

“The Girl Who Cried Rape”: An Assessment of Rape Myths in the Moroccan Sociocultural Context.

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ABSTRACT

Empirical studies have unequivocally and consistently shown that rape myths are integral to the aetiology of sexual coercion and aggression. The present article reviews the literature on rape myth acceptance as an important risk factor in the sexual victimization of women and a precursor for a hostile social attitude towards victims of rape. Through the examination of the verbal reactions of the Moroccan public to the case of rape and torture of Khadija “the tattoo girl” (fata:t lwajm) on YouTube, it attempts to assess and debunk specific examples of rape myths present in the Moroccan sociocultural context. Discussion focuses on the social perception of female victims of sexual violence and the measurement and evaluation of its physical and psychological impact on them. Victims' emotional responses and psychic trauma constitute an important part of this discussion. Findings suggest the existence of immanently cultural rape myths, such as “the myth of the willing victim”, “it is impossible to rape a resisting woman”, and “women are prone to make false allegations”, along with deleterious victim-blaming cultural stereotypes, such as “she was asking for it”. Another noteworthy finding this paper presents is the social requirement of conspicuous “psychological/emotional harm” to legitimize the status of the victim.

1. Introduction¹

“No books say what happened to you, law says this. No law imagines what happened to you, the way it happened. You live your whole life surrounded by this cultural echo of nothing where your screams and your words should be.” (MacKinnon, 1993, 3)

Following the release of an interview with an underage rape victim named Khadija in 2018, and regardless of the nature of the true events leading to the unmistakably harrowing state in which the young girl was found, a riveting debate had risen in response to the incident, which sought to discredit the victim's claims and the legitimacy of her status of the victim. The attitudes that the Moroccan public expressed towards this particular case provide an example for the study of the general reaction that Moroccan society adopts in regard to victims of sexual violence and rape and present a compelling argument that Moroccan culture is a victim-blaming, rape-supportive culture. This does not imply that the latter egregiously supports sexual violence against women and girls, but that, through the maintenance of certain stereotypes and myths, it creates an indisputably hostile climate for victims of sexual violence and rape, which discourages women from reporting incidents of sexual victimization and pursuing legal avenues, and helps deny and/or justify male criminal behaviors, thus further victimizing female victims. (Gravelin et al., 2009) explicate that existing reviews of victim blame tend to equate certain types of sexual violence; for instance, stranger rape and acquaintance rape, which, they say, when added to the fact that victim blame can be determined by a multitude of factors, of which the interaction remains an area to discover, can be seriously “problematic” (p. 2). Thus, it is crucial to focus on blaming tendencies within a very specific type of sexual assault. This article will place focus on “stranger rape” cases; another area in need of rigorous empirical investigation. By dissecting prevalent discourses of victim blame in the Moroccan context, it can be possible to make conjectures as to its functions in the creation of a rape-supportive ideology. It is noteworthy that the study of rape remains one of the most psychologically and politically sensitive and challenging areas within the social sciences. Therefore, rape myths, as a consequential element in the study of rape and sexual victimization, do still represent an understudied area of research that calls for a specifically

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feminist intervention in the Moroccan context, in which discussions about issues related to sexuality and sexual crimes remain a taboo still. The current paper is an attempt to remedy this gap in the literature.

2. The present study

The purpose of this article is to probe for the existence of rape myths that are hypothesized to be predominantly present in the majority of Moroccan people's discourses of and attitudes towards female sexual victimization (S.V). It seeks to document the manifestations of some purportedly universal rape myths in modern Moroccan society and to excavate other examples specific to the Moroccan context, through the critical analysis of the verbal reactions of the Moroccan public to the case of the kidnapping, torture, and rape of Khadija on YouTube; a case that has been constantly referred to by the media as "the tattoo girl". Critical discourse analysis is the method to be used to expose cultural myths about female sexual victimization and discourses of victim blame, and to test the hypothetical validity of the hypothesis that a large number of Moroccan people will show high levels of acceptance of rape myths, rape-supportive attitudes, and victim-blaming attitudes, but, nonetheless, will display a certain level of empathy towards the victim. It is proposed that Moroccan people hold an exceptionally complex perception of female victims of sexual violence, and can simultaneously blame them for their predicament and sympathize with them. As existing reviews tend to combine different types of sexual violence that differ in terms of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, which Gravelin, Biernat, and Bucher (2019) consider quite problematic, this paper aims to examine victim-blaming tendencies in cases of stranger sexual assault and stranger rape cases, wherein the victims were not acquainted with the perpetrators, prior to their attack. This focus is highly motivated by the need to demonstrate the often unreasoned and discriminatory response Moroccan society shows to these victims.

3. Methodology

The data for this paper were gleaned from the comments section of a number of YouTube videos related to the case of Khadija-the underage girl who claimed that 14 adult males and an underage boy held her captive against her will for two months, raped, tortured, and tattooed her body collectively. The videos chosen for this study were shared by online platforms that have a large audience with diverse demographics (e.g. Chouf_Tv, Hespress). The comments are transcribed and translated to English. They are used as indicators of perceivers' rape myth acceptance (R.M.A) and as representations of the three main rape myths assessed in this paper.

