there are no discussions about it...(GM come in and start that conversation?) possibly, I'm not quite sure how. It's not inconceivable

Kwanele

Prudence

Khanyiso

look at the victim, how they're recovering...focus on the victim or focus on the perpetrator

15. Radical rape story?

Steven

I think it would be articles about how to deal with it, how to avoid rape, how to avoid gender violence...at one stage last year we put in quite a few articles...but since then we've done virtually nothing. Those articles didn't provoke much reaction.

Khanyiso

comment from the groups and those actually involved in the rape case..what are their comments, how do they feel about this, how would they like the law to take its course, where could the law improve...

16. Do these roles threaten the way things are done in the newsroom?

Steven

I don't think so

Abongile

no I don't think so, it just depends how radical you are...it's not good for a newspaper to take a radical stance on a subject, it's not good, it's not healthy for democracy

Kwanele

I don't think it should actually... circumstances sometimes determine how you approach a specific story... I think one approach actually gives a reporter more room to apply their trade... circumstances should determine an approach that will enhance a journalism rather than hinder it.

Prudence

I would just concentrate on a monitoring role... I don't want to have my personal feelings coming up in the article...

Khanyiso

no not exactly...

17. How do you think journalists' perceptions affect rape reporting?

Steven

journalists are just people, and as journalists we have the same prejudices as everyone else does, so I would like to think that journalists have a special view on ethics. But I don't think that... she was coming home from a tavern... she deserved to be raped, a lot of people have that viewpoint, a lot of journalists too, I'm not surprised. But at the same time when I've had students going out and doing stories, they have done actually very good stories... but it's not the same as a story like somebody stole potatoes from the veggie stand... it's a very different story. A very good story is the particular case that I mentioned... the guy did a huge amount of work on it, he spent maybe two weeks on it... he was clearly very emotionally affected himself, his prime contact with this case was the victim's father, he spoke to the father for a long time. We were painfully aware of the legal ramifications of such an article that yes the law will protect the rapist... we were acutely aware that the victim was only 11 years old, there a whole lot of legal ramifications attached to that. So besides that it was a very emotionally charged issue, article there were also triple minefields and yet the student reporter that did it, in my view he did a superb job... I think that he managed to get out the feelings and at the same time not reveal identities... people know who is referring to but it's just enough distance to not get too involved... he worked on it a lot, it cost him emotionally a

lot, I got very involved in it, it cost me as well. And yet it was one case of rape, and yet there's at least...he worked on it at least two weeks...

Abongile

it affects the reporting in a very big way...example of Khanyiso, if a person goes to the perpetrators house...obviously he is going to be subjective in his reporting. That is why we have to educate our reporters...the psychological part of the rape issue, even if you will never be a rapist or a victim, people need to be educated because this involves a lot of people...one needs to be sensitive to these issues...and if you are ignorant and think that a woman who walks in the streets deserves to be raped, then you don't deserve to be in the newsroom, let alone in the community...(form this education would take)self run courses, and at varsity it should be part of their journ practice...within the newsroom, it depends on that particular newsroom, do they think it's important or do they because you've got people and then you've got pigs...(your role)I don't know actually...my current role, I don't like them...it's not that I don't want them to be published, I get too attached, I get too emotionally involved and that is really bad for the reporting...(is it really a bad thing) for my reporting, of course, I would be very subjective...that's how I usually am when it comes to these things...it's not a bad thing of course. But in SA you're innocent until proven guilty

Kwanele

obviously a journalist who thinks that rape is just a minor criminal offence...a reporter that thinks that rape is something we're used to ...if there is a gang rape that reporter is likely not to give that gang rape as big coverage as it deserves because he or she may be thinking it is something we are accustomed to. But if somebody clearly disagrees with rape and sees it as a sexual violence that it is, then that person, even if it's a rape between the spouses, that person will probably put it on the front page. He or she would be radical about it, put that thing on the front page and then ...I think that the way a reporter views rape will determine how they cover it

Prudence

.that's the thing, that's why I don't want to put my personal feelings in there...because I just fight for the person who has the less power (why's this a bad thing?!!!!)

