
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Sexual Violence as a True Weapon of Male Dominance and Control: A Review of the Literature

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ABSTRACT

This research critically examines factors responsible for S.V.A.W (Sexual violence against women), drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies. It explores the role of the patriarchal structure of society, traditional gender roles and expectations, and societal changes in the prevalence of the sexual victimisation of women. Additionally, it addresses the emergence of feminist movements in the Moroccan context and its influence on societal attitudes towards gender equality and women's rights, specifically in terms of S.V. Further, through an extensive review of the literature, it examines the implications of S.V.A.W and a functionalist attitude towards them on heterosexual relationships, women's experiences of the feminine body, and their access to the public space. S.V.A.W is presented as the result of the convergence of individual/psychological factors and social factors, namely traditional gender roles and expectations, patriarchal ideologies, and gendered power relations, perpetuating systemic inequalities between men and women. In this review, we visit issues of consent, miscommunication of sexual intent, and token resistance. Moreover, we highlight critical findings and implications for research, practice, and policy, and note directions for future research.

KEYWORDS

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, rape, gatekeeping, miscommunication theory, consent, token resistance, self-monitoring.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 April 2024

PUBLISHED: 17 April 2024

DOI: 10.32996/jhsss.2024.6.4.8

1. Introduction

According to (Lisak, 1991), the 1970s noticed a shift from, and what appears to be, a total rejection of the individual and psychological perspective that explained the male motivation to rape in terms of the unconscious and dynamic motivational factors. Pathological, or pathogenic, mothering was the sine qua non of the explanation of the anger that sexually aggressive men express towards stranger women; in the sense that it is often displaced from intimate female figures. He says that traditional psychodynamic approaches were largely confronted and replaced by a feminist critique of rape that regarded it as, simply, the ultimate expression of a misogynistic culture that normalises the objectification of women and their institutional oppression; rapists, from this perspective, "are not sick and psychologically distinct from other groups of men" (Lottes, 1988, p.195); they are normal men who only "act out what their culture perpetrates institutionally." (Lisak, 1991, p. 242) Martha Burt, whose work is to be considered one of the earliest efforts to provide a solid foundation for a "combination of social psychological and feminist theoretical analysis of rape attitudes and their antecedents" (Burt, 1980, p. 229), calls for a feminist sociocultural model of rape that analyses the ways in which the patriarchal structure of society perpetuates S.V.A.W. She says that earlier rape research had been practically atheoretical, which had large implications on its hypotheses, methodologies, and interpretation of results, one of them being the purblind incorporation of many cultural stereotypes, including rape myths. (Burt, 1980) says that rape is nothing but "the logical and psychological extension of a dominant-submissive, competitive, sex role stereotyped culture" (p. 229). It is

noteworthy that Burt and the majority researchers adopting the sociocultural perspective tend to equate the psychopathological model with any psychological view; in a way that no meaningful differences between incarcerated and unincarcerated sexually aggressive men could be found. What Lisak suggests, and what seems to be a plausible alternative, is the exploring of the intersection of the cultural and the individual psychological factors behind men's predisposition to commit sexual violence, which, according to him, work synergistically. Lisak combines both the sociocultural and the psychological perspectives, which are often regarded as mutually exclusive approaches, and says that cultural forces shape both the approximal and distal environments in which the male child is raised and lead to the creation of psychological dynamics that become attitudes, dispositions, and behaviours, which, in their turn, lead to sexually aggressive behaviour. (White and Kowalski, 1998) developed the "integrative contextual developmental model" (ICD), which puts an emphasis on the multiply-determined nature of sexual aggression and offers five multilayered systems or levels; larger systems such as communities and neighbourhoods influencing effective smaller ones, such as the home environment. They say that sexually aggressive behaviour exists ever since childhood; as it is influenced by the home environment that exists as a broader system of cultural beliefs and values.

It is undeniable that our understanding of the issue of S.V.A.W.G lacks refinement. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that every experience of aggression begins with a perpetrator, who reflects the perverse processes and structures of society, which mobilise a diverse set of forms of organised violence against women, one of which is S.V. Ervin Staub attributes the S.V.A.W in America, for instance, to profound changes in social mores, which have precipitated social disorganisation; increased rates of divorce, abortion, teenage pregnancies, drug use, and crime. (Straub, 1991, p. 437) says that the spread of feminism and women's rights ought to be taken as part of social upheavals leading to the reevaluation of male and female qualities and the challenging of traditional gender roles and rights. These conditions work synergistically to create a pressing masculine need to defend "self-concept" and world view, as a despondent response to the threat of social changes and the subsequent loss of traditional male supremacy and social privilege. Staub also talks about cultural characteristics that contribute to S.V.A.W, their devaluation, the discrimination against them, and the desensitisation to their victimisation (p.436). On a similar vein, other researchers (Beneke, 1982; Langelan, 1993; Conway-Long, 2002) contend that one of the unanticipated results of the feminist movement has been a social upheaval (Sanday, 1981) and an increase in rape. (Gruber and Bjorn, 1982), for instance, in their study of workplace S.H, assert that when women break into a certain occupation that had been dominated by men, even when in small numbers, they seem to create "a threatening situation that provokes S.H"; this "invasion", as the researchers call it, makes women "a threat to the masculine order of things" (p. 291). Linking the sociocultural structure of society with individual attitudes, (Sheffield, 1987) proposes the social control model of rape, which suggests that the male structure of society is strictly maintained by various societal factors, one of which is S.V.A.W; an argument that is parallel to that proposed by a number of researchers (Brownmiller, 1975; Griffin, 1979; Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002). According to Sheffield, traditional gender-role attitudes play a critical role in the maintenance of S.V, along with other factors, framed under the rubric of "societal propaganda," such as pornography and "our use of language." Other research within sociocultural theory offers a similar view on the subject of S.H as the manifestation of a much larger patriarchal system (Clark & Lewis, 1977; Burt, 1980; Sanday, 1981; Staub, 1991; Pollard, 1992; Sundaresh & Hemalatha, 2013; Vohlidalova, 2015) and a constituent of a broader pattern of male power (Cairns, 1997; Dougherty, 2006), privilege (Langelan, 1993), and discrimination (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1982; Lisak, 1991; Bandura, 1991; Heisei, et al., 1994; Hall & Barondan, 1997; Sanday, 2003; McLaughlin, Uggen, & Blackstone, 2012). (Wetzel and Brown, 2000), on the other hand, contend that the beliefs, attitudes, and values of communities can either foster or prevent S.H.