4. Rape myths

Rape myths were first introduced in the 1970s by (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1974) and (Brownmiller, 1975) to refer to pre-existent cultural stereotypes and false beliefs that were thought to be strictly related to the sexual victimization of women. They were defined By Burt (1980) as "prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists" (p. 217). Later on, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) elaborated upon that unpolished definition and proposed that they are "attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women" (p. 134). (Bohner, 1998, p. 14) cited in (Bohner, et al., 2009, P. 19), in a critical analysis of Lonsway and Fitzgerald, argues that rape myths are "descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (i.e. about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims and their interaction) that serve to deny, downplay or justify sexual violence that men commit against women." Rape myths are present at both the individual and the societal/institutional levels; as they variedly appear in the cultural belief systems that victimize women (Barber, 1974; Barnett & Feild, 1978; Burt, 1978; 1980; Scully & Marolla, 1984; Malamuth, 1984). Research suggests that they are deeply rooted within healthcare systems, i.e., within professionals that are responsible for both victims and incarcerated rapists (e.g., Kassing & Prieto, 2003), media institutions (Malamuth & Check, 1980; 1981; Malamuth, et al., 1980; Edwards, et al., 2011; Ryan, 2011), television programs (e.g., Brinson, 1992; Cuklanz, 1996; 2000, Kahlor & Morrison, 2007), newspaper articles (e.g., Franiuk, Seefelt, & Vandello, 2008; Franiuk, et al., 2008), novels, especially romance novels, (e.g., Thurston, 1987; Mayerson & Taylor, 1987), religious institutions (e.g., Fortune, 2005; Edwards, et al., 2011). They are, also, axiomatically, prevalent within offenders who commit acts of sexual violence (e.g., Gager & Schurr, 1976; Clark & Lewis, 1977; Feild, 1978; Burt, 1980; Hall, Nagayama, & Hirschman, 1991; Hall, Nagayama, & Barongan, 1997). Scully and Marolla (1984), for instance, found that most justifications and attempted excuses rapists presented in their study deeply reflect rape myths that are part of their cultural belief system. Rape myth acceptance (R.M.A) serves as a cognitive tool to turn off social prohibitions of committing sexual crimes (e.g., Burt, 1978; 1980; Malamuth, 1981; Bandura, 1991; Hall, Nagayama, & Barongan, 1997; Lisak, 2002), or as a cognitive precursor to rape (e.g. Check & Malamuth, 1985; Koss et al., 1985; Malamuth & Ceniti, 1986; Hall, Nagayama, & Hirschman, 1991; Scully, 1994; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002). Research shows that sexual offenders deploy cultural myths to justify, deny, and minimize the seriousness of their offenses (e.g., Bohner, Siebler, & Schmelcher, 2006; Jones et al., 2009; Cohn et al., 2013), and to blame the victim, and, in certain cases, the entire society, for what they did (e.g., Calhoun, et al., 1976; Malamuth & Check, 1985; Krahe, 1988; Bandura, 1991; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Edwards, et al., 2011; Ryan, 2011).

In the literature (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980; Bunting & Reeves, 1983; Ward, 1988; Warshaw, 1988; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; 1995; Kassing & Prieto, 2003; Edwards, et al., 2011), there are several examples of rape myths, some of which are deemed universal. Bourke (2008) claims that "rape myths take numerous forms, but the most common ones are 'it's impossible to rape a resisting

woman', 'men risk being falsely accused of rape', 'some categories of forced sex are not really rape" (p. 24). The majority of studies, Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, and Gidycz (2011) maintain, examine these specific rape myths, which are consistently and extensively documented in the academic literature that is mainly focused on Western countries. The current study is intended to yield a better understanding of the myths that are shared with the west and the ones that are endemic to Moroccan culture and that are, presumably, present in other Arab and Muslim cultures; a view that offers an occasion for future research. It should be noted that, to my knowledge, no research has assessed Moroccan people's perception and acceptance of cultural stereotypes and myths surrounding sexual violence and its victims. So it is important to have future research examine this issue, in addition to the belief structures of individuals who often come in contact with and whose job is to assist and help victims of sexual violence (e.g., the national police, the royal gendarmerie, health, social, and legal services). Data gleaned from such research would help elucidate the manner in which cases of sexual violence are handled in the kingdom, as well as the treatment of victims, which might, in turn, help us understand and, subsequently, remedy Moroccan women's lack of trust in the police and the legal system and their reluctance to seek help or to pursue legal avenues.

4.1 Women are prone to make false allegations

Research (e.g., Littleton & Axsom, 2003; Horvath and Brown, 2009; Ryan, 2011) shows that both men and women endorse "*the real rape script*", or what Krahe and colleagues (2007) refer to as "*the real rape stereotype*" (p. 316), which is characterized by three major elements: the threat of physical force, the use of a weapon, and victim resistance. Ryan (2011) says that "it involves a sudden and physically violent attack on an unsuspecting woman, usually by a stranger. The woman is alone at the time of the attack. She may physically resist the rape or she may be too afraid to resist. There is no doubt that the victim was raped- her only mistake was being in the wrong place at the wrong time. She is devastated after the rape" (p. 776). Similarly, Weis and Borges (1973) argue that, for the majority of people, rape is the equivalent of as a sudden, violent attack by a stranger in a deserted public place. The victim is expected to actively resist the assailant and immediately provide genuine evidence of her attack. They refer to this as "*the classic rape situation*".

