Sexual Offence Law and the Women's Movement: The Case of Thailand and the Netherlands

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Introduction

This paper presents evidence supporting the hypothesis that rape is not necessarily a mental disturbance in the nature of individual men, but is rather the reflection of the gender-based relations between men and women. Rape is the reflection of the imbalance of power between sexes, it is a sort of social control over women which arises from the notions of fear of female sexuality and the need, on the part of the class societies, to control female reproductive capacity.

The study analyses the issue of rape by synthesizing the radical feminist approach and the socialist feminist approach, addressing the concept of fear of female sexuality and its relationship to attempt to control over female productive capacity. It shows that fear of female sexuality could be one of the reasons why males need to dominate and control women in class societies, where labour and property are regarded as important both as the means of production and as a restriction of the status of their possessor. Apart from being a means of production, female reproductive capacity is also a type of property. Rape has therefore to be understood in relation to these two main concepts, which are manifested in the act of rape and in the general subordination of women in patriarchal class societies.

The study proves the hypothesis that rape laws rest on assumptions about women, which arise from the general social relations colored by gender subordination, by employing a comparative analysis between two countries with different socio-economic and political backgrounds: Thailand and the Netherlands. A ten-year period from 1970-1980 was studied. The study points out how female sexuality has been
construed in the formation of rape laws dealing with rape and how this has resulted in sexual bias and discriminatory judgements against female victims. The study also shows that, despite differences between Thailand and the Netherlands, there are important similarities in the assumptions shared by both countries about women and female sexuality in terms of the laws dealing with sexual offences.

Rape is a Reflection of an Imbalance of Power between the Sexes

Rape as a form of violence against women continues to reflect the imbalance of power between the sexes. It arises out of the gender-based relations between men and women, meaning that male-female relationships have been contextualized historically within particular structures and ideologies, the equality or inequality of the relationship between the sexes changing according to the particular historical period. For example, according to Mary Jane Sherfey 1, the suppression of female sexuality and the subordination of women occurred with the shift from matriarchy to patriarchy which--by establishing the patriarchal family and the notion of private property--engendered the development of civilized men.

The relationship between the sexes today reflects male dominance and female subordination, and within this framework several forms of violence against women occur--both directly and indirectly. Indirect forms of violence against women are legitimised by law, custom and within the institution of marriage. Both direct forms of violence (rape, wife-beating and prostitution, for example) and indirect forms of violence, aim to control and subordinate women. In this way, rape is a particular expression of general social control that men exert over women, and a reflection of the relative positions of men and women in a society.

Rape can also be seen as a way of humiliating women; this includes certain acts that could be termed as rape even though there has been no actual physical contact. For example, the way men look at women on the street could be considered a form of mental rape, when it aims to humiliate or intimidate women sexually. However, this paper will only focus on the issue of physical rape, which serves as the basis for rape laws in many countries.

Forms of Rape

The forms of rape that have arisen within different situations and societies very and often have specific reasons for its occurrence. However, rape is usually understood in relation to the general subordination of women. The forms of rape can be categorized as follows:

a) Single rape. This occurs between individuals i.e., friends, neighbours, or strangers.

b) Authority rape. The rapist has some sort of official authority over his victim, as employer, police-officer, doctor, teacher, and so forth.

c) Rape during wartime. During war, women have been victimized and raped by the conquerors, regardless of the type of armed conflict (i.e., religious wars or wars of an imperialistic, nationalistic or revolutionary nature).

d) Gang rape or group rape. Group rape involves more than one rapist and normally has been planned in advance.

e) Incest. The clinical definition of incest is: inappropriate sexual behaviour between family members. Incest, then, is defined by therapists and legal authorities as another category of sexual abuse, not as rape. In actuality, however, there is no difference between physical rape outside the family and within the family.

f) Rape within marriage. Marital rape is normally not obvious since family law and custom protect the sexual rights of men--irrespective of the wife's desires.

g) Mass rape. This is a form of class oppression which manifests itself as the suppression of women. There are incidences of mass rapes of the rural poor, peasants and landless labourers where they have organized against the landlords and demanded their rights, improved conditions, land reform and minimum wage regulations.