Khanyiso

it depends on the mindset of the reporter covering the event...I always ask certain questions because there are certain things I have seen but I always adjust my mind so that it is malleable...you need a level of society where it can be safe to do whatever and what time of the day

18. What do you think of some journalists' silence on the topic of rape?

Steven

just because its very difficult, legally we say it's a bad thing but people just condone it, I think its one of those really bizarre things if someone says he raped that girl, well then he's sort of a cult hero. If somebody went home and said he masturbated, then there's something wrong with him. We live in a society where raping is ok but masturbation is not. The bizarre thing is in relation to aids people say ja raping a virgin will cure you o fAIDS and people say that all the time. People don't say that if you masturbate you wont get aids...it's lies. Rape encourages or fosters aids, masturbation doesn't. we talk about the one, but not the other one. Why? It's societal values you know?

Kwanele

other than the sensitivities surrounding rape, people are not comfortable in taking a stand either against or for rape. They are comfortable in just keeping quiet about it. Some people find the subject of rape puzzling, for some rape by its very sexual nature is private, a matter between two people...I think there are some reporters who feel that way...

Prudence

that's me. It's quite a traumatic thing, especially when you have to talk to the person...it's a sensitive topic, there are words that you cant use...it's almost like reporting on suicide...it haunted me for a week, maybe I just have a sensitive soul...

Khanyiso

it's a personal issue, nothing more, nothing less...some may fear the consequences of rape suspects...

19. What should your role at GM be in relation to rape coverage/stance on rape?

Steven

we have to cover the issue. There's so much rape its impossible to cover every case properly. When we can we should focus on specific cases just to highlight that...I also would like it if advocacy groups would use the newspaper as a platform to divulge their views...I feel like there's not a lot more that can be said that hasn't been said before, but i feel that there are other people who have things to say

Abongile

we take it very seriously, we're totally opposed to rape but we try to be as objective as we can...even if you know deep down that this guy is guilty...you have to be objective...all the marches, every campaign, we cover those extensively...

Kwanele

I don't think I have that much of a role because the work that I do is governed by the newspaper's editorial policy...I don't have powers to do something way out of the ordinary... (why not)it's how things work because I take the cue from mike the online editor who takes th cue from steven, the editor...I am concerned about the way things are and that prevents me from trying new things I'd like to pursue (why don't you)if its not broken you don't fix it, you know (but it is broken) but how many people see it as broken? You're not in the nucleus of GM (but you don't have to be n the nucleus to see that there's something wrong) of course but in terms of addressing what you're seeing being done wrongly, I don't see myself as somebody who is capable of introducing anything new...the editor, yes...we haven't discussed this issue in the newsroom or at staff meetings but I think he's the only person who has the power to implement that change (why isn't he doing it) maybe there are more pressing issues than this issue,...

Prudence

just reporting on the facts, that's it. ...if the article begs for the question, then we will mention it...maybe just the role of informing people... I don't think there's a position, I think if it happens then we're there to report on it...

Khanyiso

you could take on all three forms and it could also be dependent on the story and how it came out, the problem is that it happens on the basis where it's like a case of mugging...but now its been ingrained and ingrained and ingrained to people ...rape happens on a daily basis...the victim is seen to be the aggressor and the perpetrator is seen to be the victim... rape is wrong, rape cannot be tolerated...

20. Do you think of the broader or immediate consequences?

Abongile

when I cover a rape story I think of the family and the victim, those are my number one people, I really couldn't care much about the perpetrator...but of course, his family, I would consider. If its something that has the potential to incite violence and lead to blood shed then one has to tread carefully...

Kwanele

public interest reigns supreme, if its in the public interest then in all likely hood I will report on it, and whether other people will like it or not, that's secondary to public interest. If I already understand the complexities around the issue I'm reporting then I will try to verify my facts and where impossible, where I cant verify something, I will be honest with the reader at least...

Khanyiso

that's a very marketing like decision beign a small town you might find such stories turn people against you...but what happened is what happened whether or not people might like it...

21. What are the constraints on writing a rape story?

Steven

the biggest constraint is the inability of the police to communicate anything, and secondly the legal pitfalls. They're more likely to get the newspaper than the rapist.

Abongile

being emotionally attached and sometimes if the victim doesn't want to talk...we don't push it...we've tried in the past to interview the families and they were willing...the person has to know before they even go to their assignment how you deal with this thing...our reporters have been quite good on that... if I think it would damage the family, then I wouldn't cover stuff...

Kwanele

not revealing the name of the survivor, not saying who the culprit is if related to the survivor...I think those constraints should be kept as such, I think in terms of balancing the people's rights to freedom of dignity...I don't see them as any deterrent for people who report and cover rape issues...they make rape coverage dignified, they make people look highly ethical and like they know what they're doing

Prudence

as an intern I had to check up on certain words that I am not supposed to use, and then the deadlines...and you need the comment from the police and if there isn't any comment, you cant really put the story forward...