Building on previous literature adopting a multiply-determined nature of S.V and extending the argument on S.V as residual patriarchy's response to social change and its means to subvert egalitarian principles, in this research, it is argued that the emergence of feminist organisations, Moroccan women's repudiation of traditionalism, and their gradual attainment of a status of equality with men, originating from social and economic changes, namely the production of a public collective speech noted in the positive shift in the recognition of a common political feminine struggle and an unprecedented liberation of speech against S.V, resulted in an anticipated denigration of 'feminism' and 'feminists', based on claims of the movement's renewal of a debate around problematic heterosexual sexuality and the propagation of both a culture of paranoia within heterosexual encounters and a victim culture in women. Traditionalism, and traditional masculinity, in this sense, are not used to describe or situate certain beliefs, behaviours, attitudes, personality characteristics, or even motivations in time, but rather to criticise; they are that which (Guessous, 2011) calls "anachronistic, ungenerous, uncompromising if not authoritarian, and incompatible with both feminism and leftism" (p. 104). They are equated with backwardness, repudiation of change, parochialism, double-standards, as in the case of the modern Moroccan leftist partner or husband in Guessous's study. The women [1] participating in her research say that leftist men are criticised for being traditional, which is parallel with being an obstacle to women's rights, being selective and strategic in the changes they embraced, which, for them, meant more access to the female body and the freedom from the constraints of marriage (p. 108). Men are obstructionists to equality and a cause of feminist identity. Guessous says that her interviewees' pragmatic decision to embrace leftist feminism was largely based on their thorny experiences with men from the left; modern men that substantiated the coexistence of sexism and modernity; their partners refused to change on account of the fact that "not because they (their women) were writing and speaking about equality that they could make it happen", as can be seen in many of

the participants' narratives. Men were reluctant to challenge their male privilege and use of power in relation to women; "they want to stay the same and be taken care of" (My emphasis, p. 99).

In a similar approach to the issue of S.V as delineated in this article, Genevieve Fraisse, a French feminist and philosopher, in her discussion of #metoo and its French equivalent, 'balancetonporc,' has persuasively contended that men's criticism of the movement's excessiveness, vulgarity, and brutality emanates from a condescending male privilege, endemic to dominant groups (Fraisse, 2020, p. 119), providing a tentative suggestion as to the mobilisation of S.V as a punitive reaction to social change. Moreover, the critical rise in the number of reported S.H and rape cases in Morocco provides structural support for the argument that S.V in the country, as an indubitably sexually inegalitarian society, rooted in the existing social structure, through traditional gender roles and expectations, patriarchal sexual scripts, and rape myths, is a vital instrument of the informal social control and subordination of women. It is suggested that this contained apprehension of social change, manifested in the recognition of gender equality and women's vocalisation of their experiences of S.V, is a mechanism that patriarchal institutions implement to overlook the conditions of women's lives and the pressing need for systemic change. Further, it is argued to be a reactive approach to the battlement against what (Cairns, 1997) delineates as the framing of S.H, coercion, and assault as a series of individual cases that are decontextualized as separate instances of abuse committed by "aberrant men."

In this research, incidents of sexual intrusion, aggression, and coercion represent moments in a rape-prone culture that must be thought of as intentionally pervasive, sexually differentiating elements of the development of feminine experiences, marking women as different from men, especially when it comes to everyday S.H, argued to be an experience that begins with the feminine body, continuously immersing women in sexual objectification and subjugation, and the threat of immanent danger or rape; ultimately, keeping them in a state of unremitting apprehension and fear. It is noteworthy that although experiences of S.V remain gender-based attacks, they do not exclusively define feminine subjectivity; as research shows that they are experienced differently by women, depending on a number of psychological and social factors. Further, the instrumentality of deviant sexual behaviour lies in the construction of docile subjects that are laboriously preoccupied with safeguarding the feminine body and gatekeeping an unrestrained male sexuality; a traditional subjectification that informs women's negotiation of public space and the dynamics of their relationships with men. In this research, it is argued that this male liability towards S.H and aggression, and desensitisation to women's psychological and physical wellbeing is part of a prepubescent societal conditioning of men, whose individual and collective masculine identities are constructed and validated through a rapport to women in terms of voyeurism, initiation of sex, domination, and sexual entitlement, making them, to a certain extent, victims of traditionalism, the patriarchal system, and a rape culture.

