

The cost of bride price: a security perspective on the effects of bride price on Papua New Guinean women

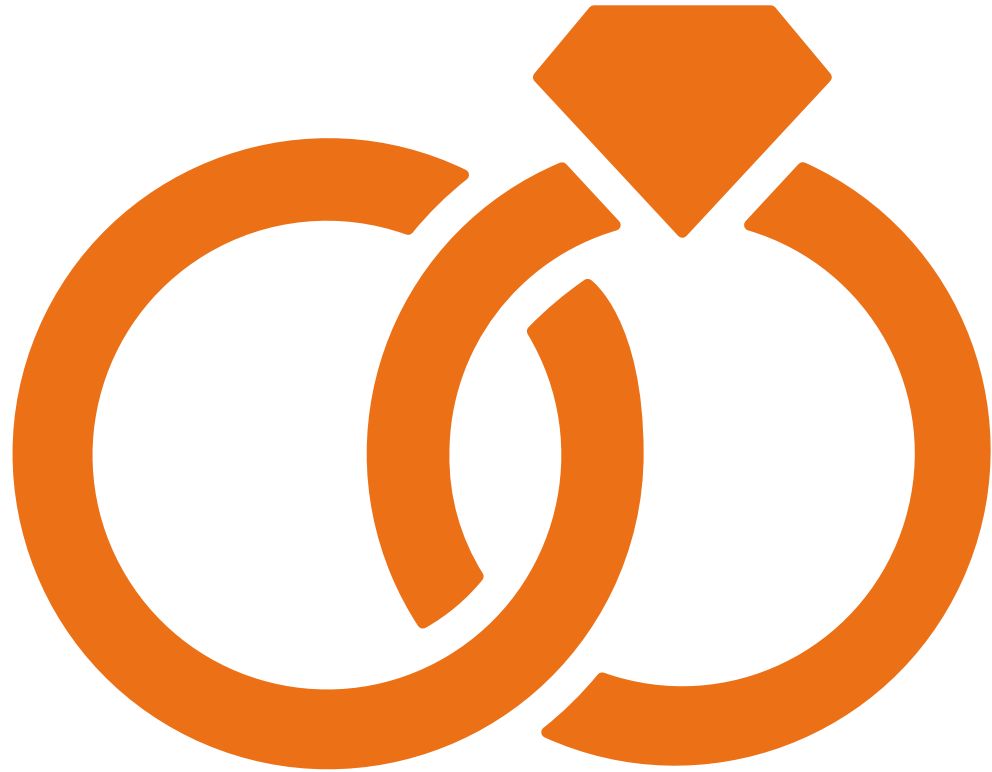
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What is bride price and what is it for?

- monetary or material payments from the groom's family to the bride's family (Anderson, 2007; Horne et al., 2013)
- familial and cultural tradition that involved the entire community
- can vary in different provinces but its primary purpose remains as compensation to the bride's parents
- ranges from 2500 Kina (\$A1187) to 300,000 Kina (\$A142,481) (SBS News, 2015)



(New Atlantis Tribes, 2013)



What has changed?

- economic growth
- increased monetisation of bride price (Shih et al., 2017)
- large payments has lead to the transactional aspect of bride price which can lead to early resentment in their marriage and the validation of the ownership mentality (Princewill et al., 2019)



Research Question and methodology

Human security

“Human security is based on the premise that the individual is the irreducible focus for discourse on security”

(Macfarlane & Kong, 2006)

“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment.”

(Human Security Handbook, 2009)