Khanyiso

information from the police, we're always given the skeletons, we're never givent eh full details...and then you've got the law itself that protects rapists (???)ok now you've given me some food to think about... firstly, you should look at the conviction rate, it says a lot...only a small percentage of reported rapes reach conviction stage... which shows that there must be some sort of loophole which helps perpetrators escape the arms of the law...

22. Do you think that minimalism is the answer to these constraints?

Steven

no, it's not the answer. It's not something I'm happy about it. And obviously that's not an answer to the constraints...I need to deal with what's practical, what's doable...we get them every week these reports coming from the police...we print a lot of those (giving up?) it's giving up in that we can't follow all of them because that particular case took him the better part of 2 weeks to do one case. I only have two reporters, one the sports reporter and the other the municipal affairs reporter...so for me to take off the municipal affairs reporter, don't cover the municipality for two weeks, cover this case and at the end of two weeks you might not have anything...it's just not a practical way for handling the newsroom...these opportunities arise when I have more students available and we can dedicate them...but the majority of them I have to give up on...

Abongile

not really [the answer], we have to put this thing to the fore, to the public..it is a reality, its happening every second of the day in Grahamstown, every time a woman walks in the middle of the night, she's raped...children, boys, girls are raped. So we need to bring it to the fore but it is so depressing to read about rape every day in every edition,

Kwanele

I like the radical view because I think using the radical approach may uncover some aspects of rape that would normally be concealed, kept out of the public domain if the story was not approached in a radical way...there are certain truths about rape that are not known out there..how does it affect a son when their mom's been raped you know...we need a radical approach to drive home those truths that are seldom uncovered...

Prudence

just the facts, saying what happened...if I had to work on a rape story I would speak to whoever is concerned, the family, who was around, who witnessed...maybe there wasn't enough information and so maybe that's why it was put in there...

Khanyiso

it's constrained by the kind of information we get, it's not easy to get the rape victim to speak

23. "tavern, etc" about context – but these reinforce stereotypes?

Steven

yes, we are, to a degree perpetuating it. But we're not for one moment suggesting that that type of thing is justified. Also it's factually correct that most of the rapes do occur in situations like that. And that's not a value judgment. This is factually what happens...(another way of writing)I'm open to suggestions...a lot of these reports we get from the cops are written in barely intelligible English, so to put context on them, you should see some of them...inconsistent, very minimalist, how are you going to rewrite the thing? I do understand that by saying a person got drunk at 2am that it is apportioning blame which is obviously I don't want to apportion any blame...because I don't believe there's a link between getting drunk and getting raped..and I know that people do make those value judgments but that's the only information I have

Abongile

the problem with that is we get the report from the police, and it's a fact, and we've got to put it there...it's not like we're trying to tell people that women who walk around in the middle of the night should be raped...everyone should be freely walking around...its part of journalism, you've got to write where this happened, where was she going, who was there, blah blah blah (without that context)no, if we do not write those things then it will look like we're hiding the fact, that we're saying we are accepting that stereotype (confusion!!!)...(weight to the perpetrators actions) oh I get you, we could look at that as well...at the time of the reporting we don't have the information about the perpetrator, it's usually the victim because she goes to the police and the police file a report immediately. It

might be that the perpetrator hasn't been caught at the time, he hasn't been questioned...or they don't know much about him, otherwise when it's on trial, then

Kwanele

if you're going to put a story as a brief then there are other things you can mention for context ...I think that if you feel the urge to include that information then you need to give it a full report not just as a brief because there's more context than you're near a tavern...if you want to talk about context then I think you need to give it more space in a newspaper...even if you're not going to name the woman, you need to get their side of the story...

Prudence

you're kind of painting the picture of what happened, so why would you want to omit it in the first place..if they both were drunk...you could say they were both at the tavern...I think you're probably telling the story from the people who were there...a story from their perspectives (witnesses) if they're willing to comment...

Khanyiso

contexts are needed to explain the story, you can just say someone was raped there and then, you need to explain what happened with the rape, what was the person doing before the rape, I know it's not important but it needs to explain the circumstances around that rape

24. How can you write these stories differently?

Steven

we do have such articles periodically...whether it's enough or not it's open to debate.

