Masculinity, Criminal Instinct And Forcible Rape: Pakhtuns’ Violent Masculinities Debarring Forcible Rape; An Investigation Of The “Masculine Hypothesis”

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Abstract

The most heinous of crimes prevalent across the globe includes rape as a highly debated issue and a dilemma of the modern world especially for social scientists. The entire body of knowledge pertaining to violent crimes exhibit a strong abhorrence for rape as a social reality, which to existing research has prevalence almost in every social structure. Contrary to this conception and notion, there was a need to rectify that women’s modesty is highly exalted and protected in traditional societies, especially the Pakhtun society and the way of life (Pakhtunwali) of its members. The present article is an attempt to signify the practice and extent of rape in a traditionally driven society of Pakhtuns i.e., Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The study is approached and undertaken qualitatively using qualitative tools for selection of samples, collection of data and analysis. The convicted members (particularly for violent crimes) in four central jails of the province were selected and interviewed to understand the issue from empirical perspective. The study concludes that the entire literature (quoted and reviewed for this study) especially the Talcot Parsons’ (1947) “masculine hypothesis” is confounded by the empirical data, revealing that rape does not exist in Pakhtun society due to men’s dominance in delinquency, because of the honor associated with women’s modesty and sanctity, and Pakhtunwali’s strict abhorrence and resistance towards malevolence of women in Pakhtun settings. Women are considered the queens of houses and are symbols of honor, which keep the generations continue and are worth-respect in either form i.e., mother, sister, wife, daughter. Men are thought to be the
saviors not the assailters. The study recommends that further research is required to understand the women’s perspective in terms of rape because men’s perspective might be subjectively biased, which needs further authentication from the opposite’s standpoint.

**Keywords:** rape, force, men’s dominance, masculinity, women’s sanctity and modesty, Pakhtunwali, violence, valor (ghairat), honor (izzat)

**Introduction**

Rape has been a recognized crime throughout the history of human beings where accounts of rape go back to antiquity, with reports in both the Old Testament and Classic Greek Mythology (Pistono, 1987). It has been the subject of art, literature, film, and theater (Siegel, 2007) and is a social problem rather than personal, with the understanding of rape as an act of violence rather than passion (Henslin & Fowler, 2014). Common law defines ‘rape’ as forcible and nonconsensual intercourse with a female (Green, 1993) while Randall & Rose (1986) argue that in traditional conceptions, it encompasses the unwilling forceful act of intercourse by a male to whom she is neither married nor cohabited. In addition, there are other forms of sexual assault such as male-male, female-female and female-male, but these were not contained within the traditional definition of rape (Krahé, Scheinberger-Olwig & Bieneck, 2003). Historically and rationally, it is regarded as one of the most abhorred, and formidable crimes (Siegel, 2007) where the concern has grown so greatly in the society that women under the age of 35 fear rape more than any other crime (Henslin & Fowler, 2014).

The fact is blatant from the definition (traditional) that rape is solely the crime committed by males or is the offense predominantly associated with masculinity. In early civilization, rape was common where men staked a claim of ownership on women by forcibly abducting and raping them (Siegel, 2007) which was a sign of men’s power-solidification and historical domination over women (Brownmiller, 1975). During the Middle Ages, the practice of rape was common among the ambitious men to abduct and rape wealthy women to force them into marriage (Siegel, 2007). In the current scenario, some of the experts appeal that men are less guilty in terms of intending the forcible rape where women are mostly blamed for provoking the men. Women used to provoke or stimulate men, or the rapist would not have been overcome with passion, in result the rape would have been taken place (Henslin & Fowler, 2014). In response, the feminists found this view as repugnant because it was blaming women for being raped. The idea of blaming women included that if women stop giving off the sexual cues that stimulate rape such as their manner, dress or other cues, the problem will be eradicated (Henslin et al., 2015).

The feminists assailed over this view where Germaine Greer expressed that it is a futile delusion that rape is an expression of uncontrollable desire or a compulsive response of an overwhelming attraction (Greer, 1972). To justify and approve the response of Greer, Luy (1977) noted the comment-cum-question of a physician Dorothy Hicks (who treated rape victims) inquired that if an 80-year-old woman or a 4-month-old baby-girl is attractive or sexy, then? The basic plea of feminists underlies the idea that it is the social structure that is responsible for rape rather than an
act of passion, it is a violent behavior and a mean to control women. Rape and its fears are ways by which men make women docile and ensure their illegitimate dominance (Henslin, 1996). Men in the social structure and during socialization are taught to associate power, dominance, strength, virility and superiority with masculinity and submissiveness, passivity, weakness, and inferiority with femininity (Scully, 2013; Scully & Marolla, 2018).