In Moroccan culture, men genuinely consider themselves protectors of the women in their life, whether they are a sister, mother, daughter, girl-friend, wife, or even cousin, and, subsequently, protectors of family honour; in other words, male honour. They are socialised, ever since they are boys of five, to guard these women from the harm of stranger men and are heavily scolded when failing to do so. In fact, men who are not protective over "their" women are called "*dajju:θ*." [2] (Brownmiller, 1975) says that "the defense of women has long been a hallmark of masculine pride, as possession of women has been a hallmark of masculine success" (p. 38). Indeed, there is an undeniable masculine tendency to be invested in the lives of women and feeling in charge of their protection in public space and a corresponding systemic social encouragement of the display of violence to control women's behaviours, attitudes, and, obviously, sexuality, which creates a certain animosity between siblings of the opposite sex and a distrust between fathers and daughters. One of the perverse effects of sexual harassment and sexual violence, in general, is the hamper of the relationship between relatives of the opposite sex; women come to believe that, at a certain age, they are no longer in a position to be in public with their male relatives out of fear for them to be endangered, or, even for themselves to be somehow blamed for what happened. Sexual harassment is almost like a female rite of passage; when it happens you know that you are officially a woman.

Male protection stems from a patriarchal ideology of female sexuality as a valued commodity to be stolen and sold, as Ahsan Sonia argues. "Women's sexuality is, socially, a thing to be stolen, sold, bought, bartered, or exchanged by others. But women never own or possess it, and men never treat it, in law or in life, with the solicitude with which they treat property. To be property would be an improvement. The moment women "have it"—"have sex" in the dual gender/sexuality sense—it is lost as theirs. To have it is to have it taken away" (Ahsan, 2015, p. 43). (Bencke, 1982, p. 19) propounds a similar view and says that such an understanding of female sexuality is synonymous with the perception of rape as theft of that commodity. In a patriarchal society, the rape of a young girl is largely apprehended as the embezzlement of her price in the market, as (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 9) explicates. The victim, on her part, is seen as a defiled object and damaged goods. In fact, in Morocco, prior to 2012, and the Amina Filali case [3], victims of rape were socially pressured, but not legally forced, to marry their rapists, although the second clause of the article 475 of the Moroccan criminal code "allowed rapists to marry their victims in favour of a prison sentence of 1 to 5 years and a fine of 200 to 500 dirhams" (Mesbahi, 2018, p. 57). This calls for the recognition of the deep implication of virginity in the discourse of rape, and the consequent unrecognizability and illegitimation of the status of women who were not vaginally raped, women with a past consensual sexual history, and wives as victims of rape, which makes them a permanent plague to feminist theory. (Bourke, 2008),

in this regard, says that "since rape legislation has often been framed from a male perspective, the victim's unique identity has often been effaced in the legislation, making rape the act of having sex with a woman who does not belong to the perpetrator. Thus married men have often been automatically spared prosecution under rape legislation if their actions were directed against their own 'property' that is, their wife" (p. 9). This also explicates the general social denial of the status of rape victim to female sex workers and prostitutes. (Vandiver, et al., 2016) contend that "because street prostitutes violate gender norms for selling sex, they are viewed as "loose," "immoral," "or "of low moral character". Because of their label, the violence against them has become normalized" (p. 54). It is even justified; as they are already despoiled of their virginity and so are defiled, dirtied, and, in a way, deserving of their predicament. Families, in Morocco, for instance, and, men, more specifically, carefully attend to their female relatives' monetary needs as they fear they would careen into prostitution, since prostitutes are, generally, women who sell their bodies due to destitution. In this perspective, heterosexual sex and the access to a woman's body is a male monetary right that enables men to evade burdensome transactions and get what they want forcefully, when incapable of payment, or, simply, for the sake of the relief of boredom [4]. (Brownmiller, 1975) says that "when young men learn that females may be bought for a price, and that acts of sex command set prices, then how should they not also conclude that that which may be bought may also be taken without the civility of a monetary exchange? ...The availability of sex for a small price is no deterrent to the decision to rape" (My emphasis, pp: 391-2).

In a society in which female sexuality is regarded as commodity to be sold and stolen, rape, an essentially gendered crime, becomes a looming menace to the women (virgins) who are vulnerable to sexual violence against them, and so their family's "honour"; it is the illegal destruction or theft of virginity outside of a marriage contract. And since women cannot be trusted with this "dangerous treasure," (Rousseau, 1951, p. 55)[5] as Julie calls it, the entitlement to and inhibitory control against their sexuality through male economic power is substantially grounded in the pragmatic encouragement of a protective, monogamous, at least on the woman's part, conjugal union and a marriage contract the basis of which is proof of virginity. The burden of virginity is such that women do succumb to this form of "protective mating", as Brownmiller calls it, which "preserves" their purity, "respects" their chasteness in the eyes of society, and, most importantly, wards off the threat of rape. Following this, rape is a weapon that insures women's permanent need of male protection and defence, and domesticity, of which the essential political function is the maintenance of the subordination of women and the organised expropriation of female sexuality. (MacKinnon, 1997) says that "rape with legal impunity makes women second-class citizens" and asks a most fundamental question: "from whose standpoint, and in whose interest is a law that allows one person's conditioned unconsciousness to contraindicate another's violation?" (pp. 52-3). She opines that "the law assumes that, because the rapist did not perceive that the woman did not want him, she was not violated. She had sex. Sex itself cannot be an injury. Women have sex every day. Sex makes a woman a woman. Sex is what women are for" (p. 51). The discourse of the functionalist attitude towards women largely preoccupied Mackinnon's predecessors and had significant consequences on the critique of the substantial and well-orchestrated inequalities between man and woman, one of which is the ability to consent.