Abongile

there is (space to do that) in conjunction with the factual reporting...and sometimes the causes but I think it's a once in a while event where we focus on a certain issue, the causes, the background...(personal capacity)there is space definitely

Kwanele

yes definitely but I don't see a lot of it happening around me. I think it will, there are certain aspects of rape that we as members of society do not know of...we don't know everything about rape and I think that we owe it to ourselves as reporters to disseminate that information, get it out there because people need. I am a fan of the kind of journalism that changes lives...if I'm going to write the type of story we speak of then I need to do basically everything, talk to the forensics...

Prudence

why do you want to omit them? It was where it happened. You're just reporting, that's basically what you're doing. (story from perp point of view) I would love to do that, just to know what's really going on in their minds...we all come from different backgrounds, maybe they grew up with abuse or something...and their minds don't work the way the rest of society does...(what's stopping GM from doing it that way) it would be a question for entry journalists or students who come in because they're the ones pitching news stories...

Khanyiso

we need the reporter to speak to the victim and the perpetrator...issue-based reporting needs two sides from the perpetrator and the victim...

25. Write in personal capacity?

Steven

I think around the time of the GL thing I wrote an editorial. I don't think I've written anything on that since then. I have ideas but I don't think they're ideas that haven't been articulated before

Prudence

yes I would do something like that...but then would I be working on a rape story at that time? Then, ja, I would. Then I'd have to get comments from people just to have that story intact. It cant come from me.

26. If you feel the paper gets mistreated for its coverage then how do you go about interacting with the community to correct or address this?

Steven

in terms of newspaper coverage, we have conflict situations with a lot of people about a wide variety of issues and when that happens I don't go back let's deal with that again...I just carry on...even around the GL story there were some people in town that were very critical of me that were quite aggressive, I carry on, I meet them, I just move on...it's a coping mechanism

Abongile

one would have to address it individually...it's very tricky. People are mad out there and they would do anything, but one would have to deal with it very carefully maybe using the paper of course (town meeting) ja, definitely.

Kwanele

I think that maybe the newspaper should have regular interactions with its readers, maybe have an annual readers meeting or something like that and that way we can talk about what went down in that year...

Prudence

I don't think so. It's up to us when we have our postmortems...you can judge me on what I've written, not on the whole paper...you are the face of the company so you have to deal with the majority of those...

Khanyiso

there might be a way, I'm not sure how, of actually consulting the community when they are upset...

27. Heavy reliance on police reports – what are the problems with this?

Abongile

sometimes you'll find that the information hasn't been logged correctly. So as a reporter it is one's responsibility to find out more about that and it may happen that they do not give us all the rape cases that happened. They usually choose about 5 top cases that they give us, they don't give us everything (police do selection too) police in general are very selective, they don't give everything out...they don't give us all the information, only when you dig...

Kwanele

that's why I say if one wants to report on rape let it be a fully fledged report not a brief because the police reports by their very nature are minimal, they give you the bare facts, and some of those facts may be taken out of context...you need to talk to more than just the police, and the first prize is to speak to somebody who was there if not the survivor...relying on the police does not do justice to rape coverage

Prudence

what if they just decided one day that they want to slack? It's not a good thing to just rely heavily on the police...

Khanyiso

they are the port of call when there are such events...you don't get a lot of eye witnesses, especially in gang rapes so you rely on forensics first of all, they tell the story...and then you know how slow our forensics is...(problems) they basically tell you what happened, where it happened and what's the next step...

28. Responsibility is often shifted away from GM, why?

Steven

I'm open to suggestions (I don't have those) I've said this before, I'm not happy, I don't think we're covering this issue of rape well, I'm open to suggestions on how to improve it...

Abongile

I don't know how we can go about balancing the issues, we report facts the way we get them from the police. I think it would also be good to get maybe the perspective of a psychologist...people like you who've had experience dealing with rape survivors...the whole psychology behind the rape issues...we'd have to do it hand in hand...report the facts in brief and then on the other hand...they want more emphasis on these stories...sometimes we don't cover them because it is really bad, it is so depressing to have five rape stories in one publication

Kwanele

it's precisely because they relied on the police, if the police say it, then it's the gospel truth because that's what's in the police report (is it the truth?) because GM did not talk to anybody except the police then they feel obliged to use everything that's in the police report because after all it's all we have, we have nothing from any other source. It would be ideal for people to diversify their sources for rape sources