To construe rape as a crime that ought to involve the use of extreme physical violence and that can be evaded by victim resistance is, certainly, deleterious to victims; as this requirement delegitimizes experiences that involve subtle and psychological forms of intimidation and/or verbal coercion, and wherein the victim is shocked, utterly incapacitated, and, simply, unable to get out of that situation. Bourke (2008) argues that "subtle intimidation, for instance, is often more effective in producing the docile body of the victim" (p. 12). It is noteworthy that the Moroccan national media and online newspaper platforms mostly cover incidents that conform to common or largely accepted myths about rape and sexual assault; e.g., the victim is a young, beautiful, chaste virgin, who was brutally ravaged, and the perpetrator is an alcoholic or drug-addict, who was previously convicted of several crimes of violence. This type of heavy publicity helps create prototypes of the "perfect victim", the "ultimate perpetrator", and the "real rape", which, foremost, renders everyday cases of sexual violence that contradict those myths severely overlooked (Longsway & Fitzgerald, 1995, Pp. 134-5), and discourages women from labeling their personal experiences sexual assault or rape. Turchick and colleagues (2010) maintain that holding a "real rape script", for women, increases the likelihood of failing "to recognize risk cues in contexts that do not fit their idea of a real rape" (pp. 81-82), which makes them more vulnerable to sexual predation (Turchick, et al., 2010; Ryan, 2011). Therefore, female victims are more likely to fail to label experiences of rape that are inconsistent with the script, and to seek assistance from friends and relatives, or to pursue legal avenues (Warshaw, 1988; Peterson & Muehlenhard, 2004; Bohner, et al., 2009; Ryan, 2011).

The "real rape script" has consequential implications on women's claims of sexual victimization, especially if they were closely acquainted, romantically involved with, or even married to the perpetrator, prior to the attack; they are perceived as scheming and vindictive liars (Burt, 1980, Bryden, 2000; Gavey, 2005; Patton & Snyder-Yuly, 2007; Edwards, et al., 2010; Edwards, et al., 2011), who falsely accuse innocent men to evade social reproval, or, in the case of Arab and Muslim countries, the repudiation by one's family and acquaintances, and legal punishment that culminates in incarceration for being caught in fornication, demand financial compensation that would save the man and his family's face, secure a husband who is unwilling to commit to wedlock, or get revenge for personal reasons (Edwards, et al., 2010). False allegations are also perceived as a means to deliberately ruin a respectable man's career and reputation, or a young man's future. Gavey (2005) argues that false allegations give the impression that it is men who are frequently victimized and in need of protection.

In the MENA region, the "*syndrome of Potiphar's wife*" is believed to characterize the female gender as a whole. The 12th chapter of the Quran, entitled Surah Yusuf, narrates the story of Potiphar's wife, who is the first and only woman in religious scripture to attempt to rape a man- Prophet Yusuf (PBUH)- and falsely accuse him of sexual assault, after he rejected her sexual advances.

"23. But she in whose house he was, sought to seduce him from his (true) self: she fastened the doors, and said: 'Now come, thou (dear one)!' He said: Allah forbid! Truly (thy husband) is my lord! He made my sojourn agreeable. Truly to no good come those who do wrong! 24. And with passion did she desire him, and he would have desired her, but that he saw the evidence of his lord: thus (did We order) that We might turn away from him (all) evil and shameful deeds: for he was one of Our servants, sincere and

purified. 25. So they both raced each other to the door, and she tore his shirt from the back: they both found her lord near the door. She said: "What is the (fitting) punishment for one who formed an evil design against thy wife, but prison or a grievous chastisement?" (Quran 12: 23-25)

The "cunning" of Potiphar's wife, as her husband calls it, has been detrimental for women, over the centuries, especially victims of sexual violence, who are, ever since, believed to routinely lie about rape (Longsway and Fitzgerald, 1994) and whose claims of victimization are discredited; not only are their attackers all innocent, until proven guilty, but they are all liars and imposters until proven truthful. Consistent with the myth that "women lie about being raped", a large number of comments revealed a disquieting belief that false rape accusations are highly frequent in Moroccan society; individuals showed some extremely stereotypical interpretations of rape incidents that present themselves as 'ambiguous' and that do not perfectly align with the expectations of what constitutes a "real rape". Concomitantly, rape and sexual assault are transformed into an act of 'whoring' where both parties are equally held responsible for what happened. Women, 'lascivious' ones, in particular, are condemned as prone to make false allegations and cry rape when having 'second thoughts' and wanting to restore what they damaged impulsively.

Comment 1: ?inna kajdahunna la ?ad'i:m dnu:b du:k ddra:ri ra:hum fərqəbtək ttaqaj lla:h

Truly, mighty is their snare! You'll carry the burden of the sin you committed against those boys. Fear god!

