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Is it Still a Sexual Offense if Society Doesn't Find it Offensive? Cultural Constructions and Rape Proclivity

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IS IT STILL A SEXUAL OFFENSE IF SOCIETY DOESN'T FIND IT OFFENSIVE?
CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS AND RAPE PROCLIVITY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Psychology

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Title: Is it Still a Sexual Offense if Society Doesn't Find it Offensive? Cultural Constructions and Rape Proclivity

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Because rape statistics on college campuses remain shockingly high, prevention of rape is crucially important. However, in order to prevent rape, individuals must first understand the factors that influence a person's likelihood to rape (i.e. a person's rape proclivity). Cultural constructions of rape, sexuality, and gender roles contribute to the continued prevalence of rape in our society. The current study utilized a sample of 153 undergraduate students to examine the relationships between belief in the sexual double standard, rape myth acceptance, and rape proclivity. Primary results indicated that belief in the sexual double standard is positively correlated with male rape proclivity but negatively correlated with female rape proclivity. Rape myth acceptance is positively correlated with the likelihood to rape in both men and women. Men are more likely to believe in the sexual double standard, accept rape myths, and endorse the likelihood to rape. These results suggest that rape prevention strategies should employ education to decrease a person's belief in the sexual double standard and rape myths.