2. Women as gatekeepers of male sexuality

It might be argued that nowadays, women benefit, equally to men, from both legal and political rights. Based on this discourse of modern gender equality, one might come to believe that all issues related to women and consent are now part of history; that men and women, alike, have the right to consent (or not to). Nevertheless, when taking a look at the reality of consent under the light of modern female citizenship and the modern organisation of heterosexual relationships, theory and practice seem to take different directions and the misleading nature of the gender equality discourse is revealed. (Partridge, 1971 In Pateman, 1980, p. 149) argues that consent is generally analogous with arguments about political obligation, where it is conceived of as "a constitutive element of democratic ideology" (p. 32). Individual or groups' capability of consenting, (Pateman, 1980) says, is paramount in their admission as full members of the political order. However, "this straightforward assertion that liberal democracies are based on consent avoids the embarrassment that occurs when theorists attempt to show how and when citizens perform this act. This assertion also avoids the question of who consents" (p. 150). She says that, from the beginning, consent theorists have acknowledged that women, as a naturally subordinate group, are incapable of consenting, although consent in everyday life, to use her words, "particularly concerns them" (p. 150). It is especially married women that pose a serious problem to liberal theorists. For centuries, the issue of the husband's authority over his wife has remained embroiled in controversy. Contemporary theorists fail to provide a logical justification to it without repudiating the basic principles of liberal theory; freedom and equality. Today, (Brennan and Pateman, 2010) says, "political theorists no longer acknowledge that such a problem exists; the authority of husbands over wives is excluded from theoretical scrutiny" (p. 55). Nowadays, marriage is considered to be a convention based on the mutual consent of husband and wife, and on the individual choice of both parties to enter into such a covenant. However, one of the implications of modern marriage is that it is solely based on the wife's agreement to the husband's authority and his placement as "head of the house". It is a one-sided convention in which the wife is the only "individual" consenting to submit and become subjugated to the other, which highlights the patriarchal nature of authority in the family.

In Rousseau's writings, the philosopher acknowledges women's unique ability to arouse men sexually; an ability that is endemic only to them and that instigates in men feelings of both fear and guilt, thus creating a sense of endangerment in terms of his independence and self-sufficiency. Women, in this sense, and based on Beneke's thorough analysis of multiple interviews conducted with men and a number of male rapists, arouse 'man' and castrate him. They are perfectly capable of sexually exciting him and mockingly turning off that excitement. Following this, men become the object of women's sexual power; in a way that, as (Beneke, 1982, p. 8) says, men's violent response to this female power, rather than being an action of an agent, is an actual indicator of their apprehension of their unsurmountable victimisation by this form of female subjectification. In a similar vein, (Brownmiller, 1975), who creates an analogy between sexual assault and rape, and robbery, as acts of "acquiring property", argues that sexual violence and rape, in addition to being unequivocally deliberate acts of physical damage to a woman, who is simultaneously and paradoxically loathed and desired, are the ultimate expression of such conflicting emotions. "The hatred for her is expressed in the same act that is the attempt to "take" her against her will. In one violent crime, rape is an act against person and property" (Brownmiller, 1975, p. 185). This can be seen in the following excerpt from Jay (23 years old), and Stan (30 years old):

"I almost have the feeling that men are more desperate than women. Women can lay back and have more of a choice about who will come after them. I've had a lot of envy and jealousy that women can just do that and have so many men because it's so powerful. I've felt belittled by that power, belittled because they can't see who I am or feel who I am because they are able to use their body as a way of attracting men through being flirtatious or coming on or whatever." (Beneke, 1982, p. 60)

"If I were actually desperate to rape somebody, it would be from wanting the person, but also it would be a very spiteful thing, just being able to say, "I have power over you and I can do anything I want with you, " because really I feel that they have power over me just by their presence. Just by the fact that **they** come up to me and just melt me and make **me** feel like a dummy makes me want revenge. They have power over me so I want power over them..." (Original emphasis. Beneke, 1982, p. 44)

Social contract theorists seem unable to grapple with this fear that women, if not kept under male subordination and, subsequently, made men's equals in the realms once purely dominated by men, and simultaneously left as their "superiors in all the qualities proper to their sex", as Rousseau calls it, could predominate over men altogether. He ponders on the difference between this and transferring to the wife the primacy that nature has endowed the husband. Woman's sexual power is seen as a preeminent threat to patriarchy; for woman, in this view, is in control of a critical area of man's life. God has endowed both men and women with "unlimited passions", to use Rousseau's words, but it is women who are responsible for controlling those passions. Rousseau goes far beyond thinking that women are "naturally" able to fully curb their own passions, to insisting that they are morally bound to control the desires of both men and women. They are the ones responsible for bringing back virtue to modern society. He says: "The social relation of the sexes is a wonderful thing. From the association results a moral person of which the woman is the eye and the man the arm, but with such dependence of one on the other the man teaches the woman what she would see, and the woman teaches the man what he should do" (Rousseau, 1817, p. 720). Women, who are bundled together in the same debauched category, are the only ones whose role is deemed quintessential in the management of sexual life.

Rousseau is unable to ascertain women's asexuality, considering his acknowledgement that both men and women have similar sexual needs, but he nonetheless argues that, because women are also creatures of passion, they must use their God-given duplicity and dissemblance to protect and maintain their modesty. However, mistrustful as he was of female nature, he prioritised even further the education of this "natural woman" that confines her training to the "labours of her sex"; woman, thus, must be subject to a vigorous training in modesty, chastity, domesticity, and, most importantly, complete submission to the authority of man. The aim is to create a breed of sexual objects and demimondaine submissive wives. The creation of the passive, dependent, chaste, subrational, sensitive, nurturing female can easily be said to be behind Rousseau's establishment of a punitive moral code that is especially made for women and that applies only to them. He says: "if timidity, chasteness, and modesty which are proper to them are social inventions, it is in society's interest that women acquire these qualities; they must be cultivated in women, and any woman who disdains them offends good morals" (Rousseau, 1968, p. 87, as cited in Okin, 2013, p. 122). It ought to be clear that the morals of which he so highly speaks are the product of a strictly patriarchal masculine ideology. One thing is certain, Rousseau's dubious foundation of "innate" female characteristics shows a terrible inconsistency in his conception of the "natural woman". Okin says that he evaded the relevance of the objection he had made to Aristotle's arguments for natural slavery in connection to his own about the natural state of submission and servitude to men to which he had eternally sentenced women; a stance she considers to be "selective blindness". He came up with answers to the questions dealing with this "natural female submission" asked earlier in this chapter, and said that the reason behind a woman's endurance of submission to the wrongs and injustices done to her is "the natural amiability of her sex when unspoiled. Boys on the other hand could never be accustomed to such treatment: their inner feelings rise up and revolt against injustice; nature has not made them able to put up with it" (Okin, 2013, p. 127). The part where he says "when unspoiled" does not go barely unnoticed; a slip of the pen that reveals Rousseau's intentions to conform women to an education that is dictated purely by function; a narrowly defined sexual and maternal female function.