Prudence

but if she was walking and you could see she was drunk? I don't think we should be responsible for how a person would/will perceive it (wtf!!!) the majority of the people perceive that she wanted it, she asked for it because why would anyone walk drunk in the middle of the night?...that's why I would want to report on the story objectively...I would be the biggest activist when it comes to that...(what's stopping you?) I don't want to tarnish the article. Maybe as a feature...I guess with a story like that (hard news) you leave it up to people to react to it...it begs for people to debate these things,

Khanyiso

when you write a story you need to be omnipresent, have the object and the subject...so your views stay out...so there is an element of truth when you say somebody was at a shebeen, but not everyone at a shebeen drinks which is the opinion of most people...

29. What's your toned up version – Steven ?

Steven

I think that if society wanted to, lets not eliminate rape as a crime, but radically reduce it, I think they could. I think south African society, I think grahamstown society, its possible. Its not an out of hand situation. But I think that there isn't a will to do it. And people say you get the government you deserve, and if this is what you want then deal with it...the five who gang raped the girl, everyone knows who these people are, if society wanted to punish these people they could. But there's not enough, popele don't think its important. And then I would go arrest those people, put them on trial straight away and then throw the key away. I believe that life imprisonment should be an appropriate sentence. But the chances of getting arrested are just about less than zero, the chances of being prosecuted and then found guilty are even less...and then even under the rare circumstances when someone is sentenced to jail, they're let out very soon afterwards...this happens all the time, it's not rocket science to just lock up the people, throw away the key. Very simple. That's what I would advocate...society doesn't care. They think its cool he's a rapist...it's the fact that society tolerates it...I think society should take a more determined view on this whole thing. And it's everyone, society accepts this...they don't do anything about it.

30. Different type of journalism?

Abongile

I don't think there is anything, I think we've never thought of it that way...coming from this (PAR) we would consider it actually...(re-imagined reporting) through rape survivors who are not afraid of speaking out about it, having someone explain the history of it all, the causes, who does it why, speaking to an ex-perpetrator who is willing to speak about it...it's really complex, it's not just about women, it's about children, it's about men who pray on young kids...(scares you) the fear of inciting violence in the community, but not really scared, it just saddens me...not really scared of rape reporting... ja, there is room for that...people just need to be educated, to know what you should do and how you should tackle this whole thing...more featurish...it brings out that idea to educate people ...

Kwanele

I think it has to do with our editorial policy...if we don't have a policy for gender violence and rape and aids, then I think things will continue like this. I think until such time as we introduce a policy and say we have taken a conscious decision to approach the issue of rape, gender violence and aids in a specific way then ...so far I don't think there's been any such inclination to do that

Prudence

in the ideal world, maybe. Scratch that, we really aren't responsible for how somebody perceives something when they read it (community) I don't think so hey, it's my job to report on what happened and once the article is there then people have the opportunity to react to it...to create a whole another journalism...it's almost like you're saying it is an issue whilst its basically a matter of just reporting what happened (it is an issue) I don't really see it (unraveling) maybe if I could write a feature...my job is solely to focus on hard news stories then I don't really...

Khanyiso

its difficult to actually talk to a victim, you need permission form the victim and from the police, and its nigh impossible to speak to the perpetrator ...and you can only work with what you get from the police...

it would first need some quality information from the police, it would need a lot of bravery from the victim to actually talk about what happened (but even if you didn't have that???) if you work with skeleton information, you cant build meat around that...(other stakeholders, famsa etc)as an issue-based, oh yes you can...sometimes you have to be selective of the cases that you handle...there is a hierarchy of importance in terms of dealing with rape cases, where this rape case is more important than the other rape case but you'll find that some rape cases will touch you more than others...

31. How do you deal with the complexity of the issue and the community?

Steven

I think that articles reflecting the consequences of rape can help. I don't know if that's going to solve the problem...the minute you expose any type of crime people jump on you very quickly...it's hard, nobody wants you to expose this...

Prudence

news happens everyday, you write the story today, next day, the next story. Sometimes you don't take enough time to sit and look at the stories you've written in the past...what's new is news and what's old...(is it news if rape is happening on a daily occurrence) I don't know...personally I think you're just focusing on what you're doing, maybe you are aware that there is this issue but you have this thing in mind that this is happening but ok, report on it, move on, report on it...