The Different Explanations of Rape

Rape—a direct form of violence against women—has been explained and studied by individuals from a wide range of disciplines. Approaches to the analysis of rape discussed in this paper can be classified as biological, radical and socialistic. The first approach considers only those biological factors which are anthropological in nature (the 'Man the Hunter' Model) while the others take (psychoanalytic) psychological factors into account. Both have created myths about rape which continue
to influence the public. The radical feminist and socialist feminist approaches, use women’s own experiences to develop their explanations of rape, and are therefore able to contribute more towards a real understanding of the issue of rape.

a) The ‘Man the Hunter’ Model: Aggressiveness is part of the male’s nature

Studies by a number of anthropologists, e.g., Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox have argued that hunting had been the motive for human development and that the existing relationship between women and men--one of dominance--originated from the ‘biological infrastructure’ of stone-age hunters. They claimed that aggressiveness is a part of the male’s nature and cannot be changed through social reform, which means women are permanent victims. However, according to the discoveries and re-interpretations of current anthropological researchers, e.g., Elizabeth Fischer, this explanation, however, is not valid. Furthermore, it tends to validate the hideous brutality of mankind, not least its justification of rape. Studies concerning the socialisation of children (e.g. of feral children) have also shown that there is no innate passive/aggressive division along sexual lines, the conclusion being that those are learned socially.

b) The Psychoanalytical Model: Women are masochistic by nature

Freud’s theories pertaining to women posited an independent and universal feminine tendency towards ‘penis envy’, a notion that was taken up by the Post-Freudians. Helene Deutsch, for example, developed this idea further, concluding that women themselves are responsible for their own rapes because they are masochistic by nature. The prevalent myth is that all women secretly want to be raped. Freud’s theories on women are limited not only by the particulars of his women patients, but also by the assumptions he brought to their analysis. Freud did not, for instance, accept his patients’s symptoms as evidence of justified dissatisfaction with the limitations imposed on them by society. In her criticism of Freud, Ann Oakley points out that Freudian theory developed within the framework of a patriarchal family system and is thus suited only to those cultures in which masculinity and femininity are defined in particular ways. Some feminists, including Juliet Mitchell see Freud’s theory

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4 Susan Griffin, “‘Rape, the All-American Crime;’ Female Psychology : The Emerging Self. (New York, 1976).
as describing the actual situation of women rather than prescribing how women are to be understood.

The psychoanalytical approach then, gives an inadequate explanation of the issue of rape because in the end, it argues for biologically based 'universal feminine tendency' that is at odds with the available evidence.

c) Radical Feminist Approach: Men control women by the use of fear

Radical feminists have worked out quite an elaborate analysis of the issue of rape. Central to this approach is a critique of the patriarchal system, showing that rape is one of the ways patriarchy pushes women into heterosexual relationships. Susan Brownmiller and others have strongly argued that rape is not a sexual act, but rather an act of domination. Susan Griffin's critical view of rape is that it is a crime carried out by a few men on behalf of many. It is a 'male protection racket' and women alone are vulnerable and liable to be raped.\(^5\)

Although the radical feminists have contributed immensely to the understanding of rape, their analysis does not explain why men control women's fertility and sexuality. The implications of their analysis could ascribe the cause of rape either to biological factors or to social factors. What is lacking is historical perspective which can show the different forms of control over women. An explanation of rape which is consistent with history becomes universal.

d) The Socialist Feminist Approach: the need to control female sexuality and reproduction in class societies

It is extremely interesting that socialist feminists have contributed very little in specific terms to the issue of rape; most of the analytical research has been done by radical feminists. The socialist feminist approach is linked to the problem of women's subordination with different modes of production; within this framework it tries to understand how and why men control women's sexuality and reproductive capacity. Socialist feminists analyse the root causes of women's oppression and suppression in terms of their class origins and patriarchal roots.\(^6\) The role of women as producers

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of the next generation and the control of women's procreative capacity, also had to be analysed in order to understand how class privilege is perpetuated. Biological reproduction is itself part of a more general concern with women's sexuality and how it relates to men's. Within class societies, the sexual division of labour, especially in the domestic sphere, is a reflection of the control that men exert over women's reproductive capacity in the interests of perpetuating unequal access to the means of production.\footnote{Verena Stolcke, "Women's Labours: The Naturalisation of Social Inequality and Women's Subordination," Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective. (London : CSE Books, 1981).}

This approach to the issue of rape posits that women are regarded as the property of men and that rape takes place only if men have relations with women who are the 'property' of other men. The socialist feminists have clearly demonstrated that women are regarded as the property of men, but more work remains to be done in order to explain why men want to rape female members of their families or of other families or why rape often cuts across class boundaries during revolutions or wars of liberation.