Comment 2: ?it ma?ta:wha:f lflu:s yerrqa:thum

She falsely accused them because they didn't give her money.

Comment 3: kdu:b mamt?atra ma wa:lu ha:d lqadijja fiha ttxəlwi:d

This is a lie! She doesn't look affected (by what happened) or anything. There is something fishy about this case.

Comment 4: madəxla:t? lijjja lrasa had lqis's'a jəqdər jku:nu ?i:r s'ha:bha w fi: tqerqi:ba məzja:na nti wjja:hum w dərtu: ha:d?i

I can't get my head around this story. They're, probably, her friends. You all got stoned and did this.

Comment 5: wa:f bənt katm?i ttətqeb bxatərha w fləxxər məlli tat?i tẓəwwəz tgolli:k daru lijjja ki:na djal n?a:s w tkərfs'u ?lijjja ha:d lhədra qdi:ma

Girls go on whoring willingly and, when they decide to get married, they start saying that they were drugged and raped. This has gotten old.

Comment 6: wa:f kajən fi ?ədd kajytasəb wkajəktəb ?ummi rah bayna hijja lli kətbə:tha

How would a rapist tattoo "mom"! It's obvious that she did it to herself.

Comment 7: tta ?rəfti ?hal dja:l ttanaqud'a:t fəttas'rii: dja:l lbənt wa bəzzaf w ?awtani ila ?ta lqad'a:? lha:d lbənt wa?əd lhəqq lli makatsta?əqqu:f fa ra:h hazala lqad'a:? fha:d lbla:d w ila: fəddu: du:k lqa:siri:n lli: kullhum bra:həf w dderbu: bl?əbs fa ra:h m?a:w ba:təl wa d'ulman

Do you have any idea how contradictory the girl's statement is? It is too much! If the law grants this girl rights she doesn't deserve, then this country's judiciary system is a joke. If the underage boys, who are all delinquents, get arrested, then their arrest is wrong and unjust.

Comment 8: sa tað?haru l?haqi:qa wa kullu ma: qa:lathu la: jataqabbaluhu l?aq

The truth will be revealed. Everything she said cannot be comprehended by the human brain.

Comment 9: ?la:f bba:k madəklara:f mən lli:la lləwla fa:f ?əbti muddat fəhrajn wənti ?ajba w bba:k ka:n ?a:sbək ma:za:la m?a bənt xa:ltək ?da: lba:b ma?alan

Why didn't your father report you as a missing person on the first night you went missing? You've been gone for two months! Did your father think you and your (female) cousin were still standing at the door of the house or something like that?

Comment 10: mən lləxxər ha:di ba:jna ?a:di tku:n ?i:r ?fi:rthum wqra:w li:ha lbla:n w mən hdərtək ?a xti: ba:jna m?ərmla bəlku:k wxi:zzu məhku:k ka:jna f i qad'iijja təmma fəhrajn bzza:f waxxa: jku:nu ?a:bsi:nək f?a:lam ddi?itəl jsi:q bna:dəm l?ba:r

End of story! She is their companion and they decided to get her. From the way you talk, sister, it is obvious that you're a delinquent. (You seem used to this) There is something amiss (in the story). Two months! That's too much! People would know, even if they locked you in the Digimon adventure world.

Comment 11: ħra:m ʕli:k maddijʕi:f du:k ʃʃaba:b msa:kən ila: kunti ɣlætti fhaqqhum dda:rki qbəl majfu:t lfu:t wətnədmi

Shame on you! Don't ruin those youth's future. If you've falsely accused them, fix it, before it's too late and you regret it.

Comment 12: qasaman billa:h w qasaman billa:h ħætta ha:d xətna ʔila kla:t ləʕs'a ya:təʕta:rəf ha:d lkli:ba xwi:nza

I swear to god! I swear to god that if this chick gets beaten up, she'll confess everything. This little bitch Cheeky one!

Comment 13: dərti ʃʃu:ha lrasək w walidi:k ʔal kədda:ba nna:s məlli katəkdəb ra:h katəkdəb kədba ɣi:r bi:da yəʕni xfi:fa nti sifatti: baʕarijja ka:mli:n ba:t'əl ʔa:na bəʕda kangu:l ʕəndək zzhər t'ra: li:k ha:dʒi fəl məɣri:b ku:n t'ra li:k ha:dʒfi fʃi dawla ʔaʕnabijja ku:n ra:h da:ba təmʃi l ħəbs wtyərrqj ra:sək bjəddi:k

You disgraced yourself and your parents. You liar! When people lie, they tell little white lies. You, (on the other hand), falsely accused the whole of humanity. I personally think that you are very lucky to have experienced this in Morocco, because if it were to happen in a foreign country, the U.S.A, for instance, you would have helped drown yourself in prison.