In order to justify the social patterns for utmost occurrence of rape; research blatantly reflect the social basis, which demonstrate that rape is not an act of few lunatic men but is intimately linked with the prevalent culture (Schwendinger, and Schwendinger, 1983; Scully & Marolla, 2018). In terms of the social patterns, research studies declare three basic patterns as the instigating factors in women’s rape including sex, age and race. Prior to these facts about forcible rape, the present study attempts to analyze “rape as a social evil” from the societal perspective and cultural patterns. In this context, the Pakhtun society has been studied to identify the level and extent of rape in the very society and perception of Pakhtun males towards the act.

**The Problem’s Statement**

In the context of sex, rape is exclusively a male or masculine-oriented crime where young males aging 15-24 accounting 38 percent of overall rape are arrested (United States. Bureau of the Census (Ed.), 1993; NOLAN III, Akiyama & Berhanu, 2002). Regarding the race, the reports from U.S population show that only 12 percent of it are African Americans while 41 percent of this group are arrested with the charges of rape (FBI, 1994). The ideation of symbolic interactionism’s sub-culture of violence reflects that some groups in the social structure keep domination as a central theme for which they adopt highest levels of aggression. Among such groups, rape can serve as a vehicle for machismo that symbolizes the dominant and strong picture of masculinity and masculine traits with all its forms and requirements (Brownmiller, 1975; Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1983). Similarly, Pakhtuns (as a race) are predominantly judged and declared as more prone to exhibit masculinity through violence, dominance, prominence machismo, which are assumed to be the predeterminants for rape. On the contrary, the argument here confounds the domineering literary perspective of machismo and masculinity exhibition when it comes to Pakhtuns, their traditions and cultural patterns. As been portrayed as one of the heinous and violent races in the world, seems to be most indulged in violent crimes including rape. The analysis section palpably exhibits that the prevalent patterns of Pakhtun culture strongly condemn and resist rape, how and why (details in analysis and discussion).

**Objectives of the Study**

- To explore the extent of forcible rape among Pakhtuns
- To understand the perception of Pakhtun men towards rape committed in the wake of exhibiting masculinity

**Methodological Procedures**
This study is part of a PhD research, which was undertaken to understand the association between Masculinity and Criminality from sociological and criminological dimensions. The study entails qualitative research design to describe the phenomenon of rape (as a crime) through masculine attributes of Pakhtuns. Respondents were conveniently selected from four central prisons of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, arrested, and convicted for “Assault” and “Murder”. Rape as a form of violent crime committed through force was also attempted for analysis to understand its intensity and perception of Pakhtun-Machomen. The participants were interviewed through a guide (face-to-face) in their respective prisons and responses were both scribed, and audio recorded till the attainment of saturation point through “New Information Threshold (presented by Guest, Namey & Chen, 2020). The collected data is qualitatively analyzed and discussed under literary scholarship and supported with illustrative quotes to either confirm or confound the body of knowledge in criminological scholarship.

Results, Analysis and Discussion

The empirical data (after thorough analysis) exhibit multiple facts about Pakhtun men, their cultural patterns, traditional expectations, and their adherence to the customary laws. It is strongly believed and unanimously accepted notion that violation of Pakhtunwali (a pakhtun’s code of life) is never tolerated while living in a Pakhtun society. A famous proverb expressed as by an interview participant i.e., “Da kali uza khu da narkha ma uza” (better to exile or migrate or leave the homeland for ever, but don’t compromise the social and cultural values, traditions, and norms). Pakhtuns never intend to get behind from other Pakhtun counterparts predominantly known as “tarburan” (cousins and relatives). Such a strict adherence to the code of life, often compel them to indulge in and commit violent actions only for the sake to ensure and ascertain their masculinities, machismo, and chivalry.

In the literary context, such conception and ascertainment are most likely associated with power-show of masculine regime, in terms of a conventional mean for male sex role, rape could be a way of establishing power in the face of socially imposed powerlessness (McNeely & Torres, 2009). Contrary to this perception and at some instances, compatible with the approach presented in scholarship, Pakhtun’s masculinity often dominates women and there are indications in which men exhibit violence on women through beating, thrashing, putting on fire and even bulleting. These incidents are predominantly recorded in personal relations especially occurring in spousal, parental and sibling relations and could be rarely found in strangers’ relations, because relations between stranger men and women are scarcely possible in a traditional Pakhtun social structure, for instance,

“… we (pakhtuns) are harsh, rigid, and strict with our women, not with women of others. It is true that both types of women are respectable, but there come instances in life where we are compelled to be harsh with them like our wives, sisters, and mothers. We are violent only in matters when our masculinity is at stake. Our masculinity comes at stake when our women commit acts of cowardice, like they do not observe veil (che kala purdah na kai). We have nothing to do with other
women, rather we need to protect them and even do not look at them because it’s a sin. If we look at other’s women, then other people will also look at our women, which is intolerable for us”.

