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RAPE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

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by

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## CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**

**CHAPTER 1: RAPE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND WESTERN SOCIETIES**

- Rape in Papua New Guinea
  - 3
- Rape in England, Wales, and the United States of America
  - 7
- A Comparison of the Rates of Rape
  - 8

**CHAPTER 2: EXPLANATIONS FOR RAPE**

- The Historical Aspects of Rape
  - 10
- Feminist Explanations for Rape
  - 11
- Masculinity
  - 12
- Relevance to Papua New Guinea
  - 13

**CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL IDENTITY AND RAPE**

- Introduction
  - 18
- Social and Personal Identity
  - 19
- The Social Self
  - 19
- Sexual Socialisation
  - 20
- Rape and Socialisation
  - 21

**CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION**

- 24

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- 25
INTRODUCTION

Rape is a crime, predominantly against females in our society, which attracts much debate. There is considerable literature which discusses the different aspects of rape—rape in relation to victims, rape and the law, the feminist contribution to academic record which led to the challenging of established theories and ideas of rape, anthropological contributions to the discussion of rape, and so on.

This discussion paper focuses on the issues of rape, young men, and social identity, within Papua New Guinea (as well as personal communication with ex-prisoners and unemployed youths about how these young men view themselves.) Many of the young men who were interviewed often stated that they didn’t want to lead criminal lives, but were forced to do so, in order to survive.

This study into rape stems from hearing many ‘ad hoc’ explanations of ‘why men commit rape’. Many of these ‘explanations’ appear to be related to self-esteem, and what many may consider to be young men feeling better about themselves. This begs two questions:

- how do young men who commit rape see themselves; and
- how, and to what extent, does their social identity impact on their decision to commit rape.

The focus is on young men because most Papua New Guineans have grown up with the stereotypical view that it is the young, unemployed males, with too much idle time on their hands, who commit crimes, including rape.

This paper uses the term ‘young men’ rather than ‘juvenile’, because, up to 12 June 2003, Papua New Guinea did not have a juvenile court. This meant that, even though the law is supposed to deal differently with juveniles and adults, many young men who may be classified as juveniles have been tried in adult courts. Also, the registration of check births is not compulsory. Consequently, many people do not know how old they really are. Moreover, the definition of youth in Papua New Guinea is different to that in Western societies. For example, in Papua New Guinea, a youth can be someone who is not married, hence an age definition for youth is inclusive.

Although the discussion of rape specifically focuses on young men, it is still necessary to consider rape, in general. Chapter One broadly discusses rape in Papua New Guinea, as well as in England, Wales, and the United States of America. Chapter Two compares explanations for rape, discusses the theory of masculinity, and explores feminist reasons as to why men commit rape. The relevance of these theories to Papua New Guinea, along with other considerations, are also discussed. Chapter Three focuses on the concept of social identity, its relevance to Papua New Guinea, and the contribution that a discussion can make towards understanding the issue of rape involving young men.
Papua New Guinea is a series of islands located in the eastern half of the island of New Guinea, between the Coral Sea and the South Pacific Ocean. Papua New Guinea’s population is some 5,190,786 (2002 National Census). The capital, Port Moresby, has an estimated population of some 300,000 people. Papua New Guinea is an heterogeneous society, with many different tribes and clans, and more than 800 different languages. The most used languages are English, Tok Pisin, and Motu.

Since Papua New Guinea became an independent State in 1975, people have migrated to Port Moresby, from all over the country, in search of better opportunities in relation to employment, and social services, such as health and education. However, during the past 28 years, the country’s economy has deteriorated, with a culture of corruption taking root within the bureaucracy. Also, there has been a general sense of deterioration in social order. Squatter settlements have mushroomed within, and on the outskirts of, the larger cities such as Port Moresby and Lae, and these are often branded as the ‘breeding grounds’ for criminals (*Post-Courier*, 6 March 2002:10, and 18 March 2002:10).
CHAPTER 1

RAPE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND WESTERN SOCIETIES

The first part of this chapter outlines the situations in which rape occurs in Papua New Guinea, while the second part discusses rape in Western societies, such as England, Wales, and the United States of America (Rennison 2001; Myhill and Allen 2002). A comparison of rape in the various countries is also made.

Rape in Papua New Guinea

Rape in contemporary Papua New Guinea, as in most societies, will always be a contentious issue. Rape occurs at all levels of society, and even within marriage. It can be perpetrated by persons who are known to the victims, or in unfamiliar circumstances, by strangers. Rape can also be an ‘opportunistic crime’, for example, during a robbery, or if a girl is walking home alone, on a ‘bush track’.

According to Dinnen (1997), rape in Papua New Guinea often involves multiple assailants; that is, ‘pack rape’. This form of rape is regularly reported in the media. Incidents such as the pack rape and murder of a young mother (Post-Courier 2003), the alleged pack rape of a young woman by 70 men, and the pack rape of a teenage girl by fifteen men have been reported in the daily papers.

Rape may also occur as premeditated ‘payback’. Banks (1997) documented a case where a man raped a 13-year-old girl, as ‘payback’, because she accused him of stealing from her, and insulted him by swearing at him. Furthermore, the girl’s father accused the person of stealing his chickens, and insulted him and swore at him as well. These insults were further fuelled by the person’s reasoning that the victim’s brother raped his sister, and although the matter was reported to the police, no action was taken.

Serious sexual assaults also appear to take place, as crimes of opportunity, during the commission of other offences, such as breaking and entering or armed hold-ups. For example, a 13-year-old girl was kidnapped and taken to a settlement, where she was repeatedly raped. The kidnapping occurred when the girl was travelling to her village outside Port Moresby, with her father and sister. A roadblock had been set up by the perpetrators, with the intention of stealing a vehicle (Post-Courier, 7 March 2002).

Rape in Papua New Guinea is a criminal offence under s.347 of the Criminal Code Act. A person who has carnal knowledge of a young girl, is guilty of rape, when it is committed under the following legally defined circumstances:

(a) without consent; or
(b) with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force; or
(c) using threats or intimidation, by fear of bodily harm; or
(d) by means of fraudulent representations as to the nature of the act; or
(e) in the case of a married girl, by impersonating her husband (ibid.).
Papua New Guinea has an unreliable criminal database, which does not provide accurate statistics concerning the levels of crime, including rape. The most accurate statistics are kept by the police, but these are difficult to obtain. Criminal justice data concerning rape are generally of poor quality, and have to be interpreted with care. Sexual assaults are perhaps the most underreported of all criminal offences in Papua New Guinea (Dinnen 1997).