4.2 “She asked for it”: The myth of “the willing victim”

The myth of the “willing victim” happens to be one of the many cultural attitudes that promote and propagandize prejudicial and stereotyped attitudes about rape and rape victims. Individuals who endorse this myth, typically show high levels of skepticism in regard to victims' claims and unambivalently believe that female ‘victims’ enjoyed being forced; a belief that is intensified by unconventional displays of character that are presumptuously judged as pure insignia of ‘immodesty’, ‘immorality’, and ‘delinquency’, and, most certainly, by news of the victim's engagement in extramarital sexual behavior and her ‘promiscuity’. The belief that the victim was willing to engage in a consensual sexual encounter, but nevertheless cried rape, can also be evoked as a response to the victim's uncanny, unexpected mental condition following her attack, as individuals tend to, whether consciously, or subconsciously, perform a certain assessment or diagnosis of the victim's psychiatric condition to determine her level of ‘stability’, and, consequently, the degree of her ‘credibility’. In this sense, rape myths, e.g., “women routinely lie about being raped” and the myth of “the willing victim”, prescribe the way victims of sexual assault ought to feel or behave after their attack.

In the comments section, several people, men, and women expressed their bewilderment at how the young woman does not seem “traumatized” or “broken” enough as if there was an already established and ready to use a scale of psychic trauma according to which all female experiences of sexual assault and rape can be measured. The viewers seemed viscerally certain about what ‘true trauma’ looks like or, at least, should look like. Her state did not meet their expectations. Victims of sexual violence are mostly invited to speak of the impact the incident had on their lives. The importance of the incident, in this case, the rape and torture of a non-consenting underage girl, is judged according to the level of emotional breaking the victim reached. The more broken you look, the more believable you are. It is in here that lies the danger of the emphasis on the psychological/emotional impact; for when the victim does not show typical signs of psychological/emotional harm, she may find her experience trivialized, if not deemed completely unreliable. Buddie and Miller (2001) argue that because the visibility of clear emotional distress prescribes the way all “real victims” ought to feel and react, individuals' responses to rape victims are not the same, especially in the case of victims who do not display a strong emotional reaction to their attack; they are not always met with a subjectively positive and sympathetic response. Viewers voicing their concern about and questioning Khadija's credibility based on her “perfidious” performance can be attributed to her failure to meet the expectations of “the psychological and emotional impact”, which communicates, not only the narrowness and erroneousness of individuals' understanding of trauma but also the way the latter is “constructed within the experiences and realities of dominant groups in cultures.” (Brown, 1995, 102) Brown says that “the range of human experience becomes the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; White, young, able-bodied, educated, middle class, Christian men. Trauma is thus what disrupts the lives of these particular men but no other.” (p. 101)

Brown's argument, certainly, remains valid in the Muslim world, in the sense that victims who do not respect stereotypical and prescriptive guidelines are faced with disbelief, insensitivity, and minimalization of the effects of the experience on their lives. In Khadija's case, the degree of her “stability”, “composure”, and “poise” came as a shock to the majority of viewers and, consequently, stirred in them a feeling of disbelief. Some expressed that her claimed kidnapping and rape by a gang should have left her unable to speak with such “fluency” and “confidence”, let alone open up about the distress Moroccan women face, today, because of

harassers and rapists. Some even found this "ridiculous". It is obvious that she is "making it all up"- she ran away with one of the men- her boyfriend, presumably- and when things got out of control, she cried rape. It becomes clear that, in cases where rape is seen as a situation in which the woman "played along" and "changed her mind" afterward, the victim's sexual history is immediately brought to light and carefully scrutinized, sometimes, merely to point an accusing finger at her "loose morals" and "promiscuity", and, consequently, deduce, without a qualm, that she was "asking for it". The fact that the victim's mother mentioned her escaping the family home on numerous occasions is considered a red flag, especially that Moroccan society, as a Muslim society, regards "... women's acceptance of Islamic values of modesty, docility, and especially sexual virtue [as] a precondition for their involvement in public roles." [emphasis added] (Ahsan, 2015, p. 12) Further, the belief in the victim's promiscuity translates into the belief that she was 'not really damaged by rape'; as society conceptualizes sexual violence against women who are sexually active as a less psychologically harmful experience.

Comment 14: li ma:da lajsat munha:ra nafsijjan baŋda kulli ɗa:lik

Why isn't she mentally devastated after all of that?

Comment 15: wəzhək qa:səʰn ku:n kənt bla:sʰtək w wqəf lija ha:dʒfi ku:n qətəlt ra:si bssədma

You are so insolent! If this happened to me, I would've killed myself out of shock.

Comment 16: ʃəmmərna sməʃna bha:d tʰəʃari:qa dja:l ttaʃdi:b mən qbəl wala:kin kajbanlija biʔanna lbənt kant mʃa: ha:d ʃma:krija wʃa:zəbha lha:l wha:dʒi ka:məl ba:ʃ təhrəb mən lwa:qiʃ lʒtima:ʃi dja:lha ra:h ba:ʒna mən tʰəʃariqa lli kathdər bi:ha hit kathdər bwaʰəd lburu:da

We've never heard of this method of torture before, but it seems that the girl was hanging out with these thugs and enjoying their company, and that is to escape her social reality. It is apparent in the way she talks because she tells the story so calmly.