This view has been replicated in other studies on the topic of female masochism and women's natural inclination to subordination to male power.

Okin contends that Rousseau, who saw women as the utmost source of evil in the world, because, again, of their sexuality, proffers two extremely conflicting accounts on female sexuality, especially in terms of the feminine role in the sexual act; "women must, on the one hand, allure, and on the other hand, control and restrain; they must be sensuous, loveable and passionate, but on the other hand scrupulously chaste" (Okin, 2013, p. 118). The tension between these two "natural" functions of women, as presented by Rousseau, Okin says, leads to tragedies that can be reflected in the tragic fate of the philosopher's heroines. The philosopher, to his great content, seems to condemn the female kind to a situation in which they will always end up vanquished; in some instances, female resistance is essential to "curb to the boundless desires of both sexes," in others, this very resistance becomes essential to entice or arouse men; "*far from repressing the desires of the male, "chasteness" enflames them... Since the best way to arouse him is to resist his advances, chasteness and shame are natural concomitants of the female's role in the sexual act*" (Okin, 2013, p. 117). Males are stimulated by either female bashfulness and coquetry or by genuine or simulated resistance. It never is clear in Rousseau's words which one does actually arouse men sexually. However, one thing is clear; women may resist but men can always conquer this resistance [6]. (Mackinnon, 1997) argues that women are granted this "contract fiction", as she calls it, as long as they use it in male terms; that is to say, as long as they remain powerless; an argument with which (Pateman, 1980, p. 164) concurs and says that consent is deeply rooted in a discourse of gender-based polarisation in which man- the "naturally" superior and sexually active pursuer- offers a contract to which woman- the subordinate passive subject- can only antagonistically consent. (Mackinnon, 1997) says:

"Consent is supposed to be women's form of control over intercourse, different from but equal to the custom of male initiative. Man proposes, woman disposes... Fundamentally desirability to men is supposed to be a woman's form of power because she can both arouse it and deny its fulfilment. To woman is attributed both the cause of man's initiative and the denial of his satisfaction. This rationalizes violence. Consent in this model becomes more a metaphysical quality of a woman's being than a choice she makes and communicates. Exercise of women's so-called power presupposes more fundamental social powerlessness" (pp. 45-6).

It seems that a biased and masculinist perspective that usually is the norm according to which incidents such as unwanted male sexual intrusions and sexual violence are judged is one that highly prevails. This perspective ultimately fails to perceive or acknowledge particular forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence as harmful in nature or life-threatening. It historically constructed consent as a purely female responsibility. It is the woman recipient's responsibility to, not only, establish consent; that is to either grant it or not, but, also, to clearly communicate it to the initiator and to make it known to him that his conduct is unwelcome when it is. However, the interpretation of this extremely valuable communication lies in the hands of the initiator. It is his own understanding and interpretation of consent- its nature and manifestation- that is prioritised over his actual behaviour; in a way that he is totally redeemed when he believes that consent has indeed been granted to him and that his actions are unproblematic, if not innocuous. In this case, consent is not the woman's but the initiator's, an argument that has been present in multiple studies, including Rait and Zeedyk (2002). The woman's words are lost in translation; they are circumvented; metamorphosed.

3. Women's miscommunication of sexual intent and Token resistance

Men's overperception of a woman's sexual intent is attributed to four distinct variables that oftentimes tend to overlap; the cultural/social, the situational, the perpetrator, and the victim variables. We can easily say that the socialisation of men relies heavily on their role in looking for women's sexual intent; as women are understood to not convey it in a direct way and that it is endemic to their sex to even hide it (Harnish, Abbey, and DeBono, 1990). But, most importantly, men are socialised, in a way, and taught to initiate sexual activities and to persist, sometimes even forcefully, despite the woman's verbal refusal (Check and Malamuth, 1983, p. 344) [7]. For instance, (Malamuth and Brown, 1994, p. 706) say that sexual aggressors discount the verticality of women's communications, especially when women "protest too much" and are more inclined to perceive a woman's "No" response as seductive teasing. According to this script, the loss of an opportunity of courtship is greater than "false alarms" or the misperception of sexual intent. (Haselton, 2003) says that, "although courtship effort is costly for males, in the currency of differential reproduction these costs will often pale in comparison to the costs of missed mating opportunities" (p. 35). And, in the light of making a clear distinction between sincere rejection and apparent seduction, man finds himself torn between two different interpretations that can have profound consequences, especially on his sense of manliness; he gives up and simply decides to persist [8]. In fact, men are socially compelled to ignore women's refusal "because a man who stops when a woman says no is not sufficiently masculine" (Muehlenhard, 1997. P. 519). Sprecher and her colleagues say that incidences of sexual miscommunication are highly prevalent in societies where couples lack communicative skills to talk about sexual matters. On a similar vein, (Tannen, 1991, as cited in Frith & Kitzinger, 1997, p. 518) says that "women and men have different past experiences... Boys and girls grow up in different worlds...