However, the issue of rape is real, with the media regularly reporting rape-related crimes. Between January 2002 and August 2003, some 28 articles appeared in the Post-Courier, relating to rape and sex crimes. Thirteen of the articles were about rapes and sex crimes, and fifteen were in relation to the sentencing of accused rapists. Public concern has been shown through protest marches by women and concerned members of the community.

The Letters to the Editor, in the Post-Courier, are evidence that rape is an issue of concern which is regularly discussed (Post-Courier, 12 March 2002:10; 21 March 2002: 10; 22 March 2002: 10; and 26 March 2002: 10). Newspaper columnists also discuss issues of rape (The Independent 2001). The late Sir Anthony Siaguru stated in his In House column that, if we can have a continuous diet of what’s wrong with the economy, let’s have a bit, too, on ‘why rape’ (Post-Courier, 3 May 2002:11).

Public opinion and protests concerning rape have led to calls for tougher penalties against rapists, including the more frequent exercising of maximum life imprisonment sentences, the death penalty, and even the implementation of castration orders. This is currently occurring, as the country’s criminal justice system faces a backlog of court cases, with large number of remand prisoners being incarcerated with convicted criminals, for long periods of time.

Mass breakouts and food shortages are not uncommon in Papua New Guinean jails. There are no rehabilitation policies, no proper rehabilitation programs, and no counselling services available, because of lack of funds. Consequently, the general feeling is that convicted offenders are sent to prison ‘to become better criminals’.

In early, pre-modern times, rape occurred in some regions of Papua New Guinea as part of tribal warfare, where men from one tribe would rape women from enemy tribes. Alternatively, it occurred as part of male initiation ceremonies. Disputes usually arose over land, women, or pigs. Adultery, suspected adultery, and other sexual offences were major sources of disputes (Morauta 1995).

In Highlands societies, a form of wife swapping was unofficially condoned (Berndt 1962; Langness 1969; Read 1954, cited in Tamakoshi 1990). Errant wives were punished through gang rape or genital mutilation (Meggitt 1964; Newman 1964; Read 1954, cited in Tamakoshi 1990).

Given the difficulty of obtaining statistical evidence concerning the prevalence of rape, the findings of some of the major studies carried out in Papua New Guinea regarding rape and/or sexual offences are presented here.
Rape and violence against women have generally been viewed as ongoing endemic social problems within Papua New Guinean society. Academics such as Strathern (1975), Morouta (1985), Banks (1997), Tamakoshi (1990), and Borrey (2000), have all explored the issue of rape in Papua New Guinea.

Morouta (1985) outlined the types of cases that were presented at the Port Moresby General Hospital and which could be described as rape. The five possible scenarios include:

- cases of persons known to each other, where there is a dispute in the family about a suspected or actual sexual relationship. These allegations usually occur when there is incest, or the girl is underage, and the suspect is a family member;
- rape can occur as part of hostilities between two groups. This type of situation is said to be common in traditional society, between warring groups;
- rape can occur when the parties don't know each other;
- rape can occur as the result of quarrels between parties or persons closely related to the parties; and
- rape can be committed as a form of payback (ibid.: 23).

Banks (1997) conducted a study into overall responses to injury in four Papua New Guinean societies. The study included the examination of court records of the trials of violent offenders, which included cases of rape and carnal knowledge. Some 255 cases covering offences such as murder, serious assault, rape, and carnal knowledge were considered from all provinces. A total of 110 cases out of the 255 that were examined in the study involved sexual offences. The study presents an ethnographic account of rape in four different Papua New Guinean societies.

Tamakoshi (1990), Banks (1997), and Borrey (2000) present case studies of situations where rape has been committed in the different societies that they studied. Banks (1997: 33) presented a case study that could be described as an 'opportunistic' crime where a security guard was sentenced to five years for raping a tenant in a block of flats which he was supposed to be guarding. The incident occurred in Port Moresby. According to the security guard, he went to the woman’s flat to get some cigarettes and was aroused when he saw her sleeping in her room, with her laplap (loincloth) exposing her thighs.

In another case study presented by Banks (ibid.), a couple who were returning home, after a night out, were asked for a lift by a group of five young men from a nearby urban village. After being given the lift, the men held up the husband with a knife and took the vehicle and his wife. The husband arrived with his relatives and interrupted them as they were sexually abusing his wife. The wife and her husband’s family retaliated by throwing stones and hurling abuse at the young men’s families.

Another case presented by Banks (ibid.) portrays an ‘acquaintance rape’ scenario, which occurred in Lae. A woman had attended a dance and was being escorted home
by her cousin’s boyfriend, who led her to a deserted house and asked her for sex. When she refused, he raped her, and invited his friends, who had followed them to the house, to rape her as well.

Borrowy’s (2000) study involved the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data on discussions of sexual violence amongst different sectors of society in Port Moresby. Borrowy’s (ibid.) research was conducted in Morata, which is Port Moresby’s largest and only planned settlement. A young man and his girlfriend, who were not residents in that particular area, were on their way home after a party. They were met by a group of young men who were preparing to commit a planned burglary. On seeing the couple, they chased the boy away and held on to the young woman. They then notified other young boys of the sexual opportunity. According to Borrowy’s informants, boys aged about 13 and 14 came running from various houses to take part in raping the victim.

Borrowy’s studies have led her to ascertain that sexual violence is not only committed by ‘raskols’ (ibid.). A random survey conducted in Morata settlement, in Port Moresby, revealed that 51 percent of the self-reported offenders knew their victims. Some 42 percent of the victims stated that they knew their perpetrators.

The Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research conducted a study of sexual and reproductive behaviour in Papua New Guinea, in 1993. Interviews were conducted with 423 men and women. Some 61 focus group discussions were also conducted from cultural areas, which represented 82 percent of Papua New Guinea’s population. The study’s findings revealed that women and girls experience a high level of sexual violence, which ranges from uninvited touching of their bodies and being made to engage in various forms of sexual activity against their will, to being forced to have sexual intercourse with one or more men. The research indicated that most of the violence is carried out by men who are known to their victims.

A substantial proportion of males who were interviewed, as part of the study, described group rape as ‘a common practice’. Approximately 60 percent of those who participated in the research study had participated in this form of sexual violence. The study found that 55 percent of the women who were interviewed stated that, on occasions, they had been forced to have sex against their will.

The majority of women knew their perpetrators, with only eight percent of women reporting that they were raped by someone who was unknown to them (Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research 1994; and Jenkins 1996, cited in Bradley 2001).

Research shows that rape is not only committed by young men, but also by males of all ages and educational backgrounds. In the larger cities, such as Port Moresby and Lae, it is still a common perception that it is mainly the young, unemployed men who have a lot of time on their hands, who commit rape. Media reports also frequently report rapes as having been committed by young males.
Rape in England, Wales, and the United States of America

Rape is a universal crime, which is experienced and debated all over the world. Obviously, there are specific cultural contexts within which rape occurs. A comparison of rape within Western countries, such as England, Wales, and the United States of America, reveals similarities and differences between Papua New Guinean and Western societies.

**Rape Statistics from England and Wales**

The 1998 and 2000 British Crime Surveys (Myhill and Allen 2002) included computerised self-completion questionnaires that were designed to provide accurate statistics on the extent and nature of sexual victimisation in England and Wales. The questionnaires were completed by women and men aged between 16 and 59, and found that:

- some 61,000 women, aged between 16 and 59, were victims of rape in the year preceding the 2000 crime survey;
- approximately 1 in 20 women stated that they had been raped, after turning 16 — an estimated 754,000 victims — and approximately 1 in 10 women stated that they had experienced some form of sexual victimisation (including rape) after turning 16;
- age is the biggest risk factor, with women aged between 16 and 24, rather than older women, being more likely to state that they had been victimised; and
- women are more likely to be attacked by males whom they know — most often partners (32%), or acquaintances (22%). Current partners (at the time of attack) were responsible for 45 percent of rapes that were reported in the survey, while strangers were responsible for eight percent.

In the survey report, rape is defined as being ‘forced to have sexual intercourse (vaginal or anal penetration)’. This is not entirely synonymous with the legal definition, which stipulates penetration as ‘penile’. It is possible that respondents could have included the incidence of digital penetration by objects (Myhill and Allen 2002).

**Rape Statistics from the United States of America**

It is commonplace to suggest that American society is a ‘rape culture’, in which sexual violence is supported by specific cultural characteristics (Lonsway 1995). A sexual experiences survey, which was administered in 1987 to a national sample of women and men enrolled in 32 colleges and universities, found that:

- after turning 14, some 24.5 percent of the 3,187 women who were surveyed reported experiencing an act which met the legal definition of rape;
- some 25 percent of the 2,972 men who took part in the survey admitted involvement in some form of sexual aggression; and
• some 7.7 percent of men reported perpetrating an act that met the legal definitions of rape or attempted rape.

According to the Criminal Victimisation Survey 2000 (Rennison 2001), approximately 25.9 million violent and property victimisations occurred during 2000. Rape and sexual assault are included in the violent crimes category. According to the survey:

• violent crime fell by 10 ten percent, during 1999-2000, as the result of a decrease in simple assault, rape, and sexual assault, coupled with a slight fall in aggravated assault, during 2000;
• rape and sexual assault victims were the least likely to be confronted by an armed offender;
• males were more frequent victims of overall violent crime, however, females were victims of rape and sexual assault at significantly greater rates than males, during 2000;
• there is a greater chance of victimisation among younger people; and
• blacks were violently victimised at a greater rate than whites and persons of ‘other races’ (ibid.).

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (2003), an American is sexually assaulted every two minutes, approximately 44 percent of rape victims are under the age of 18, and approximately one in six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape. Youths between 15 and 17 years of age account for 13 percent of all arrests nationwide, for violent crimes, as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Rape is part of this defined group.

The report of a ‘decline’ in the incidence of rape may be because of various factors. Allison and Wrightsman (1993) state that results from psychologist, Mary Koss, and her colleague’s study of rape indicate that rape is 10 to 15 times higher than the Department of Justice’s statistics. Many rapes are not reported, and the victims probably do not view some cases as rape, especially in instances such as spousal rape, and within the ‘acquaintance’ rape scenario.

A Comparison of the Rates of Rape

The comparison of rates of rape is through ethnographic accounts for Papua New Guinea and the presentation of statistical data relating to rape in Western societies. The different social contexts in which rape occurs in Papua New Guinea and Western societies show similarities as well as differences. The case descriptions by Morauta (1985), Banks (1997), and Borrey (2000) present the same sort of scenario as the literature about rape in Western societies — acquaintance rape, stranger rape, and gang rape.

The discussion of women as ‘being the property of men and/or the clan in Papua New Guinea’ can be identified with in the historical context of rape and the social status of women in Western societies. Prior to the 19th Century, rape in Western societies was
also viewed as a crime against men. Women were seen as the property of men, and their ‘purity’ was of utmost importance to men and themselves. Consequently, the act of rape was seen as a serious social misdemeanor because of the implications it had for men.

The difference between rape in Papua New Guinea and rape in Western societies is that rape occurred, and still does, in Papua New Guinea, within tribal fighting situations. It is predominantly perceived as an ‘injury’ or ‘inault’ towards the father, brothers, and the clan of the victim. The concept of one’s clan and the notion of belonging to a family, a wider clan, and having tribal lineages are still very strong in Papua New Guinean society. The ‘market value’ of daughters is also important, through the continued traditional practice of paying brideprice. Women are valued for their reproductive role, and the role which they play as mothers and wives. However, many Papua New Guinean women are becoming increasingly independent, as they acquire an education and pursue lifestyles that do not necessarily conform with ‘traditional’ gender roles.