**Integration of Radical Feminist and Socialist Feminist Approaches: Social Construction of Female and Male Sexuality.**

To understand rape, it is important to understand the fear of female sexuality and the notion of the social relations of gender subordination within differing socio-economic formations. The radical feminist and socialist feminist analyses can be combined to develop an alternative conceptual framework. On the basis of this framework, the rape laws of Thailand and the Netherlands were analysed as well as the connection between law and religion, since these are closely linked and share the same assumptions about women.

It shows that fear of female sexuality can be one of the reasons males feel the need to dominate and control women in class societies, where labour and property are regarded as important both to the means of production and also as a type of property.
The notion of the fear of female sexuality can be demonstrated with religious, cultural, legal and historical examples. Women’s capacity for multiple orgasms could be a source of male fear of female potential, and thus explain their suppression of that potential, as Mary Jane Sherfey has pointed out. Sherfey was of view that the suppression of female sexuality occurred with the shift from matriarchy to patriarchy and was necessary for the development of civilizations based on the establishment of private property and the patriarchal family, which became the stabilizing and creative crucible from which modern civilized men could emerge.

In some great religions, women—and especially their sexuality—are associated with evil. For example, in Buddhism women are inimical to efforts at self-purification. As pointed out by Emmanuel Reynaud, the Catholic church has so enmeshed female sexuality with evil that within the Church, sexuality has been controlled and suppressed to such an extent that it has become one of the obligations of marriage. In some Muslim countries, such as Somalia, Sudan and Egypt, precautionary measures take the form of female circumcision and infibulation, which represent an extreme version of the ‘honour and shame’ code even more drastic than the chastity belts worn by some medieval women.

The control over female sexuality and reproduction of labour can be seen through the relationship between the household and women’s subordination, as Zillah Eisenstein has pointed out. The domestic labour performed by women stabilises patriarchal structures. Alison M. Jagger’s analysis of control over reproduction focuses more on the issues of control over motherhood and sexuality, noting that in the past women have often been forced to bear more children than they wished in order to satisfy demands for labour power. In contrast, in advanced capitalist societies, children have become an economic burden rather than an economic benefit, and women are often unable to bear the number of children they wish. Class society cannot exist without mechanisms to control the means of production, and women’s reproductive capacity is one of the areas under such control. Emphasizing the institution of marriage

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ensures the reproduction of labour within the family. In other words, productive relations of society are based on a microcosm of gender.

The fear of female sexuality could be one of the reasons why men wish to dominate and control females. In class societies, labour and private property are regarded as essential means of production, and female reproductive capacity is essential to the production of labour. This is also reflected in the laws and religions of many countries.

Despite differences between the situations in Thailand and the Netherlands, there are important similarities in the assumptions about women, which are explicit in the religious doctrines and the laws of both countries. This is true of rape laws in most other countries as well. These assumptions arise from social relations in general which are adored by gender subordination. Women of both countries are assigned a lower moral status; their sexuality is regarded as a source of evil for mankind and a threat to purification—hence the need for control. Therefore, male control of female sexuality is taken for granted. Law and custom justify the control of women by their families and husbands; hence, women have little access to legitimate power in either Thai or Dutch society. In both countries women’s political and economic power is in no way commensurate with their numbers and abilities. In certain respects, the laws are clearly biased in favour of men.

In Thailand, despite the fact that Thai women participate in agricultural production and other employment sectors to a considerable degree, they continue to have little access to legitimate power and authority. Thus, according to the old laws, women were regarded as the property of their husbands and hence could be sold, given away or pawned at any time. While not equivalent, Dutch law exactly similar in terms of form also clearly views women as the property of their husbands, restricting their ability, within the institution of marriage for instance, to maintain their bodily integrity against attack. Historical examples within Dutch law show this as well.

Buddhism not only places women on a lower moral plane (perpetuated by their limited access to power) but actively discriminates against them by excluding them from all but the lowest level of the monastery-conducted education. Buddhism inherited from Hinduism its fear of female sexuality. As the saying goes “—for women are able to lead astray in (this) world not only a fool but even a learned man, and to make a man a slave of desire and anger—”. Women are accordingly seen as inimical to a man’s efforts at self-purification. This fear of female sexuality is also clearly evident in Christianity where the Church associates women with sex, and sex with evil. The
Church holds women as a group, responsible for the evils besetting mankind. On these grounds, the Church’s responsibility is to repress sexuality until it becomes a duty. Both Buddhism and Christianity are similar in their concepts with regard to female sexuality.