And as adults they travel in different worlds, reinforcing patterns established in childhood. These cultural differences include different expectations about the role of talk in relationships and how it fulfils that role... When styles differ, misunderstandings are always rife" (pp. 125-7).

Based on numerous studies, the perception of sexual interest presents itself as an important risk factor leading up to the commitment of S.V.A.W. (Harnish, Abbey, and DeBono, 1990) propound a view in which Snyder's theoretical concept of "*self-monitoring*" might relate to individuals' perception of sexual intent in others' behaviour. Snyder separates people into distinct categories, "*low self-monitors*" and "*high self-monitors*". He says that low self-monitors are less concerned with and responsive to social considerations than high self-monitors, which pushes them to look for potential social situations that would allow them to present their "inner-self" (p.57). They are individuals who incredibly value the congruence between "who they truly are" and "what they do", as Snyder explicates; their words and deeds underly genuine feelings, attitudes, and dispositions; their public appearance and private realities of the self are the same (p. 47). They show a "committed" orientation towards dating relationships, and are capable of developing high levels of intimacy in the long term. The second group, on the other hand, consists of individuals who unambivalently monitor, regulate, and control the images of "the self" they present to others (p.15). They are responsive to situational considerations, and, accordingly, are constantly concerned with assessing and actively structuring the social climate that is around them; a process that enables them to accumulate extensive social and interpersonal knowledge [9], which, Harnish and colleagues say, antagonistically hastens their impressions of others, as they are more susceptible to societal influences and stereotypes, even during the development of their personal schemata. Harnish and colleagues say that, compared to low self-monitors, this group's propensity to have "uncommitted" or liberal orientation towards heterosexual relationships that are also characterised by a lack of personal intimacy, are more likely to perceive the opposite-sex partners in a sexual manner. In their study, "male participants rated themselves as being significantly more flirtatious, sexy, seductive, and promiscuous than did females...Furthermore, males rated their opposite-sex partners as being significantly more sexy, seductive, and promiscuous than did females" (My emphasis. pp. 1338-9). Moreover, male participants were more sexually attracted to their opposite-sex partners; a finding that Harnish and colleagues attribute to high self-monitors' "optimistic perception of having a greater number of sexual partners" (p. 1342). The women in the study, on the other hand, were more interested in becoming friends with their partners than the men were with them. High self-monitors, contrarily to low self-monitors, are more likely to "jump into conclusions", when interpreting ambiguous information, and are more likely to mistake friendliness for seduction, misunderstand certain situations, misinterpret women's behaviour, and, subsequently, overperceive their sexual interest, which (Abbey, 1987) considers to be a potent risk factor in S.V and date rape, in particular.

Sexually coercive men, especially, are more likely to perceive more sexual interest in a woman than non-aggressive men, which results in sexual aggression (Farris, et al., 2008). For instance, in (Loh and colleagues, 2005)'s study, one third of college men reported having perceived token resistance from a partner in the past. These men are argued to be three times more likely to have committed sexually aggressive acts than the men who did not report having perceived token resistance. According to (Kanin, 1969), sexual overperception creates feelings of frustration and confusion, when the woman decides to turn down the initiator, and, in extreme cases, exceeds mere social embarrassment, and results in aggression and sexual coercion, as is also shown in several studies (Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987; Buyers, E S; & Lewis, 1988; Abbey and Harnish, 1990; Abbey, K, 1991; Malamuth & Brown, 1994; Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Bondurant & Donat, 1999). Part of a broad corpus of literature [10], (Muehlenhard, 1988), in her study of date rape, says that the gender discrepancy in the interpretation of sexual interest "could cause some men to feel led on if they thought that a woman was acting as if she wanted sex more than she actually did, and some men regard being led on as justification for rape" (p. 31). A "*sensitivity*" approach to this gender discrepancy in the recognition of sexual interest sees that men are generally insensitive to women's affective cues and "require fewer impelling cues prior to labelling a behaviour sexual interest" (Farris, 2008, p. 52). Ironically, (Haselton and Buss, 2000) showed that men do not overperceive their sisters sexual interest in a third-party man. Further, several studies represent a deep interrogation of the role of mass media in men's overperception of sexual interest, which results in the misinterpretation of woman's cues, one of which is (Abbey and Harnish, 1990)'s, which suggests that mass media play a central role in the polarised representation of men and women, and the well-orchestrated oversexualisation of women that result in a masculine socialisation that is focused on women's attractiveness and sexual availability. This sexual schema about women, according to them, serves as a guide to translate any "ambiguous information as evidence in support of their beliefs" (Harnish, Abbey, & DeBono, 1990, p. 1334). They also say that men are taught that it is but an instinctive response for women to resist men's sexual advances and that the strategic use of force and dominance is bound to turn a woman's "No" into a "Yes" (p. 13340).

A recurrent theme of Women's reports of more experiences in which men overperceive their sexual interest than when men underperceive it is bound to make us realize that sexual socialisation and traditional sexual scripts play an immense role in the "expectation" of rape and S.V.A.W, as (Check and Malamuth, 1985, p. 414) contend; men are taught to use force and coercion, to delight in domination, and to evade a woman's consent, whereas women are taught not to openly show their sexual interest or to freely engage in sexual activities; instead, (Muehlenhard and Hollabaugh, 1988) talk about women engaging in "token resistance",