Overall, rape occurs within a cultural context of social relations. Because of the immense cultural differences within Papua New Guinea, comparisons with Western societies will not adequately capture some of the social contexts within which rape occurs. Social relations are very important in Papua New Guinea, as is the notion of the community. Therefore, even though rape is committed against individuals, in many cases, the victims’ family members will play an active role in prosecuting the offenders and making sure justice prevails. However, there are some universal situations within which rape occurs, and which are not unique to Papua New Guinea.

Addressing rape is an ongoing issue and process in Papua New Guinea. However, as long as it remains a ‘women’s only issue’, society will continue to struggle to adequately address pertinent issues such as victims’ rights, and how best to deal with offenders. Papua New Guinea needs to have a greater amount of gender-sensitising, from the ‘top down’. This has to begin with elected leaders and bureaucrats, and flow through to the school curriculum and the family unit.

Accurate statistical comparisons between Papua New Guinea and other countries could be made, if we had a crime statistics database that provided quantitative evidence of crime in the country. This is very important because law and order is currently seen as the biggest impediment to economic investment and development in Papua New Guinea (Law and Justice Sector Working Group 1999). The move to adequately address victims’ rights and other issues of violence against women has been progressing steadily. The Papua New Guinean Family and Sexual Violence Action Committee was formed in 2000, with the aim of addressing violence against women and children. This committee comprises parties from government, civil society, and non-government organisations.
CHAPTER 2

EXPLANATIONS FOR RAPE

There are many explanations for rape. However, this paper is based on several socio-cultural aspects of rape:

- the historical aspects of rape;
- the feminist contribution to the explanations of rape, as the main focus is on men and how socialisation and social identity may influence their decision to rape; and
- masculinity.

The Historical Aspects of Rape

The study of rape, reasons for rape, and the effect that it has on the victims have been widely documented in Western societies. Initially, rape was viewed as an act that was committed by a person who was psychologically unsound, and many theories were built upon this assumption. However, over time, the idea that only persons who had psychological problems committed rape were challenged. Feminism contributed to the consideration of rape, as a social problem rather than a psychological one. Rape then began to be viewed from different perspectives.

Before the 19th Century, rape was considered to be a crime committed against men, mainly because of the notion that ‘men were the owners of their wives and daughters’. Many 19th Century legal policies endorsed this social discrepancy between men and women. For example, a man charged with rape (which was, like the theft of a horse, a capital offence) could exonerate himself by marrying his victim or paying a sum equal to her estimated value. Women were especially valued for their sexual purity.

In the 19th Century, some legislative changes occurred (Smith 1999). Coverture laws were repealed. The Married Women’s Property Acts were introduced in England and Wales, enabling women to have a legal identity, sign contracts, own property, and have both rights and obligations. The United States of America and Europe were transformed into urban societies during the industrial revolution, with an influx of young men and women moving to towns and cities to work in mills and factories.

Rape law was defined as ‘carnal knowledge of a woman (not a wife), by force and without her consent’ (ibid.) It was understood that rape was a ‘class crime’ which was committed by strangers. Working class women and ‘coloured’ women had little chance of prosecuting a rapist. If a ‘good’ woman had the unfortunate experience of being raped by someone she knew, it was shameful for her to make it known. The rape had to be the woman’s fault for several reasons, one being because she should not have allowed herself to be in a situation where such an incident could occur. Also, a woman should not tempt a man who could not be expected to control himself in the face of temptation.
As a result, a woman’s sexual history, her style of dress, and her general behaviour were part of relevant enquiries to determine whether rape could have been committed. A woman who was raped was better off not telling anyone, because, even though there were laws in place to prosecute rapists, it was the woman who still had the most to lose (ibid.).

During the early 1970s, the silence surrounding the issue of rape was broken, when feminists declared it as the ‘All American Crime’. Rape was described as a ‘male protection racket’ that kept women off the streets and confined them to their homes. The ‘Take Back the Night’ campaign was a claim to ‘a right to equal security and freedom to participate in society at large’. After the silence was broken, the ‘anomalies’ of law and custom were exposed to scrutiny. This was evidence that the ‘cultural’ attitude about women was changing (ibid.).

By the end of the 1970s, women were being regarded as individuals, with interests of their own, and were entitled to determine the direction of their own lifestyles. Research began to show that rape occurred within the context of familiarity, with the perpetrator often knowing the victim in at least 80 percent of cases. This changed the focus of rape to challenging the marital rape exception, and acquaintance rape was given more attention during discussions.

**Feminist Explanations for Rape**

Brownmiller (1975) presents rape as a crime which is committed, not only against the individual, but against women in general, for the purpose of keeping them in their place. Rape is not viewed as sexual, but as an act of power. Brownmiller (ibid.) presents rape as a highly regulated practice which is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation through which men keep women in a state of fear. Rape is seen as a way through which men can control women. Rape is said to have been a ‘male protection racket’ to keep women off the streets and in their homes. All men are included in this ‘protection racket’ — even those who don’t rape — because they also benefit from the freedom of movement of their women, which is indirectly curtailed because of the fear of rape.

In the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in America, feminist literature presented rape as an act of violence, which was used to dominate, humiliate, and control women (Brownmiller 1975; Ellis 1989; Dworkin 1989). Subsequently, this enabled rape to be discussed more openly. Feminist theory espouses that prostitution and pornography permit a portrayal of women in subservient and degrading ways. At the extreme, women come to be little more than property. The feminist approach does not consider sexual gratification as a reason for rape. Rather, rape is seen as the use of sexuality to establish or maintain dominance and control of women, by men (Ellis 1989: 11).

One of the areas of research has been to examine the core of cultural beliefs and attitudes about rape. Burt (1980) first defined them as *rape myths*, which were prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists. Scully’s
(1990) study of convicted rapists, which is grounded in a feminist perspective, found that men used rape as a means of revenge and punishment, with rape as an afterthought, and group rape as a means of bonding. Rape is perceived as making men feel good about themselves, as it elevates their self-image. Scully’s (ibid.) research was based on the assumption that sexual violence is sociocultural in origin; that is, men learn to rape.

Masculinity

According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2002), ‘masculine’ means ‘to have qualities or appearance traditionally associated with men’. Masculinity was traditionally viewed as a single notion to which men aspire. However, there are different masculinities, with some, such as the patriarchal ideal, being more dominant than others. Jefferson (1994) describes Connell’s (1987) notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ as best capturing this idea of different masculinities and their hierarchical order.