**Similarities and Differences between Thai and Dutch Sexual Offence Laws**

This paper has shown that the law dealing with sexual offence reflects the prevailing societal relations between women and men. Rape laws and religious doctrine both rest upon and reinforce gender subordination. Certain assumptions—both implicit and explicit—have created a mythology surrounding the crime of rape. There is a prevalent myth, for example, that women ask to be raped; that women enjoy rape, that rape is always violent; that only a virgin can be raped; that only willing victims can be raped; that rape only includes penetration of the vagina by a penis and that rape cannot occur in marriage.

It is clear that law and jurisprudence in both countries are still influenced by religious doctrine: Thai law by Buddhism and Dutch law by Christianity. Though the laws have changed from time to time, they continue to maintain the same assumptions about women, and to reinforce their subordination as a group.

The study shows that during the 1970-1980 period both Thai and Dutch laws dealing with sexual offence were similar in terms of their assumptions about women and sexuality. The definition of rape in both sets of laws shows that women are viewed merely as a means of biological reproduction. The logical reason for this is that they are capable of creating a new generation of labourers, who remain—at least until they reach the age of maturity—the property of their fathers. That both countries share the same assumptions is emphasized by the fact that any major differences between their respective laws lie in the area of penalties rather than in the actual definition of an offence.

**Similarities between Thai and Dutch Law**

Both sets of laws draw heavily on essentially similar notions of female sexuality in that both place heavy emphasis on the role of violence. Thus a lack of violence is seen as proof of consent. That only heterosexual penis/vagina intercourse can constitute rape are essential elements of both codes and of the assumption that
Rape exists only outside marriage. The similarities can be classified under four main assumptions:

a) Rape is always violent: the lack of violence proves consent.

The sexual offence laws of both countries define the act of rape as one that is always accompanied by violence. In Thai law, this emphasis on the 'act of violence' has led to Article 226 of the Penal Code which defines how evidence is to be put forward. The woman has to prove that she was physically harmed and show signs of struggle against the rape. Again, the interpretation of the police, the prosecutor and the judge are based on signs of bodily injury, the presence of semen in the vagina and, as Prasit Pattanamorn points out, evidence of recent loss of virginity. Besides conducting a physical examination of the victim, a doctor also observes the victim's behavior and checks her physical strength, to compare it to the strength of the accused.

In Holland, the law requires the victim to make a complaint by herself; of course in the case of a mentally handicapped woman which happened in 1978, filing charges was difficult. Yet in many cases in Thailand and elsewhere, women have been murdered because they fought back. It seems that the most acceptable proof of rape is a woman's dead body. Is this where current rape laws leave us?

b) Rape is only penis-vagina penetration.

The legal interpretation of rape focuses exclusively on the forcible penetration of the vagina by the penis. The use of other objects is not included in the definition, and is classified instead, as either indecent assault or grievous bodily harm. For example, the Thai Supreme Court (No. 1048/1975) declared rape to be vaginal penetration by a penis, while forced anal intercourse is therefore not within the preview of the law. In Dutch law, rape is a violation of a person's 'honour', the word 'honour' according to W. P. J. Pompe's interpretation, is related to 'love' and reproducing the next generation.

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Vaginal penetration is seen as a special category because the vagina is the means of biological reproduction. This is why the laws of both countries classify it separately. The laws of most other countries (as the London Rape Crisis Centre reports regarding English-speaking countries) share the same assumptions, classifying only penis-vagina penetration as rape.

c) Incest and the rape of dependents and subordinates (other than wives) should be classified separately.

The laws of both countries have similar approaches to incest and ‘authority’ rape, as seen by Article 285 in Thai law and Article 249 in Dutch law.

d) Rape exists only outside marriage.

Obviously both countries have laws wherein a woman is considered the property of her husband, since only such an interpretation would give the right of sexual aggression to a husband. In other countries, such as Australia and the United States, recent changes in the law have admitted the possibility of rape within marriage.13

Differences between the two sets of laws

The main differences between the Thai and the Dutch sexual offences laws lie in the area of punishment. There are provisions for punishment and its degree. The range of punishments under Thai law is more severe than under Dutch law. Thai law provides for both fines and imprisonment, including out-of-court settlements, while Dutch law has only imprisonment. However, the overall pattern of penalties, showing how the various crimes are ranked in relation to each other, are similar in both countries.