at least once in their lifetime; they say “no” to sexuality but actually mean “yes”. The women in their study were found to endorse adversarial attitudes about sexual relationships, masculinity, and femininity; they were likely to believe that violence and coercion are central to heterosexual relations and that women do actually want to be forced. This, I think, leads to the conceptualisation of sexually forceful men not as rapists, but as “romantic heroes” (Gavey, 2013. p. 21). Token resistance, (Sprecher, et al., 1994, p. 126) say, can vary significantly from one culture to another, depending on the way each particular culture treats premarital sexuality, chastity in a marriage partner, and first intercourse. They argue that, typically, in a sexually restrictive society, wherein gender equality yet remains a serious problem, women tend to make up “excuses” to avoid premarital sex (Sprecher, et al., 1994, p. 130), or, simply, the explicit signalling of sexual cues; which, in many different studies (Reiss, 1989; Sprecher, 1994; Perilloux, et al., 2012), was contended to foster a reputation of promiscuity. This does not stop women in *sexually permissive* societies from equally engaging, if not more, in token resistance- Sprecher and her colleagues say that more sexual liberty is often consonant with sexual pressure; in a way that people find themselves in situations wherein they are forced to do things they do not want to do and where their refusal is not heard or taken seriously. This can also be applied to men, in general; as they are said to considerably engage in token resistance. The authors attribute this finding to the fact that men, in sexually restrictive societies, at least, have less of an opportunity to say “no” or to “play hard to get”, as women rarely initiate sexuality and are taught to think that they should always refuse. Compatible with this view is (Margolin, 1990)’s study in which participants, male and female, regarded it as acceptable for a woman to violate a man’s sexual consent, without using violence, and not the other way around. However, one thing is certain, it is women whose “refusals are often not heard, not attended to, not believed, or simply overruled” (Frith and Kitzinger, 1997. p. 517).

In some studies, for example, (Susan Estrich, 1987), women are asked to assume responsibility to make their “NO” heard. In a similar vein, (Murnen, Perot, & Byrne, 1989, p. 102) says that “women are often trained to be ineffective communicators in a sexual relationship... Perhaps if more women were able to communicate their disinterest, more of the unwanted sex could be eliminated” (Frith and Kitzinger, 1997, p. 519). In others, as in (Paglia, 1995), there is a belief that the prevention of rape is an essentially feminine burden; where assertive verbal communication by women can deter instances of rape entirely. This particular attitude surrounding rape and rape prevention is compatible with and represents an extension to a large body of literature that regards women’s sexual cues as ambiguous [13] and their verbal signals as often misleading, as was discussed earlier. Women, in this sense, are not merely “victims” of a rape culture, they are deeply implicated in it, to the extent of being active members of it. Assertiveness skills are what (Powell, 1995) claims women lack the most in, not only their personal sexual encounters, but also, society. She says that they do not know how to be “pleasantly” firm; so they avoid assertion at all costs especially when they desire to please men and to be accepted by them, as in the context of a job environment; they mostly perceive it as unattractive and unfeminine. To this, she says that women should opt for “polite” or “non-confrontive” assertions- they should be “strong, feminine, and courageous” (pp. 110-1).

(Sprecher, et al., 1994) argue that both men and women, in the case of sexual violence at the hands of a partner, may say “yes” when they want to say “no”, for multiple reasons; for instance, “verbal pressure from a partner, need to conform to peer standards, and desire to maintain the relationship” (p. 126). (Frith and Kitzinger, 1997) say that the reason behind the popularity of miscommunication theory amongst individual women is that it allows them to make sense of experiences over which they had no control, as well as a way to maintain heteropatriarchy; as “miscommunication allows women to remain friends with their rapists” (p. 524). (Warshaw, 1988)’s survey found that three fourth of the female participants still maintained contact with the attacker; 25% of them still considered him a friend and 11% considered him a boyfriend. “In presenting rape as the unfortunate, but innocent, byproduct of cultural differences, sexual miscommunication theory obscures male power and female subordination” (Frith and Kitzinger, 1997. P. 525). The miscommunication model, in its emphasis on rapists’ “honest” bewilderment (Crawford, 1995, pp. 118-119, as cited in Frith and Kitzinger, 1997, p. 524) and surprise of having their behaviour labelled rape, but most importantly, women’s responsibility to improve their communication skills, is tailored to be, as (Henly and Kramarae, 1991, as cited Frith and Kitzinger, 1997) argue, “a powerful tool, maybe even a necessity, to maintain the structure of male supremacy” (p. 526).

Therapists and researchers have a responsibility to rectify the lack of advocating for greater changes in public policy that would remedy the asymmetric class and gender power relations and challenge standards of male dominance and sexual entitlement. In a society that is imbued with sexism and gender inequality, it is necessary to explore, and, certainly, to expose, the ubiquity of these discourses in Moroccan societal attitudes and beliefs, which ignore, diminish, or justify men’s agency in everyday sexually intrusive behaviours and rape, and that blame women for sexually ‘provoking’ men. This, as has been seen throughout this paper, can be attributed to the fact that early gender-role socialisation and representations of masculinity and femininity in language, Mass Media, and pornography serve to produce, encourage, and normalise men’s dominance, initiation of sexual behaviour, and physical potential to “perform” S.V against women, who, conversely, are inculcated with adverse notions of vulnerability, passivity, and submission, and are brought up with the idea that their sexuality- a passive reproductive power- ought to remain unexplored and unarticulated. Further, they are surrounded by a brouhaha of the lack of support of victims by the authorities, victim blame, and lack of justice.