32. What scares you about rape reporting?

Steven

there's the legal ramifications, the whole GL sotry was in many ways quite traumatic, there's the having to deal with people who are victims, or survivors and their families...it's a traumatic experience...it's very hard to deal with...what I have is a job and to deal with emotional trauma on what is essentially a job, its not nice

Prudence

so you think I'm closing a door on something that I should? I don't want to cloud my judgment. You need to write what's factual (what is factual? My factual differs from your factual). You don't want anything else to creep up in there.

33. What are your/Steven's responses to rape reporting so personal?

Steven

rape is obviously a very personal crime. And can you, one way to deal with it is to simply deal with it as a police news brief story...but the minute you get close to it it becomes an emotional minefield, and if you've seen someone who's been raped and think about what actually happened, it's a terrible thing...how do you make it not terrible, it is terrible...it's very difficult...it affects you

Abongile

rape affects us all...it's our fault as reporters because we just cover it we don't really go in depth...people are, it's really psychological...you find that in the poor communities that's where it happens the most, the richest, they hide it...society seems to condone rape...I don't know even how to describe it...

Kwanele

maybe he sees the paper as an extension of his personality, that's who he is. I'm not the editor so I can detach myself easily...so, for me I think that, I'm a fan of the kind of journalism that changes lives, I've detected there's a lot that we don't know about rape, and that the onus is on journalists as the people who disseminate information to let us know as much as we should about rape. Because you know gender violence, rape these crimes shouldn't be happening, you can't justify why we have these things...I think that all editors should have a policy that favours a radical approach towards rape coverage, and I think we need to move away from relying on crime briefs to report, I think we need to go all out and

Prudence

with anybody when it comes to issues like that you are personally, it does influence you...you just have to know where to draw the line when reporting

Khanyiso

from what's been covered, from what's been coming in, an example would be the Liddell case, the Mary Waters case, the perpetrators got all the support...which is a negative, it's supposed to be the other way around...there have been cases where there are fake rapes and paraded so much, and it's now where survivors are seen as ????

34. Are newsroom routines stopping GM from making a difference?

Steven

even if I had a massive staff I don't think I would have case studies of all the rape cases because there's just, quite frankly, too many

Abongile

if there's a big story happening, then we do a follow up on that...

Kwanele

policy, or lack thereof, and also the lack of resources...I think our newsroom system is efficient and effective but if we could get more resources...both human resources and also machinery...in order for this issue of rape coverage to be improved upon, we need to invest as much amount of resources

Prudence

I think so, like I said, a story comes up, you work on it, you move on. If the rape issue comes up, you report on it (excuse) no, not at all...I'm just a reporter that focuses on hard news, I don't have enough space to ...it's just all about facts

Khanyiso

yes it does have an effect because you might have other stories...

35. Additional comments?

Abongile

I have no words to describe how this whole thing involving rape how it effects me....

Kwanele

(if you were editor) I would have a policy...a rape coverage policy, that is going to inform how we cover rape issues. I believe iwht a policy in place, even if you don't have a dedicated

reporter, you can make an impact because whenever rape would be covered in the newspaper it would be covered in a formal and consistent kind of manner, because consistency is important also, so I think first and foremost a policy

(why aren't you editor) I don't know maybe because I haven't been recruited to the post yet...I don't think I would be considered, I didn't even make it as news editor...I was interviewed but I wasn't given the post

(why are you this aware of rape as an issue) maybe its because I've been exposed to research and workshops, remember the 1 in 9 workshops so maybe I know more about the subject than the other reporters. And also my mom was almost raped in '92, I was fourteen at the time...I know that strained the relations between her and my father because my father when he was drunk would raise the issue, are you sure those boys didn't rape you?...and at to that my younger brother is doing time behind bars for rape, he was charged in 2006, and was convicted in 2008...I have strong opinions on this matter and because you have the time to listen and I can share this

Prudence

of course, I think so...I am so for it (objectivity) because I am bit of a romantic, I don't trust my feelings to go into something because I might cloud my judgment

(is that necessarily a bad thing?) yes it is, because I need to get the true facts

(are there true facts) of course...sometimes you have the power to control a story...that is probably a problem, that power...you don't want to use it for the wrong reasons, intentionally or...you cant put your personal feelings, what if this person is not guilty? Even if they are guilty, you have to approach it in a very objective way and say here are the facts, this is what the police are doing, and the progress of the investigation...

Khanyiso

(terms of objectivity, where did you acquire those ideas) I learnt it at school, at university...

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