Upon analysing the reason for the difference in penalties, one finds that Thai law places great importance on the concept of ‘virginity’, thus the higher penalties for this violation since the sense of property is very strong. In Holland, this concept does not play a part in the actual text of the law; hence, it can be assumed that the

sense of property is not very strong in Holland. Therefore Dutch women are seen more as individuals and independent human beings, although this needs to be researched further.

The women's movement and its effect on the law and on the situation of women in general

Rape and the laws that deal with rape have been seriously addressed by the women's movements in both Thailand and Holland. The Dutch women's movement is stronger, and has developed more both in terms of theory as well as practical experience. The myth that rape is always violent has concerned the women's movements in both countries, probably because it is a key to so many myths which attempted to obscure and conceal underlying inequalities. The women's movements in both countries are seeking to uncover the basic facts of gender subordination by calling for a redefinition of rape which defines it as the sexual violation and attempted humiliation of an autonomous human being, rather than the theft of someone's reproductive property.

The phenomenon of rape in both countries

In the past, both Thai and Dutch women were victims of rape, and they continue to remain so. Though they are the victims and not the perpetrators, they are still likely to be blamed by society and forced to take responsibility for their victimization. Rape in Thai society is a sort of sexual terrorism directed against all women, regardless of their class. Rape cases have occupied the front pages of many daily newspapers for the past several years. Rape victims have been identified in the press in full detail, together with their photographs,—a practice that is unknown in Holland.

In Thailand, figures of rape cases from the Statistics and Data Section (Staff Division) of the Police Bureau indicate that sexual offences are increasing each year. The figures show 4,737 cases reported in 1976 and 5,331 in 1982. The Rape Prevention Centre notes that the cases reported average out at 7 cases per day, but represent only 5 percent of the total number of incidents that actually occur. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, although the number of cases reported represents only 10 percent of all rapes, there was a 30 percent increase between 1970 and 1976. In 1979 25,000 rape cases were reported. According to the National Social and Cultural Planning Office, of the 10 percent reported, only 2-3 percent were brought to trial.
Research into sexual offences in both countries

Curiously, there have not been many studies concerning rape either in Thailand or the Netherlands. In Thailand some studies have been conducted by universities and research units as well as by postgraduate students. These deal with the psychological, sociological and legal aspects. Sample titles include, "The Personality of Rapists" by Kannita Santikul (1982), "Attitudinal Survey on Rape" by Sucheela Tanchainan (1983), "The Study of Sexual Offences: Particularly Sexual Intercourse Case" by Nuanjun Tasanachaikul (1982), "The Sexual Offences" by the Subcommittee of the National Research Council (1966), and "Sexual Offences Law" by Prasit Pattanamorn (1982). There is still a need for further study in such areas as children as rape victims, gang rape, incest, rapists, male sexuality, and the treatment of rape victims while under judicial process. These are specific problems victims face before, during and after the trial.

In Holland, a number of studies have been conducted by universities and research units, the planning units of some Ministries, as well as by women's organizations. Studies covering the juridical aspects include "Sexual Criminality and Criminal Law" in Tydschrift voor Strafecht by P. J. W. Pompe (1964), the report of the Committee on Moral Law in 1980, and the "Criminaliteit en Rechtspraak" in Sociale Atlas van de Vrouw (1983) by Corrine Gudijk. The sociological studies include "The Fear of Sexual Offence" by Bernadine Ensink and Francine Albach (1983), the study on sexual assault by the working Group de Beaufort (1981) and the Jaarboek (Annual report) for 1983-84 entitled 'Tegen Haar Wil' (Against her Will). In addition, a policy paper in 1983, was published by the 'Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid' on "Voorlopte Nota Sexual Geweld naar Adviesorganen Gezonden" (Prevention of Sexual Assault against Women and Girls). Further topics for study as recommended by the Women's Organization against Sexual Violence, are the phenomenon of rape, its perpetrators and victims, and the underlying causes.

