

Do Beliefs change?

Sorcery Accusation Related Violence in Migrant Simbu Communities in Port Moresby



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Overview

- Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV) in Papua New Guinea
- Internal migration in Papua New Guinea
- Do Simbu beliefs in sorcery/kumigi or 'sanguma' change with rural to urban migration?
- Some preliminary findings

1. What is SARV?

What is Sorcery?

1. Term covers range of magical practices that are used to (a) influence the outcome of events, and (b) explain the causes of events. These practices come in two ways: 1. Helping services or, 2. Harming services. (MI, Paper no. 14, 2011)

2. Refers to the deliberate use of magical rituals to injure, kill or cause misfortune, and witchcraft refers to an unconscious capacity to harm others.' (Richard Eves, 2013)

con't.

‘Every culture has its own traditional ways of explaining why things happen. People need ways to explain events, so they can make sense of the world they live in...’

‘In Papua New Guinea, sorcery and witchcraft are often used to explain why things happen, especially when those events are unexpected, or confusing and upsetting.’

- (MI, Paper No.14, 2011)

SARV in Papua New Guinea

Sorcery Accusation Related Violence in Papua New Guinea




- Frosyth and Eves (2015) observed that: rather than disappearing under the influence of Christianity and modern life, sorcery and witchcraft practices and beliefs are proving extremely resilient.

con't.

1. Leniata Kepari (2013) - National 'Haus Krai'
2. Re-enactment of Death Penalty
3. Repeal of Sorcery Act of 1971
4. New Provision in Criminal Code Act 1974 (Chapter 262), Section 299A
5. GoPNG - Sorcery National Action Plan (SNAP)
6. July/2018, 8 sentenced to death, 88 received life sentences in Madang.



2. Internal Migration

1. Economic  Job opportunities, Excess to services (education, health etc.)
1. Environmental  Natural disasters/ climate change
1. Safety  Security, safety from persecution, violence, tribal fights, SARV

con't.

Why security is important:

- High prevalence of such violence in PNG is a cross cutting issue with very serious implications for public health, social policy, economic development and justice and Law enforcement” (Lowy Institute, 2013)
- Breakdown (bastardization of the ‘melanesian way’) in value of wantok system; once guarded Melanesian societies.

3. Do beliefs change?

Yes and No.

Two Mile Settlement/ Simbu community: Port Moresby

- Made up of 20 families from 6 clans and 2 tribes from Kilau in the Salt Nomane District in Simbu province
- 6 of those families originally settled in early 1980s

2011 SARV - resulting in the death of 4 of 5 women accused

Resolved with compensation to victims kins, no police involvement

4. Preliminary findings

- Beliefs in sorcery still very strong
- However, associated more with ‘harming services’
- Belief incorporated with contemporary connotation
- Effective policing, awareness needed

