

Socio-cultural, personal and psychological factors of rape

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



The paper "Socio-Cultural, Personal and Psychological Factors of Rape" is a perfect example of an essay on social science. Rape and other forms of sexual assault remain an overpowering challenge not only in the United States but also globally (Bedera & Nordmeyer, 2015). Available statistics demonstrate that an estimated 15 to 38% of women in the United States experience a sexual assault or rape during their lifetime (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014), and that college women are more susceptible to rape and other forms of sexual assault than women in the general population due to the dynamics involved (Koo, Nguyen, Andrasik, & George, 2015). The present paper discusses some important issues and concepts related to rape. Although scholars have defined rape differentially depending on context and circumstances, there are several elements that appear to have been mentioned in most of these definitions. These elements or components include "penetration", "use of force", "consent", "prohibited act or conduct of an offense", as well as "state of mind of the perpetrator" (Jozkowski et al., 2014; Kalmakis, 2010). Drawing from these components, rape can be defined as a form of sexual assault which entails prohibited or unwanted sexual intercourse (vaginal, oral, or anal) involving the use of force or threat of force by a mentally sound perpetrator on a victim who has not consented to sex. Scholars have often relied on the dynamics of rape to demonstrate the driving forces behind, and the motivations for, sexually aggressive behavior that is exhibited by rape perpetrators and their accomplices in contemporary settings. One of the dynamics is that rape is an aggressive and hostile act that can never be categorized as a crime of passion. In rape, the perpetrator seeks to

demonstrate power and control over the victim, with available literature demonstrating that the aggressive act of rape is used as a means to degrade, dominate, humiliate, intimidate, as well as control rape victims (Jozkowski et al., 2014). Another dynamic is that the motivating factor for rape is not sexual behavior; rather, sex in rape incidents is simply the medium used by rape perpetrators to express various types of non-sexual feelings such as anger and hostility among women. Another motivating factor for rape includes the need by perpetrators to control, dominate, and affirm power as well as influence over women (Kalmakis, 2010). The last dynamic of rape revolves around unearthing the reasons or justifications as to why a person should decide to commit a sexually violent act such as rape. Some of the common themes that have emerged demonstrate that an individual commit the act of rape to “ compensate for feelings of helplessness, to reassure the offender about his sexual adequacy, to assert his identity, to retain status among his peers, to defend against sexual anxieties, to achieve sexual gratification, and to discharge frustration” (Fairstein, 2005, p. 28). It is important to note that these dynamics have helped health professionals to gain a deeper understanding of rape and other forms of sexual violence. The society is deemed to perceive rape through the social-cultural lens. For example, “ women who dress provocatively or behave aggressively are either blamed for or perceived to enjoy rape” (Fairstein, 2005, p. 35). There are cultural and social norms that seem to support sexual violence against women, such as associating men with power and authority and viewing women as submissive (Jozkowski et al., 2014). Other social/cultural factors that seem to support rape include (1)

cultural acceptance of violence, either as a normal method of resolving conflict or as a usual part of rearing a child, (2) social disapproval or punishment and feelings of guilt and shame that result from discussing sex issues publicly, (3) traditional beliefs that men have a right to control or discipline women through physical means, (4) deeply-held convictions among societies that alcohol plays a positive role by assisting individuals to shed their inhibitions, and (5) the societal misconception that a man has a right to “correct” or discipline female behavior (Changing Cultural and Social Norms, 2009). At a personal level, rape can be encouraged by the mode of dressing, the way women establish relationships with men, the projected behavior of women in social gatherings and other events, as well as visiting insecure environments. It is also documented in the literature that rape may be a consequence of psychological predispositions or inclinations. Such predispositions include a conviction that men commit rape to demonstrate power or to vent out anger, rather than to fulfill sexual needs or lust. Other psychological factors include (1) the assertion that rapists are more inclined to suffer from personality disorders, (2) the conviction that rape is encouraged by the psychological needs of the rapist as well as a distorted and unstable personality development, and (3) the misplaced belief that rape is perpetuated by feelings of revenge and degradation of the victim (Fairstein, 2005; Jozkowski et al., 2014). Date rape can be described as rape which is committed by someone the victim is dating, while acquaintance rape can be defined as rape which is committed by someone that the victim knows at a personal level (Jozkowski et al., 2014). These and other forms of rape can be prevented by, among other things, avoiding to go out alone,

taking alcohol in moderation or avoiding it altogether, involving close friends of the same sex in dates and night outs, as well as watching out for one another. This paper has discussed some important issues and concepts related to rape. Overall, it is generally felt that the information provided can be of immense importance to health professionals and other stakeholders in addressing the menace of rape.