The women's movement against sexual violence and proposed changes in the law

A serious attempt has been made by the women's movement in both Thailand and Holland to address the issue of rape and the laws dealing with rape. In Thailand the women's movement against rape is still at the embryonic stage, this is in the past because the women's movement tended to emphasize political and economic issues. Except for studies on prostitution, not much work has been done
on the issue of sexuality. There are women's organizations which have achieved a certain degree of success in changing public opinion concerning the myths surrounding rape and in their call for collaboration from the public. Women's organizations are providing first aid and free counselling for rape victims, both necessary and important services. In Holland, the Dutch women's movement is stronger, and is more fully developed both in terms of theory and practical experience. The women's movement against sexual violence constitutes one of the four main aspects of feminist strategy in the country, the others being education and culture, political parties, and trade unions. Activities within the movement against sexual violence include the setting up of radical therapy groups, shelters for battered women, self-help groups, groups for menopausal women, rape crisis centres, etc. Nearly every large city in the country has an active women's organization against rape most of which are government-sponsored. Nearly all were started by the women's movement. Such a movement is concerned about the myth that rape is always violent. In order to uncover the basic facts underlying gender subordination, it is necessary to redefine rape as sexual violation and the attempted humiliation of an autonomous human being, rather than the theft of someone's reproductive property.

Consistent pressure on the government by women's organizations, coupled with clear-cut views on specific problems pertaining to sexual violence have resulted in some positive measures by both governments. However, in the Netherlands, women's organizations are faced with financial constraints. In Thailand, the women's movement against rape has achieved a certain degree of success in changing public opinion concerning rape. As far as the prosecution of rapists and the protection of victims are concerned, more studies need to be conducted with regard to rape trials, the unprosecuted cases, and the problems which the female victim has to face.

Conclusions

Rape, as a form of violence against women, is a reflection of the imbalance of power between the sexes. Rape is a sort of social control arising from a fear of female sexuality and the need to control female sexuality and the reproduction of a class society. This paper has analysed the issue of rape by synthesizing the radical and socialist feminist approaches, addressing the concept of fear, with regard to female sexuality and how this fear is related to attempts to control female reproductive capacity in class societies, examining how women are perceived by religious doctrine, by the law, as well as in terms of their actual societal situation. The hypothesis is that the rape laws rest on certain assumptions concerning women which stem from a social relationship that is, in general, marked by gender subordination.
The study shows that despite differences between Thailand and the Netherlands, there are important similarities in the assumptions both countries share concerning women, both in terms of religion and the law. In both countries, evidence shows that women are considered to be of an inferior moral status; hence the male assumes control over female sexuality. The political and economic power which women in both countries yield is in no way commensurate with their numbers and abilities. Both countries have laws which are biased in favour of men, at least in certain areas. In most countries, rape laws have evolved historically from religious codes and sanctions against women.

The study shows that during the period 1970-1980, Thai and Dutch laws dealing with sexual offences were similar in terms of their assumptions concerning women and sexuality. The definition of rape in both sets of laws shows that women are seen merely as a means of biological reproduction. The logical reason for this is that they are capable of creating a new generation of labourers, who then remain, at least, until they reach the age of maturity, the property of their fathers. That both countries share the same assumptions is emphasised by the fact that any major differences between their respective laws lie in the area of penalties rather than in the actual definition of an offence. In Thailand, the stronger sense of property and the corresponding importance of virginity are reflected in sentences that are relatively more severe. In Holland, where the idea of women as a piece of property is losing ground, the sentences are less severe. However, other factors may be involved as well, and further research is needed in this respect. With regard to punishments in general, the overall ranking of offences according to the 'seriousness of the offence' is markedly similar. The laws' insistence on separating vagina-penis intercourse from other forms of assault, in both countries, makes the relationship between the mythology surrounding rape and the desire to control property and reproduction all the more vivid.

In both countries, the laws dealing with rape reflect the belief that rape is a crime, not simply against morality, but against the honour of some man (father or husband) and the honour of love. It is not seen as a crime against--or violation of--women as independent, autonomous individuals within society. The laws reflect women's presumed role. The insistence that a woman's lifestyle has some sort of bearing on any sexual attack functions as a kind of social control; it sends out a signal to women in general that those who step outside their prescribed role will be punished. If a woman behaves in a certain way, so myth would have it, she is asking to be raped, and cannot expect society's institutions (i.e., the law) to help her. Taken together, these myths and their various manifestations assert and maintain male property rights.