4. Directions for future research

Putting into perspective women's everyday negotiations of the power imbalance in public space, it is paramount to advocate for the implementation of educational training programs targeting the prevention of repressive belief systems and sexual double standards, symptomatic of a rape culture, including ones targeting bystander intervention. Further, in the Moroccan context, wherein a nominal portion of disbursement from the country's coffers is allocated to the education of young people on issues related to S.V, it is imperative to establish a multifaceted approach to this critical matter, which ought not only to confront the deficiency in the effectiveness of policies and laws, aiming to alter women's status of second-class citizens, but also strategise governmental resolutions that prioritise securing credibility and funding from international agencies, for impactful S.V prevention and intervention initiatives and programs. While future research should interrogate and challenge the efficacy of preventative strategies in reducing S.V in the Moroccan context, it is equally important to further address women's development of particular sexual scripts, notably, "male initiation and female gatekeeping skills" (Sakaluk, et al., 2013, p. 6), which perpetuates the problematic belief that unsolicited male sexual behaviours stem from an irremediable sexual attraction, or romantic and passionate love that the sexual harasser approves for the target, potentially leading to serious relationships or marriage; a prospect that might be present in Moroccan women's consciousness. This line of inquiry is crucial for understanding and dismantling deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and attitudes that inform women's perceptions and management of experiences of S.V.

Notes

[1] They describe themselves as "*jasa:rjja:t wa taqaddumija:t*"; which is translated into "leftist and progressive". Based on their description of their politics and on the words used in Moroccan political discourse, Guessous prefers to call them "leftist feminists".

[2] A cuckold: a man who does not get jealous over his family (*jaya:r*) or ashamed of it (*jaxzal*). Three of whom God has forbidden Paradise; the addicted to alcohol, the disobedient to parents, and the cuckold [hadith]. A Cuckold is a pimp upon his family (*alqawwad ealaa 'ahlih*). <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/دبوث/>

[3] Amina, an underage girl, committed suicide after a judge ruled for her to Marry her rapist. After she suffered, at the hands of her husband, from continuous physical torture and additional rapes, she decided to take her own life to terminate her misery. Following her tragic story, a national campaign for the abrogation of article 475 of the Moroccan penal code took place where activists called for the end of judicial endorsement of early marriage for underage girls, often virgins whose families desire to save face and honour, and condemned the ludicrous unsuitability of legal actions taken against rapists. In Morocco, rapists are still able to be spared imprisonment, and to terminate criminal proceedings, by marrying their victim and "making things right."

[4] (Jacobson and Dallas, 1981) propose the incorporation of the development of dating skills and social interactive skills, and the constructive use of shared leisure activities that help avoid boredom, which the authors consider to be an important cause of "relapse", in treatments of sexual offenders.

[5] Reflecting on sexuality in the Moroccan context, Abdessamad Dialmy, in Leila Slimani's book, says that "in the eyes of religion, virginity means the absence of sexual relationships before marriage. But by the end of 1960, young girls started to modify their sexual compartments. In 1975, I was conducting research in Casablanca and a high school female student told me: "to make love in a superficial manner, without penetration, is a conciliation between my desire and taboo." It is a sort of compromise. She pleased God by refusing to lose her hymen and, simultaneously, she pleased herself. The most recent investigation conducted by the ministry of health shows that 56% of Moroccan youth between the age of 15 and 24 have sex without penetration and that 25% with penetration" (My translation. Slimani, 2017, p. 101).

[6] (Rousseau, 1968) says that "love is the realm of women. It is they who necessarily give the law in it, because, according to the order of nature, resistance belongs to them, and men can conquer this resistance only at the expense of their liberty" (p. 46).

[7] In other biologically-oriented theories of rape, in addition to neurological and hormonal malfunctions that create conditions of perceptual deficits, as is argued in the precedent paragraphs, "**natural selection**" is at the root of what researchers like (Ellis, 1991), as a good example, propose. In his "biosocial theory", as he refers to it, "natural selection has favored men who more readily learn forced copulatory tactics than women, and women who are more inclined than men to resist forced copulations" (p. 631). Men, according to him, seem to have this insatiable, pragmatic need to be "pushy", to use his own words; a very primitive and unforgivingly animalistic instinct that stems from their natural role in the copulation with numerous sex partners- often unwilling- in order to produce as many offspring as possible, so as to dominate.

[8] This can be found in (Zilbergeld, 1978, p. 32) and (Muehlenhard and Hollabaugh, 1988).

[9] (Snyder, 1987) refers to (James, 1980)'s reasoning of individuals characteristic possession of "multiple selves", and proffers that only high self-monitors seem to have a repertoire of social selves from which to choose, depending on the reference group or the situational setting to which they actively adapt (James, 1980, p. 47).

[10] Several studies have been conducted in a laboratory setting, using depictions of women in photographs and video stimuli (Abbey & Melby, 1986; Abbey, et al., 1987; Shotland & Craig, 1988), written dating scenarios (Abbey & Harnish, 1995; Haselton & Buss, 2000), or in live staged heterosexual interactions (Abbey, 1982; Abbey, Zawacki, & McAuslan, 2000) have proved that men and women have different understandings of friendly and sexually interested behaviour. Other studies were conducted outside the laboratory setting and have revealed a line of continuity in terms of findings (Abbey, 1991; Saal, Johnson, & Weber, 1989; Craig Shea, 1993; Haselton & Buss, 2000; Haselton, 2003; Willand & Pollard, 2003)

[11] See also: (Bem, 1981)

[12] See also: (Berger, et al., 1986); (Weis & Borges, 1973).

[13] (Grammer, et al., 2000) say that Women send ambiguous sexual interest cues when they are interested. (Haselton, 2003) contends that (Buss, 1994) and (Haselton, 1999), in what can be considered an insurrectionary view on the subject of male overperception of sexual cues, "hypothesize that women can benefit from leading some men to believe that they are slightly more sexually interested than they actually are. A man who is motivated to pursue sex with a woman, and who believes she is interested in him, might be more inclined to do her favours, protect her from harm, or might simply give her flattering attention that can increase on-lookers' perceptions of her mate value" (p. 46). It seems that they are seriously oblivious to the harm such a male tendency can cause to women and the irremediable consequences it can have on them.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

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