Comment 17: kathədri ʃa:di ja xti: ku:n kunt ʔa:na kun dda:wni ləsbi:tʰa:r lħumma:q

You speak so calmly, sister. If it had been me, I would've been taken to an asylum.

Comment 18: fi:n hu:ma dmu:ʃ

Where are the tears?

Comment 19: tathdər ʃa:dijja w kathdər bkull tiqa la bka la wa:lu ʔallah jməsxək ʔa ʃʃəmka:ra

She speaks so calmly and confidently. No crying! No nothing! May Allah metamorphose you, thug!

Comment 20: ku:n ka:n hadʒfi bəssaʰ matqədri:ʃ thədʳi bha:d tʰəʃala:qa xusʳu:sʳan ʔanna hadʒfi mərtabətʳ bəlmaʃa:ʃir w su:tək ma fi:h htiza:z dja:l ʔatəbki ma wa:lu

If it were true, you wouldn't be able to speak so fluently, since this is a matter of feelings. Your voice is not shaking to give the impression that you're about to cry.

Comment 21: mʃi:ti brəzli:k ʔaʰbi:btɪ məjəmkəŋʃ jəddi:wək bla matʔəwwti w məjəmkəŋʃ təbqaj ʃəhra:ʒn w mathəmli:ʃ nti mʃi:ti mʃa:hum bəl ʔira:da dja:lək

You asked for it, honey. There is no way they could've taken you without you screaming. There is no way you could've stayed (there) for two months without getting pregnant. You went with them willingly.

Comment 22: ʃəft ha:d xəjti ma katəbki ma wa:lu ma məsdu:ma ma wa:lu ana wa:qi:la ku:n kunt fbla:stha ku:n tqəʃa:t lija lhədra

I see that this chick doesn't cry. She isn't shocked or anything. If I were in her place, I would've lost the ability to speak.

Comment 23: ʔa:na xi:r qbətɪ ʃʃəffa:r ka:n ʔa:di jətkəʃəs ʃlija finmma kantfəkkərha kanbqa nttəʃəd ha:d xəjətɪna ha:dʒfi ka:məl da:z ʃli:ha wma:al kathdər ba:nlɪja mən hərdʳəʃa fi:ha ttana:qudʳ

I've been attacked by a mugger. He was about to rape me. Every time I remember it, I start to shake. This chick went through all of this and can still speak (calmly). There is so much contradiction in her statement.

Comment 24: nafsijjətha ʰsən mən nəfsiti ʃəbbəʃtu:na xəʃəf la sadʳma la ʃək la ktiʔa:b la ʰuzn ma: ha:da ja: ha:da

She is in a better mental state than I am. You are feeding us lies. No trauma! No shock! No depression! No sorrow! What in the world is this?

When female victims are not found "willing", they are "characterologically" blamed; e.g., they are found extremely trusting and naive (Howard, 1984; Perrot & Webber, 1996; Anderson, 1999), and/or "behaviourally" blamed for employing submission as a coping strategy and not successfully deterring their assault (Anderson, 1999; Groth & Birnbaum, 2013). Although, Anderson (1999) argues that a clear-cut distinction between behavioral and characterological blame is almost impossible, her study shows that when people are asked to make attributions of rape to both male and female victims, both genders were more likely to make behavioral blame attributes for not physically resisting the attack, 'as one ought to'. In (Perrot & Bebbler, 1996), it is mostly male victims who are behaviourally blamed; they are judged for having been incapable of using their 'biologically-endowed' physical strength to prevent the attack.

4.3 It is impossible to rape a 'resisting' woman

It is disquieting that a large number of perceivers hold the belief that rape victims, Khadija as one of many, are not only capable of but also responsible for preventing their rape. How can a woman who was raised in a society that taught her nothing but to be passive and submissive miraculously develop a self-defense technique that would break her free? How can the public think that Khadija's reaction to the perpetrators should have been other than the inescapable paralysis of will that is the inextricable outcome of feminine conditioning, which encourages women to remain in the shelter of domestic life and demonstrate characteristics, such as shame, modesty, and chasteness, which are recognized as intrinsic, or natural, in a woman. Bourke (2008) on the subject of women's resistance, sarcastically says: "who was this woman who merely has to apply the "tremendous power" of her pelvic and abductor thigh muscles to evade her assailant? She was not everywoman" (p. 26). In a patriarchal society- practically any society one chooses to name- as a woman, "you [are driven to] develop a self who is ingratiating and obsequious and imitative and aggressively passive and silent – you [are driven to] learn, in a word, femininity." [Emphasis added] (MacKinnon, 1993, p. 7) This type of femininity, Brownmiller (1975) argues, makes you "unfit for the contest" (p. 403) and trains you to lose. As a woman, you are expected to show no evidence that your character reveals a degree of openness that would determine that the male conduct towards you was welcomed or even solicited; a character that, in other words, does not speak of innocence, purity, and chastity. "Provocative femininity" is to be avoided at all costs. You are, also, expected to say "NO", even when you desire to say "yes". It is your moral duty. You must maintain your modesty and chasteness because you are "naturally" equipped to do so. You are to use your natural skills of duplicity and dissemblance. You are destined to resist. In the comments section, people found it odd that Khadija could not prevent her rape and torture. They blamed her for not doing anything about it. They blamed her for letting it happen.