Kersten (1996) states that ‘criminology tends to employ masculinity as a taken for granted, essential category that needs no further deconstruction’. He further posits that ‘masculinity is as an abstract configuration of social orientations and practices’, and that ‘masculinities, as acting agents of power, domination, and the use of force have, without any doubt, ties to deviance and social control’ (ibid.:382).

Godenzi (1994) states that the normality of men’s violence against women is an elementary structural and cultural component of a patriarchal society. Godenzi (ibid.) believes that the degree and kind of violence which men are willing to use depends on internal and external barriers, social situations and anticipated consequences, and finally, social images via the mass media.

Godenzi (ibid.) contends that men’s sexual violence against women is sustained and supported through the ruling norms of society, and the daily experiences of both sexes. Men are encouraged — or at least not discouraged — to perform or approve sexual violence. Every man knows that our societies and their supporting institutions tend to cover men’s violence against women.

Sanday’s (1981) research into the sociocultural context of rape defines a rape-prone society, as one in which the sexual assault of women, by men, is either culturally allowable or largely overlooked. According to Sanday (ibid.), several themes interlink this definition. These include the idea that men are posited as a social group against women. Rituals that include rape mark the entry into adult men’s or women’s groups.

There is also a theme that women are the property of men, hence the practice of compensating husbands whose wives have been gang raped. A ‘rape free’ society is one in which women are treated with considerable respect, prestige is attached to women’s reproductive roles, and people’s attitude with regard to the natural environment is one of reverence rather than one of exploitation.
Relevance to Papua New Guinea

There has been considerable debate concerning the relevance of these theories to Papua New Guinean society. The feminist theory of rape as being a way in which to control women and their insubordinance has been used as a reason for violence against women in Papua New Guinea. Often, 'culture' is given as an explanation for rape, as well as for males' general disrespect for women in Papua New Guinea, owing to the country's dominantly patriarchal structures.

Morauta (1985:20) states that 'it is difficult to talk about Papua New Guinean attitudes because there are so many differences between Papua New Guineans'. Morauta (ibid.) believes that these differences arise not only from differences in precolonial culture, but also from differences in education, employment experience, contact with Christian missions, and economic development.

Borrey (2000) states that the interpretation of Christianity, gender roles, power, tradition, retribution, and sex all have a significant impact on the understanding of 'sexual violence' in Papua New Guinea. Borrey (ibid.) acknowledges that Strathern (1975), Tamashoki (1990), Josephides (1993), and Nihill (1994) have brought insights into the issue of engaging in the analysis of interrelated discourses, that are influenced by a multitude of different values derived from precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial influences, and which are also the result of increased mobility among the different cultures in the country. However, Borrey (ibid.) states that these anthropologists tend to proceed from analyses that are based on Western understandings of sexual violence, which they 'measure' in a different cultural setting.

There are also differing arguments concerning the explanation for, and definition of, rape within the Papua New Guinean context. A literature review on child abuse, which was conducted by the National Research Institute (2000), for UNICEF, found that the Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission's study on domestic violence (Toft 1982) showed that ten out of the thirteen villages in the study indicated that rape was not common in their societies, or that it was frowned upon. Banks (1997) argues that explanations for violence against women in Papua New Guinea must be grounded in an analysis that takes into account the specificity of culture, and that this analysis can be assisted by examining the context in which the violence occurs.

Studies by Banks (1997) and Borrey (2000) have shown the difficulties of defining rape within the communities where they studied. Borrey's (ibid.) experience concerning sexual violence in Papua New Guinea has led her to question the validity of research conducted into concepts of 'sexuality', 'gender', and 'violence', which she believes carry particular meanings that have been created within a Western frame of reference. Borrey (ibid.) states that the recognition of particular acts, as sexual violence, does not necessarily correspond with the conventional definition of sexual violence.

Borrey (ibid.) believes that many incidents which would be defined under the code of penal law might not be problematic, as the understanding of the underlying issues is
contextualised in a different social reality. However, whose social reality is it? Should the law take into account the different social settings within which rape occurs? Borrey’s (ibid.) study provides examples of three different groups of people regarding their ideas and opinions with regard to rape and sexual assault. Borrey (ibid.) conducted interviews with students from the University of Papua New Guinea regarding their personal experiences of sexuality and gender expectations in the ‘marital context’.

There were differences between men’s and women’s expectations in marital relationships, and their views regarding sexuality. Men’s comments indicated that they still valued women in terms of their capacity of being industrious, obedient, and respectful to the husband and his relatives. The bond between men was stronger than the bond with their girlfriends, with the sharing of girlfriends with other friends being mentioned.

Discussions relating to the repercussions of sexual violence mainly focused on the economic value of the kin, with the shift being from the victim to the kin. Discussions with public servants were similar to those among the university population. However, there was a high degree of denial of any problem regarding sexual violence. Interviews were also conducted with grassroots people in a Port Moresby settlement.

Contrary to discussions with the university students and public servants, the grassroots people discussed sexual violence without embarrassment, mostly in groups of the same sex. Discussions involved offenders and victims of sexual violence, and found that, regardless of educational or professional status, everyone in the settlement could be a potential offender or victim.

‘Self-reported’ offenders also related experiences of the ‘fun’ associated with group sex. The incidents were not acknowledged as criminal by the perpetrators, as consent did not seem to be a matter for consideration. The victims, who were mostly young girls, rarely mentioned the incidents for fear of repercussions from parents, who would probably blame them, or for fear of retaliation from the perpetrators. In most cases where incidents are taken up by relatives, it is in the hope that compensation will be paid to them. Only a few cases ever go through the formal justice system. These different responses are evidence that rape occurs within different social realities.

Rape and sexual violence in Papua New Guinea must be studied within our own cultural framework. However, the idea of studying rape within the urban context begs the questions of how to achieve this, and how to take into account all the different cultural backgrounds of the people. Borrey (2000) believes that there is a ‘social panic’ with regard to rape and sexual assault. Factors which contribute to the social panic include the number of rape cases which involve multiple assailants, the degree of violence involved, the young age of many of the victims, and the perceived increasing prevalence of the incidents.