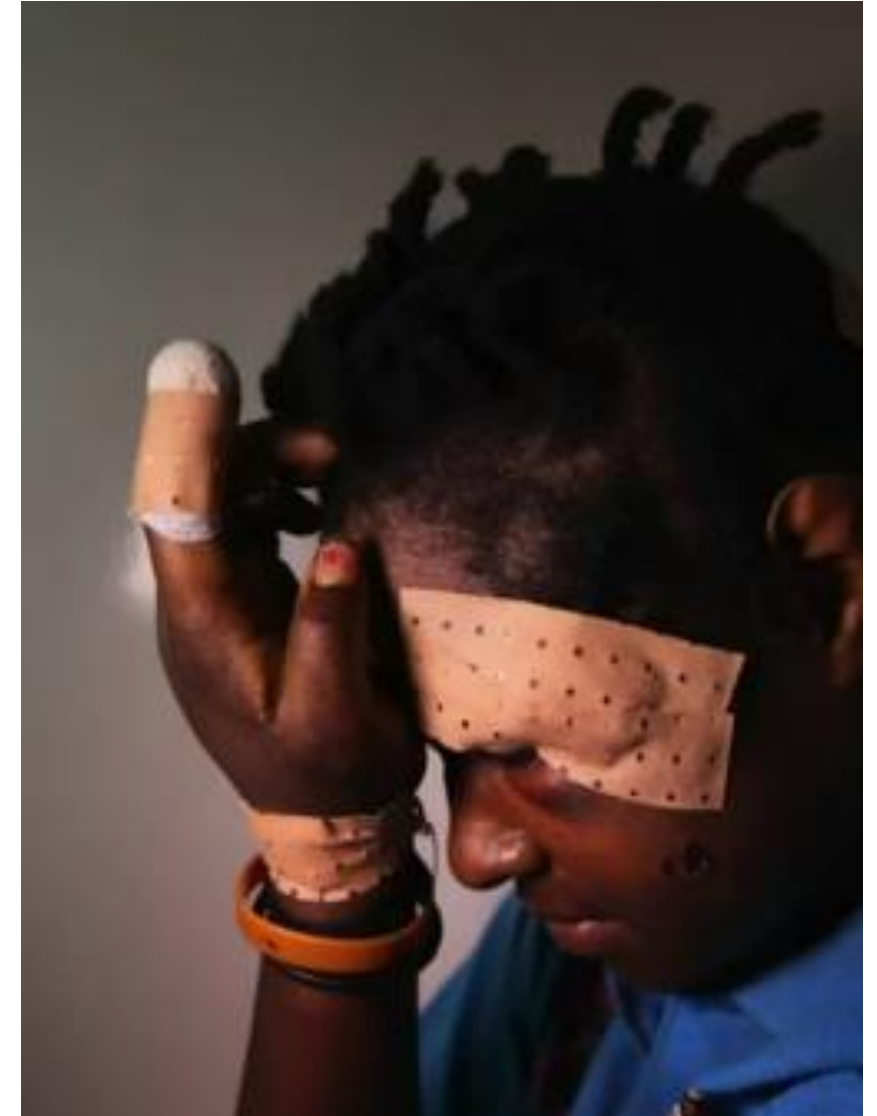
(Fedele, 2012)

Findings

- The transactional aspect bride price has developed overtime contributes to the commodification of women (Eves, 2006)
- Bride price can also be a source of security as it is a symbol of identity and validation for women (Dutilleux, 1987)
- 2013 Family Protection Act – lack of political will and awareness (Lytton, 2015; Putt & Kanan, 2022)
- Institutionalisation of values – rape and violence are not regarded as serious crimes (Chandler, 2014; Amnesty International, 2015)
- Re-integration is non-linear – stigmatisation (Cochrane, 2015; Geraghty, 2015)

The blame game

- the normality of violence – marriage affairs considered too personal, and violence is deemed necessary (Gerawa, 2015)
- culture vs individual will (Shih et al., 2017)
- law enforcement implementation clashing with values (Human Rights Watch, 2015)
- cyclical nature of trying to seek help (Darko et al., 2015)



(Geraghty, 2015)

Is bride price still evolving?



(Sweet Studio Photography, n.d.)

- Globalisation has enabled cultural homogenisation and hybridisation (Davies, 2012)
- the absence of prejudice and misconceptions means bride price is closer to its original traditional form instead of transactional
- power of social media (Copus-Campbell, 2019)
- effects of COVID-19

The way forward

- Bride price can be a source of both security and insecurity for women and how they navigate a patriarchal societies
- Bride price is commonly used as an alibi for more serious and more entrenched institutional issues
- a long-term solution would need to be a coordination from both 'top down' and 'bottom up' or grass roots level of agencies (Shih et al., 2017)
- top down – focus is on prevention which requires a political commitment to strengthen institutional capacity to reduce structural violence
- bottom up – focus is on empowerment and developing resilience, need for understanding how women navigate their way in patriarchal societies

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