Comment 25: ha:d xəjti ba:jna məsku:na da:k ʒʒənn lli sa:kənhə həwwa lli wʃəm li:ha hi:t katəhdər bwa:əħəd lburu:da majəmkənf ki da:r ta wʃəm li:ha bla matqa:wəm hadʃfi walla:hi:la qis's'a ha:di

This chick is clearly possessed. The demon possessing her is the one who tattooed her because she speaks with such coolness. It's too much! How is it possible that he tattooed her with such precision without her resisting it? Indeed, it is a weird story!

Comment 26: tbarkəlla:h ʃla xadi:ʒa ma ɣəwətti ma wa:lu ma ka:nu la na:s la wa:lu

God bless, Khadija! Why didn't you scream, when they kidnapped you? Weren't there any people (around)?

Comment 27: kifa:ʃ da:k lwʃa:m məs'a:wəb məzja:n w makajni:nʃ lʔaxt'a:ʔ zaʃma ʔila ka:nu wəʃmu li:ha bəzzəz mənnha ɣa:di tebqa tʒerr jeddi:ha w ɣatqa:wəm jaʃni ɣatlqa: fʃəddi:ha ɣi:r tʒerbi:q w ma:ʃi wʃa:m mətqu:n muʒarrad raʔ

How is that tattoo well made and flawless? If they tattooed her forcibly, she would've kept pulling her arm and resisting. This would've led to scribbles on her arm and not a neat tattoo. That's just my opinion.

Comment 28: majəmkənf muzri:m jəktəb kəlmət ma:ma fʒəldha ssi:r huwwa anna:hu lmuzrimi:n ʃa:qqi:n ra majmkənf jku:n ktəbha ʃan ħubb ləmmu: ttəfisi:r dja:li həwwa annahu: hijja lli: qallbat ʃli:ha hi:t lbnat waxxa kajku:nu xa:rzi:n lətri:q kajbqa:w mətʃellqi:n bmmawa:thum

There is no way a criminal could've tattooed the word "mama" on her flesh. The secret is that criminals are "undutiful" to their parents. There is no way he could've written it out of love for his mother. My explanation is that she's the one who asked for it, because girls, even when deviant, remain attached to their mothers.

In an interesting sidelight, the endorsement of rape myths that blame victims for what happened to them does not necessarily translate into the complete negation of the nefarious effects that rape has on victims; a considerable number of perceivers who endorse some rape myths seem to recognize the negative effects of the experience on the victim, an argument that is in line with

(Buddie and Miller, 2002)'s findings. Consequently, perceivers seldom directly blame victims for their predicament but would agree that certain of her characteristics (e.g., promiscuity, immorality) and actions (e.g., drinking alcohol, smoking, spending time with "thugs") irrevocably led to her victimization. This was not applicable to Khadija's case, as the majority of perceivers who showed high levels of R.M.A directly blamed her for her rape and went farther than that to, actually, express a feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, and joy, even, obtained from her misfortune, which represents a major disconfirmation of the hypothesis that perceivers would blame the victim for her experience and simultaneously show a certain level of empathy towards her. The majority of the comments express a feeling of schadenfreude were, surprisingly, written by women.

Comment 29: kadda:ba lla:h jmäsək ʔa xti w lla:h ʔəʕti:kum lʔiʔda:m ka:mli:n

Liar! God damn you, sister! May all of you get executed.

Comment 30: xəlli:ha məzja:na li:ha ra:h hijja lli mʔa:t mʔa:h bxa:tarha

She brought this on herself. She went willingly with him.

Comment 31: w llah ʔəttə məzja:na fi:k

God be my witness! You brought this on yourself.

Comment 32: naʕlat lla:hi wa ʕali:k ʔa lfa:siqa

God damn you, you slut!

Comment 33: laʕnat lla:h ʕali:k ʔa ʔəmka:ra dʔħəkti ʕla ʔʔaʕb lmuʔaffal

God damn you, you thug! You laughed at this stupid nation.

Comment 34: ba:jna axti bəlli nti xa:rza lətri:q w ʔallahu ʔaʕlam nəfta:rdu bəlli hu:ma ʔəmka:ra ku:n kənti məħta:rma ra:sək w da:xla su:q ra:ssək məjʔerbu:kʔ w mən ttasʕri:h dja:lki ba:jna mətwətra dnu:b du:k dra:ri msa:kən fu:q kta:fek w lħaqi:qa ʔa:da tba:n ʔinna lla:ha jumhilu wala: juhmilu

It is obvious, sister, that you are deviant (a slut). Only Allah knows! Let's suppose that they are thugs. If you had had some self-respect and were chaste, they wouldn't have approached you. You look nervous, from the way you talk. You will bear the burden of (falsely accusing) those poor boys. The truth shall be revealed. Allah gives respite but never neglects.

