

## PATTERNS OF RAPE IN METRO MANILA: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS\*

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### Conceptual Approach

This sociological research adopts the victimiological approach in the investigation of rape. Victimology, as initially systematized by Hans Von Hentig in his crime studies<sup>1</sup> (Hantig 1948), is a framework that examines victim-offender relationship as a guide in understanding the dynamics of crime. This perspective converges with Marvin Wolfgang's approach in crime studies which outlines the patterns of the crime by determining the characteristics of the victim and offender, their backgrounds, the relationship between them, and the circumstances surrounding the crime<sup>2</sup>(Wolfgang 1979). This technique is a suitable alternative to utilize in a sociological research for it essentially focuses on the victim-offender relationship. The social context of the crime is, therefore, addressed.

In a pioneer study on rape by Menachem Amir in 1971<sup>3</sup> (Menachem 1971) where characteristics of victims and offenders and the circumstances surrounding the crime was studied, the victimiology framework is useful in analyzing the police gathered data. While consequent studies on rape proceeded to tap other sources of data to add depth to Amir's initial inquiries,

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such as surveys, victim interviews in crisis centers, hospital and court records, the concept of victim-offender relationship remained central in their analyses.

Emerging discussion on rape emphasize the power relations that are at play in rape incidents (Brownmiller 1975, Renner *et al.* 1989, Yurchesyn 1991). By looking into the characteristics of the victim, the offender, the relationship between them and the circumstances surrounding the crime, the approach allows the examination of the power relations between the victim and offender as they occupy positions in a stratified society. In the same way, this approach can inquire into elements of Filipino culture which may significantly explain rape.

In detail, the approach compares the ages and socio-economic statuses of victims and offenders and their familiarity with or control over the place of the incident. It also verifies the association between or among variables such as victim-offender relationship, reporting interval, the number of times the victim was raped, type of rape, mode of intimidation used by the offender and victim's reaction. This approach aims to arrive at a typology of rape.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the research is to conduct a victimiological probe on the crime. The specific components of this objective are the following:

1. to describe and compare the characteristics of the victim and offender in terms of age and socio-economic status.
2. to examine the victim-offender relationship and determine their social interaction prior to the incident.
3. to determine the spatial circumstances of the incident.

4. to outline the exchange that occurred between victim and offender during the assault, such as the mode of intimidation the offender used in the rape, whether the abuse was carried out by a single or multiple offender(s), and the victim's reaction.
5. to determine the report trends such as how a rape is reported to the police and how long it takes for an incident to be reported.

The general objective of the research is to provide a sociological analysis of the crime highlighting the social context where it occurs.

#### DATA SOURCES

The research examined a total of 178 rape cases from two sets of files obtained from two of the largest police stations in Metro Manila. One set, consisting of 80 cases, was gathered from the Central Police District EDSA, Quezon City station, one of the eleven stations in Quezon City, covering the period of August 1986 to February 1991. Another set, consisting of 98 cases, was taken from the Western Police District United Nations Avenue, Manila station, one of the eleven stations in Manila, covering the period of January 1989 to August 1991.

The research conducted an exhaustive gathering of all the files available at the police stations. The disparity in the years covered by the data collection is due to the different extent and volume of the available files and the system of filing of the two stations.

It must be qualified that the files gathered may not represent the total number of reported cases. At the Quezon City station, few rape complaints logged in the crime record book cannot be found in the monthly filing envelopes where these

were kept along with other crimes. The available files only consisted of cases starting August 1986 until February 1991. On the other hand, the Manila Police station provided the researcher with a folder containing the collection of rape cases filed starting January of 1989 until August 1991. According to the Manila police officers, this contained all the available cases filed at the station.

The police records used in the study contain written reports of the statements made by the complainant who is either the victim herself or her parents or guardian prepared by attending police officers. A report contains the name, address and other personal data on the victim and the offender (if known or under police custody). It also contains what the police calls "facts of the crime" that detail the circumstances on how, when, and where the rape occurred as described by the complainant and the sworn statement of the victim, parent or guardian. It is often accompanied by a record of an interview of the victim by a police officer where a victim narrates the event. Occasionally, a medico-legal report is affixed to the complaint. Some reports are attached with an Affidavit of desistance.

## **Findings**

The findings of the study revealed that victims were generally young ( $x=16.04$  years,  $s.d.=5.31$  years) while offenders were significantly older, ( $x=29.75$  years,  $s.d.=11.41$  years). Rape appears to be a lower class phenomenon as most victims (93%) and offenders (74%) came from the lower classes. Most offenders, however, were often economically superior (46%) than their victims. The findings also showed that victims and offenders were closely related to each other or, at least, acquainted with each other. Incest rapes comprised 22% of the cases; close interactor, 29%; occasional interactor, 36%; and stranger rapes,

only 11%. The greatest proportion of rapes occurred in settings controlled by the offender (29%).

Victim-offender relationship is linked to many factors. The closer the relation between victim and offender, the younger the victim, the more repeated the rape, the longer the rape is reported to the police. More than half of the offenders (54%) were armed. Unarmed offenders were likely to have their victims fight back against them. In general, however, most victims did not fight back (59%). Strangers (88%) were the most armed, and all (100%) had intimidated victims. Most incest perpetrators (60%) were found to be armed as well and had victims (59%) who did not fight back. Offenders who may be considered "peers" of their victims (i.e. neighbors, co-workers, acquaintance, friend, suitor, boyfriend, and ex-boyfriend) tended to be less armed and had more victims who fought back. Aided and gang rapes were associated to occasional interactor and stranger rapes, while single perpetrator rapes were linked to incest and close interactor rapes.

Findings of the study suggest that rape is a premeditated attack where offenders seek out vulnerable victims. The notion that rape is committed by strangers lurking in the dark is debunked as the study revealed that most victims and offenders knew each other and were often members of the same family, household, neighborhood or community. Offenders, being physically stronger, older, economically better off and holders of esteemed positions in the family or household, were socially superior to their victims. The study finds rape to be a crime of power where the strong exploits the vulnerable.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Hans Von Hentig. 1948. *The Criminal and His Victim*, New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.

<sup>2</sup>See Marvin Wolfgang. 1979. "Victim Precipitated Criminal Homicide", *Classics of Criminology*, ed. J. Jacoby, Illinois: Moore Publishing Company.

<sup>3</sup>Menachem Amir. 1971. *Patterns of Forcible Rape*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.