The social panic can be explained by the fact that Papua New Guinea may be adopting a Western framework of understanding rape as a crime against the individual.
However, rape is still essentially viewed as a crime against the victim, as well as the wider family, clan, or tribe. Borrey (*ibid.*) offers the explanation that social panic is being created by influences from cultural and social contexts outside of Papua New Guinea, which, at times, triggers resentment, especially from women.

Women are slowly progressing in their chosen fields, and Papua New Guinea, as an emerging modern state, has signed international declarations such as the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Papua New Guineans are increasingly being exposed to cultural and social contexts from outside the country. Consequently, it is expected that new ideas and influences — whether good or bad — will be brought into the country. After all, we are part of the ‘global village’, and can no longer be isolated from exposure to other cultures.

Moraute (*1985*) highlights two main differences between urban and rural living in Papua New Guinea:

- in urban areas, people do not always live among kinsmen and friends; and
- in urban areas, people live in much closer proximity to others than in rural areas — people who one does not know at all, and people with whom one has no social ties.

If there is an absence of surveillance, people may feel less secure. According to Moraute (*ibid*), towns create public spaces such as markets, bus stops, and roads that are unheard of in rural areas. It could also be argued that urban social situations are becoming increasingly similar to rural living, especially in low-income neighbourhoods and settlements where migrant families have resided in the same community for generations, and have formed a close network of social relations.

Someone who claims to be a career Correctional Service officer wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Post-Courier* presenting a list of ‘reasons’ for rape. This officer claims to have spoken to rapists who were serving various jail terms. The reasons give an insight into the motivation of rapists:

- females are raped because they are females;
- being in the wrong place at the wrong time;
- rapists are losers (females don’t like them, so they can’t have sex any other way);
- rapists have no self-control (lustful desires);
- rape is a form of revenge;
- females wearing sexy clothing;
- name calling (shaming males in public);
- spitting at males (a tradition in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea);
- the rapist asked for friendship, but was rejected (she thinks she is better than the man who asked her out);
- the victim is beautiful;
- rapists being under the influence of alcohol or drugs (seen as an excuse);
- females who perm or colour their hair;
- half-naked females at the beach or at a river;
- wife or girlfriend not sexually satisfying her spouse; and
- jealousy (for example, when females are considered for job opportunities).

How society treats women, and how young men are socialised to behave towards women are very important. There is a need to look at modern masculinity culture because not all men commit rape. Kersten (1996: 382) stated that 'masculinity is abstract'; that is, masculinity is subjective and the orientations and practices of masculinity are influenced by one's own interpretations of what they define and internalise as features of masculinity. So why do some Papua New Guinean men commit rape and others don't? Not all men think that women who colour their hair or dress up nicely are prime rape victims.

Some of the observations made by the correctional officer provide explanations of rape which are parallel to those in Western societies (Scully 1990; Teague 1993).

The similar explanations include being in the wrong place at the wrong time, women wearing provocative clothing, revenge, jealousy, and alcohol. However, explanations such as 'spitting at a man', which is a reason for rape that is uniquely Papua New Guinean, exemplifies the particular cultural context and the perceived magnitude of disrespect shown by this action. As violence and the maltreatment of women are embodied in a culture that sustains and maintains such behaviour, we need to seriously look at how we socialise our children so that they can maintain positive self-attitudes.

Tamakoshi (1990) posits that the most popular explanations of contemporary sexual violence ignore sexual exploitation in traditional Papua New Guinean societies. Tamakoshi (ibid.:259) advocates that sexual aggression in traditional Papua New Guinean societies has been transformed into contemporary Papua New Guinea, and 'new ideas about women's inferiority and men's right to dominate them have, in many instances, been grafted onto older sets of beliefs, thereby contributing to women's alienation, and an increase in violence against women'. Banks (1997) found that violence by men, against women, appears to arise most often when:

- men perceive that they have lost control over women;
- women are perceived, by men, to have breached certain expectations of conduct; and
- there are underlying prior injuries within the family.

Dinnen (1997) speculates that the factors underlying current patterns of violence against women in Papua New Guinea are complex. Changing household relations, high levels of societal tolerance of violence, alcohol abuse, the breakdown of traditional restraints, and the persistence of male dominance in all fields, all play a significant role. Many of the mechanisms that have been designed to settle disputes at local levels, in fact, reinforce gender inequalities. For example, Village Courts often punish women who are
accused of adultery more severely than their male counterparts. Institutions of polygamy and brideprice accentuate a view of women as the property of men (ibid.: 6).

The factors that were summarised by Dinnen (ibid.) have progressed, over time, as economic conditions have declined, and as obligations to look after the extended family and relatives put an extra strain on already scarce resources. Polygamy and brideprice have contributed negatively to the status of women because members of society have manipulated these two traditional customs to suit the ‘modern day’ context within which we live. For example, what used to be the exchange of traditional money and/or food, as brideprice, is now being interpreted in present-day monetary terms, which sees the exchange of commodities such as cars and speedboats as part of brideprice. Polygamy is being used as an excuse for adultery. Factors such as alcohol abuse, tolerance of high levels of societal violence, and the breakdown in traditional restraints are by no means unique to Papua New Guinea.
CHAPTER 3
SOCIAL IDENTITY AND RAPE

Introduction

There are various explanations for criminal behaviour, some of which are contributing social factors. This paper specifically concentrates on social identity, because, in Papua New Guinea, every individual belongs to a family, clan, tribe, or ethnic group. Our identity is an integral part of ‘who we are’. Papua New Guinea predominantly comprises patriarchal societies, where gender roles in traditional times were clearly demarcated (Meggitt 1964; Newman 1964; Gelber 1986, cited in Tamakoshi 1990).

In traditional Papua New Guinea, young men, as they grew up, were socialised according to traditional gender roles. At the present time, many children grow up, away from their ethnic places of origin. This is where social identity, as opposed to cultural identity, may need to be explored, in order to address many law and order issues. Rape should be included in this because variables such as gender, ethnicity, and masculinity all contribute to social identity and how we view ourselves.