Framing rape within victim-blaming discourses implies the focus on every detailed aspect that would make the victim "**rape-prone**." The rape-prone female, as described by Hugo (1967, p. 105) cited in MacKinnon (1993, p. 70), is someone "who consciously or unconsciously exposes herself by dress, behavior, itinerary, or other means to potential sexual assault." Following this, "provocative" clothing, makeup, laughter, posture, or walk, the fact that the victim was working in isolated areas, keeping late hours, walking down deserted dark streets "alone" is to make her the perfect victim. She got what she was "asking for." It is important to add that a woman might also get raped because she was not being cautious. Her rapist is out of the picture. In this regard, (Valenti, 2009, p. 151) argues that "women do not get raped because they weren't careful enough. Women get raped because someone raped them [original emphasis]."

Cultural stereotypes and myths that blame victims aim towards ostracising women from the public sphere. They construct strict boundaries between what is "private" and what is "public", thus rendering the streets an exceptionally hostile and minacious environment for women. They are especially conspicuous in cases of everyday street sexual harassment and sexual assault; as victims are constantly and unjustly incur blame for the perpetrator's actions. The tribulation of being a victim of sexual violence in a patriarchal system is the latter's attempt to rationalize and justify male sexually aggressive tendencies when attributional strategies fail to uphold individuals' belief in a "just world", where, essentially, each person gets what they deserve. Such systems promote a number of rape myths that help exonerate perpetrators of sexual violence, e.g., men "*are very sexual*" and "*unable to control their sexual behaviors*." (Ryan, 2011, p. 6) Consequently, perpetrators of sexual violence, especially child molesters and pedophiles, as (Groth and Birnbaum, 2013, pp. 145-7) maintain, are constantly represented as "retarded" or "insane", "alcoholic or drug-addicted", and as "sexually frustrated" people. Therefore, Moroccan women are held accountable for managing and deterring, men's sexual behaviors and 'unrestrained' sexual urges, as well as overtly communicating non-consent; a notion that is perfectly clarified in the comments section.

5. Conclusion

Predictably, the examination of the comments section of multiple YouTube videos revealed a number of alarmingly negative and unsupportive responses to the female victim. The present research demonstrates that a large number of Moroccan people- men,

in particular- show high levels of rape myth acceptance, rape-supportive attitudes, and victim-blaming attitudes. The rape myths debunked in this paper appear to be indistinguishable from the ones revealed in previous studies done in Western countries, which shows that stigmatization, discrimination, and unsupportive responses constitute an unmistakably shared experience for the majority of victims around the globe. The social attitudes that are vocalized in the comments section represent an array of political ideologies and modes of understanding of heterosexuality, especially sexually normative male aggressiveness and female "rape proneness", which represent an important challenge to western societies, and an even greater one to the MENA region, wherein the victimization of women is normalized, minimized, and justified, as has been demonstrated in this paper. The current manifestations of stereotypes and myths documented in this article reveal an enduring skepticism about women's claims of sexual victimization and a plethora of victim-blaming discourses that struggle for recognition, thus reinforcing the belief that they are an unmistakable sign of structural violence. It becomes important to adopt a feminist sociocultural model of S.V that acknowledges the role of the patriarchal structure of society in the perpetuation of S.V.A.W, which entails the recognition that negative cultural beliefs, including stereotypes and myths about S.V, victims, and perpetrators represent strong mediating variables between structural gender inequality and the high rates of S.V in the country. Moreover, all understandings of the negative attitudes towards victims have to be framed within a larger context of structural violence that ensures the persistence of the current gender stratification system, which, in its turn, helps maintain male sexual entitlement and social superiority over women.

This research has yielded an interesting finding that supports the notion that Moroccan women are implicated in the maintenance of societal violence and victim discrimination; a large number of the comments examined in this paper are written by women. Female perceivers seem to hold negative attitudes towards their own gender and to tolerate- even, justify- male sexual violence towards other women, which can only demonstrate the magnitude of the problem of Moroccan women's non-labeling their experiences sexual violence when they are legally recognized as such, which results in the underreporting of sexual crimes and the consequent impression that they are a rare occurrence in the Moroccan context. Further, the responses of both male and female perceivers validate the failure of the country's strategies to deal with the problem of S.V, thus highlighting the stressful need for the development of efficient social strategies that work towards the deconstruction and elimination of cultural stereotypes and myths surrounding S.V.

6. Directions for future research

The present article was intended to offer a better understanding of the issue of cultural stereotypes and myths about S.V in Moroccan society. Nonetheless, several limitations warrant discussion. First, for a thorough documentation of the current manifestations of rape myths in the Moroccan context, studies can examine diverse cases of S.V that differ in terms of the victim's perceived reliability and the case's perceived level of ambiguity. This paper's main focus has been the case of Khadija, which has gained an unprecedented level of media coverage, public interest, and involvement of social and human-rights activists. Second, future studies might examine the demographic, sociocultural, and behavioral characteristics of individuals who support rape myths in the Moroccan context. Finally, it is crucial to examine the beliefs that encourage sexually aggressive behavior towards women, justify perpetrators' actions, and, certainly, help restrict disclosure of female experiences of sexual victimization.

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