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# MALE RAPE: A NEGLECTED PHENOMENON?

The analysis of male rape from legal and institutional perspectives in the  
context of the European Union

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## Abstract

Male rape is an under-researched topic<sup>1</sup> and is considered to be a taboo.<sup>2</sup> This thesis aims to explore this issue in the context of the European Union (EU). The research questions analyse at three different levels to what extent male rape is neglected in the EU. First, the Concluding Observations of the United Nations (UN) treaty bodies are analysed to explore whether there are references to male rape and sexual violence against men at the UN level. Then the national level is analysed through the examination of the rape laws in the EU Member States to see whether the laws are gender neutral. Thirdly, interviews were conducted with organisations that offer support services for male rape victims in order to analyse the level of civil society. This design contributes to the understanding of how male rape is perceived at different levels and how the theory (rape laws) is translated into practice (support services). The methods of the thesis are qualitative text analysis and interviews. The research materials are 389 Concluding Observations, 28 rape laws, and 8 interviews. The results show that none of the analysed levels neglect men completely, however, there are major challenges that need to be overcome in order to obtain full acknowledgement of male rape.

**Key words:** male rape, EU-28 rape laws, Concluding Observations

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<sup>1</sup> Chapleau, K. M., Oswald, D. L., and Russell, B. L., 'Male rape myths: The role of gender, violence, and sexism', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 23, No. 5, 2008, p. 601.

<sup>2</sup> Eriksson, M., 'Sexual Violence in Context', In: Eriksson, M., *Defining Rape: Emerging Obligations for States under International Law?*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011 (b), p. 170.

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