Socialisation is the way in which one learns and internalises values and how this, in turn, affects social identity. Brown (1998) succinctly summarised many of the questions relating to socialisation. Brown (ibid.:83) stated that symbolic interaction is concerned with understanding the socialisation process:

- How is culture acquired and perpetuated?
- How do people come to adopt the values, standards, and norms of the society into which they are born?
- How are individuals transformed from asocial creatures at birth, to socialised beings?

Mead (1934) believed that the key to understanding these questions is through the emergence of self. Mead (ibid.) argued that individuals become socialised when they adopt the perspective of others, and imagine how they appear from other peoples point of view.

This chapter also discusses social identity and its relationship with antisocial behaviour in young men. Feminist and masculinity theories have already been discussed as part of explanations of why men commit rape, because both have relevance to that issue in Papua New Guinea.

Social identity has been included because of the way people interact, and how they interpret and internalise social interaction. There is a need to explore what social factors influence or contribute to a person’s decision to rape, as this is relevant to social identity.
Social and Personal Identity

Theorising about identity is a complex process, as there are many different notions of social and personal identity. Tajfel (1981) made a clear distinction between personal and social identity. For example, personal identity might include being a girlfriend, son, or mother, while social identity might include being a ‘rascal’, lawyer, or Highlander. However, Mead (1934) did not distinguish between social identity and personal identity, that is, social identity is personal identity, and vice versa. Mead (ibid.) and Jenkins (1996) argue that individual and collectively shared identities are similar, that each is routinely related, and that both are intrinsically social. Personal identity and social identity are closely interrelated, but there is a need to explore how social identity impacts on personal identity and vice versa.

Identity is an essential prerequisite for social life. Individual identity, which is not embodied in selfhood, is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. Selfhood is socially constructed in the process of primary socialisation, and in the ongoing process of social interaction within which individuals define and redefine themselves and others, throughout their lives.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2002: 701) defines identity as ‘the fact of being who or what a person or thing is’, and social (ibid.:1361) as ‘of or relating to society or its organisation’. Bosma et al. (1994) provide three definitions of identity, two of which are relevant to this paper:

- identity, in a psychological sense, is a concept that has its roots mainly in ideas of personality and social psychology; and
- identity, in this sense, refers to a person’s unique personality structure, and is also used to refer to the images that others have of that personality structure.

The Social Self

Bosma et al. (ibid.:176) state that identity may also be used in a subjective, phenomenal sense, in which case expressions such as ‘sense of identity’ or ‘identity awareness’ are preferable. Identity is a characteristic by which people are known and which refers to an individual’s awareness of personal sameness, continuity, and uniqueness. What he or she actually is, is the self (ibid.). The social self refers to how one is regarded and recognised by others. A person has many ‘social selves’, because how we think of ourselves depends on the social roles that we play. We are different ‘selves’ in different situations.

There are several issues that relate to Papua New Guinea:

- How do young Papua New Guinean men act out their various roles as social selves?
- How important are traditional values and customs regarding women, to these young men?
• Is the peer group and the associated social identity of a young man more important than other aspects of identity, such as ethnicity and family?
• How important is the social role with regard to the aspect of self?

It is commonly stated that a man’s social self is the recognition which he gets from his ‘mates’.

There are only a few Papuan New Guinean studies which can provide answers to these questions. A great deal still needs to be inferred from considering these theoretical positions in conjunction with what is known about the social structures for young men in Papua New Guinea.

According to Abrams (1992:58), social identity is concerned with specific implications for intergroup behaviour, and incorporates the assumption that individuals seek self-esteem through intergroup social comparisons. Applying this theory, we know that ‘rascal’ gangs are a feature of the criminal world in Papua New Guinea. Rascal gangs comprise organised social groups of criminals who commit crimes ranging from burglaries, to armed hold-ups and rapes. Harris (1988) infers that rascal gangs were originally groups of young men who bonded together, as a way of increasing their self-esteem.

Sexual Socialisation

Karin’s (2001) study of self-disclosed rapists, although from the USA, provides an interesting discussion regarding rape and socialisation. The study involved 71 unmarried, college undergraduates. The control group for the study consisted of 227 white, undergraduate, unmarried college males, who were around the same age group as the rapists. From Karin’s (ibid.) study, 93 percent of rapists, but only 37 percent of the control group, stated that their best friends would ‘definitely approve’ of tactics, such as intoxicating women, and using other coercive methods to lure ‘certain women’ to have sex with them. Furthermore, 91 percent of the rapists, in contrast to 32 percent of the control group, have had these procedures suggested to them by their best friends, as ‘being functional for sexual success’.

According to Karin (ibid.), this is evidence that those who have been most successful in obtaining heterosexual sex are also those who resort to deviant means. In assessing sexual frustration, based on sexual experience, Karin (ibid.) argues that the dissatisfaction manifested by rapists results from differential socialisation in a hypererotic, male culture, which is where sexual success is of paramount importance in the maintenance of self-esteem, and reflects the inability to commit rape. Karin (ibid.) discusses sexual socialisation, which views sex as a highly valued and prestigious activity, but also provides justification for directing sexual efforts towards specific targets.

More specifically, sexual socialisation can be thought to comprise influences that are positive to sexual predation. This includes providing stereotypes of ideal victims, as
well as the absence of negative definitions that serve to counteract or insulate against the positive 'pulls'. Agents that could be considered central to providing such definitions are an individual's peers and family.

An attempt was made to gauge the support that one's peer group would give to aggressive and offensive sexual efforts, by containing imputed reputation consequences of such behaviour. The study found that the friends of the rapists put them under more pressure to obtain sex through aggressive means, and that this also enhanced their reputation status within the group.

Karin (ibid.) states that, not only do these men have associates who condone such behaviour, they are also subjected to peer influences that encourage it. Importantly, these men did not acquire this aggressive sexual behaviour at college. It seemed that the current culture sustained values and beliefs that were acquired, prior to college. The same peer group phenomenon was found within the men's high school peer group, so basically the college peer group served to substantiate and embellish old values, while adding new values to what was already an acquired social interaction.

Rapists are much more apt to have a history of collaborative sex. Some 41 percent of the rapists, and seven percent of the control group stated that they had been involved, at some time, in a 'gang bang', or the sharing of a female with a male friend. More than 67 percent of rapists had experienced sexual intercourse with a woman who a friend had recommended was sexually congenial. Also, 21 percent of rapists' first female genital contact was made possible through having been 'fixed' by a friend. This study illustrates an American example of young men who commit rape, and their socialisation.

Rape and Socialisation

In Papua New Guinea, there have been numerous reports about rapes which involve multiple assailants, who often may be known to their victims. Studies by the Institute of Medical Research (1994), Tanakoshi (1997), and Borrey (2000) refer to rape as a 'male bonding experience'. Borrey (ibid.) stated that the university students with whom she spoke implied that they 'shared' their girlfriends. Interviews with the University of Papua New Guinea female students' warden and a group of peer educators found that the influence of boyfriends was very dominating, especially with regard to issues such as contraception and sex in general (personal communication 2001).

Mead's (1934) analysis of the self places a strong emphasis on social interaction as part of the development of self. Being born into a society with complex cultures, having to be socialised according to 'cultural' norms, and trying to find one's true self are always going to be difficult processes for young people. Triandis (1989) posits that, when a person is socialised in a given culture, he or she can use custom as a substitute for thought, and save time. In Papua New Guinea, people often use custom as an explanation for their behaviour. However, in an urban context, custom should not be used as an excuse for certain behaviour, such as committing rape. Whether or not a young man is taught about his custom, it is always pertinent to remember that, when
living in urban cities such as Port Moresby or Lae, one has to respect other people, their customs, and traditions, and not impose their culture on others.

If the reasons for committing rape that were given by the correctional officer are in any way valid (see Chapter 2), there is a need to find out more about the ‘self’, and how culture, as well as other aspects of social interaction, such as peer groups, the family, and religion influence an individual. The influence of the family, in Papua New Guinea is very important. Studies have shown that many young men become involved in a life of crime because of problems at home (Goddard 1995; Sikani 1998). Studies of gang activities highlight the importance of peer group influence (Po’o 1975; Harris 1988; Goddard 1995).

Religion plays an important part in crime in Papua New Guinea because male prisoners come out of jail proclaiming to be reformed, and ‘hard core’ criminals often come out in public, denouncing their criminal activities and professing to live in the ‘light of the Lord’. The questions which this transformation raises are:

- In which part of the socialisation process could a young man possibly internalise ideas of self worth?
- Is it high self-esteem or low self-esteem which encourages or influences a man to commit rape?

Becker (1963) developed a labelling theory, which views deviance as the creation of social groups, and not the quality of some act or behaviour. According to Becker (ibid.), deviance is simply rule-breaking behaviour that is labelled deviant by persons in positions of power. Therefore, studying the acts of individuals is unimportant. Those men who are likely to engage in rule-breaking are essentially different to members of the rule-making or rule-abiding societies. Those persons who are prone to rule-breaking behaviour view themselves as morally at odds with the rule-abiding society. Becker (ibid.) uses the term ‘outsiders’ to describe labelled rule-breakers or deviants who accept the label attached to them and view themselves as being different to ‘mainstream’ society.

Becker’s theory could be tested in the Papua New Guinean context, because once ‘reformed’ prisoners and ‘street boys’ have been labelled ‘rascal’, it is hard to divest themselves of the identity which has had an adverse impact on their lives (personal communication 2003). They have accepted the term and begun to view themselves as different to mainstream society.

The generally accepted prescribed process to rule-breaking behaviour is one which can be tested in Papua New Guinea. Primary deviance is the first step, and this act can be intentional or unintentional. Becker (ibid.) states that most people think in a deviant manner, hence there is a crucial need to study why certain people conform, while others give in to deviant impulses. The second step towards secondary deviance and a career in crime involves the acceptance of the master status label by a deviant. Not all rule-breakers follow this path, as there are various paths which a rule breaker can follow, including that of choosing alternative paths which do not include continued rule-
breaking. The final step involves a rule-breaker affiliating with other labelled deviants, and becoming part of a subculture of deviance.

The labelling theory is included in this discussion of rape, because talking about young men and social identities is important, especially when describing the self-definition and definition by others as a process of internalisation.

In Papua New Guinea, there needs to be more empirical research conducted into the capacity of individuals to resist becoming deviant, as well as into the decision-making process of those who are defined as deviant or stigmatised in one way or another. It is essential to determine the extent to which a negative label influences a young man to commit crime, including rape. What factors influence a young man to choose alternative pathways — parents, family members, or religion?

Jenkins (1996) states that 'primary deviants' often know that what they are doing is contrary to a law-abiding society, even if they aren't labelled. Classifications of deviance are public knowledge, are altogether cultural and collective, and can be drawn on and manipulated in different ways, with respect to identity (ibid.:76).
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

This paper supports the belief that, in Papua New Guinea, we need to address the issue of rape, from both the victims’ and perpetrators’ points of view. From the victims’ standpoint, there needs to be adequate services to help them through the ordeal of rape. Many Papua New Guineans react with calls for rapists to be castrated, and/or given the death sentence or life imprisonment, as a just punishment for their crime. However, is it constructive to place rapists in prison, where there are no proper rehabilitation programs for them to address their offensive social behaviour? There is no point in incarcerating someone when there are no resources to address their offending behaviour. The focus needs to be on preventing rape, if we can.

There is also a need to determine the factors which contribute to rape. While acknowledging that psychiatric problems may cause rape, this paper discusses the social factors which contribute to certain deviant behaviour. If it is parental neglect, family violence, lack of education, or peer influence, then as a community and country, we need to address the issue from the bottom up. Social crime prevention strategies need to be designed to address these issues, because, if certain social factors contribute to a young man’s view of himself, then, for every convicted rapist who we incarcerate, there is another one being bred in the community. Once we know what to address, then we must devise programs to address the various issues.

This paper has portrayed rape through ethnographic accounts. However, there is a need for up-to-date crime statistics, as this will enable us to present quantitative information about crime. This is extremely important because it enables us to draw on quantitative data to qualify statements with regard to law and order in Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea is a beautiful country which has beautiful people who have so much to offer. It is one of the world’s last frontiers. The need to address the social issues, including rape, is pertinent.
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