In the most developed and advanced country of the world, U.S., the investigation prompted more than 5000 female soldiers to call military hot lines to report similar behavior at Army bases around the country (Siegel, 2007). The Army scandals basically included the drill instructors, who are given almost the complete control over young female recruits who in turn were depended on them for support, training, and nurturing (Vistica & Brant, 1996). Furthermore, some puzzling information also add to the discussion where women are dealt as the spoils of war; as the evidence from World War II witnessed that more than 200,000 Korean women were dropped in the frontline brothels and repeatedly raped and compensated by 2300 dollars each (Kageyama, 1998). In evidence, a Bosnian Serb commander admitted in front of international tribunal in the Netherlands about raping a woman in Bosnian war in 1992, which is the foremost confession by a person to plead guilty to rape as a war crime (Simons, 1998).

Rape among the other crimes has been at the highest rates even in the current scenario of high rationality and moral values that is witnessed by UCR’s information that about 92,000 cases of rapes and/or attempted rapes were reported to police in 2004 (Lynch & Jarvis, 2008). The studies reveal an average estimation of the rape as many as 10 percent of all adult women may have been raped during their lifetime (Testa, Livingston, Vanzile-Tamsen & Frone, 2003). In addition, National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) reported that almost 210,000 rapes and attempted rapes took place, which are slightly less than half of all rape incidents, not reported to police (Catalano, 2005). In this scenario, whatever the conditions are, whichever the rate of rape is and wherever it is experienced and occurred, the mainstream indicator remains the male segment or the masculinity-element of the males. There is no single method or single type or a single reason for the occurrence of rape in society rather a multi-structured and patterned system.

It is believed that rapes might be premeditated, impulsive, victim-focused, unfocussed while in terms of frequency, some rapists commit rape once, the others are multiple offenders; some commit it alone, the others attack in group or gang rapes (Warr, 1988). In this connection, criminologists focus their emphasis that there are multiple motivational factors behind the scenes, which seems a straighter and transparent one. A. Nicholas Groth (psychologist) classify the sex offenders on three-element based formula; anger, power, and sadism (Groth & Birnbaum, 1979). He conceptualizes that the sex offender must belong to or based on any of the three elements while committing rape. Consequently, dealing with the rape offenders, he found that about 55 percent of the power type; 40 percent, the anger type while only 5 percent were the sadists (Knight, 1997). Contrary to this debate, the Pakhtun men qualify the attributes of Groth i.e., anger, power, and sadism, which are found among them with highest intensity, but the perception and tendency towards rape is about nil among them. being the survivors of murderous relations and being murderers. An interview participant, a mass murderer (convicted for 5 murders in one instance), commented on rape as,
“…No, obviously no. Pakhtuns may be killers, violent, harsh, hard, unsocial etc. but cannot be rapists or sexual assaulters. Among Pakhtuns such acts are extremely abhorred. Nobody can tolerate such acts on one’s own family members (women); where in response they cannot offer any filthy act with the women of others’ family” (3A03-30RM).

In other words, rape as a masculine job has been highly debated under the biological, evolutionary, and sociological positivism, which declare multiple factors associated with masculinity in terms of committing rape related criminalities. The evolutionary or biological conception believes that the prehistoric drives transfer genetically, which is a natural motivation for men to indulge in sexuality with more than one woman (Symons, 1979). The act of rape also involves the drive for possession and control of those to whom one is sexually attracted because rape is bound up with sexuality and violence (Ellis, 1991). This ideation is again confounded in the empirical data, where men have physical and biological powers and prowess. Pakhun men are worldly known as and acknowledged for being hard, tough, and rough, but in terms of rape, they do not agree because of the engraved modesty of women as a symbol of honor, for example,

“… No, Pakhtun can never be a rapist. If so, he will be insane, or will not be a Pakhtun. Pakhtun gives respect to women. It is true that we treat them harshly, but it doesn’t mean we could be so cheap to rape them, no and never. We have power, we have authority, we have all the resources, but being resourceful does not mean that we should molest our women. Every woman of the village is our woman, and she deserves to be respected”.

On the other hand, the sociological perspective emphasizes over males’ socialization as a determinant for rape. It is socially perceived and learnt through socialization process that women love to have hardcore sexual-play, which in turn, legalize men’s inclination towards rape and infliction of violence in intimate relations (Osman, 2003). In addition, the influence of peer group also reinforces such values if they share situations like the one’s as perceived and learnt by people (Schwartz, DeKeseredy, Tait, & Alvi, 2001). Diana Russell (expert in sexual violence) expresses that in actualization, rape is not a deviant act rather it conforms to the qualities appropriated for masculinity (Russell, 1985). Russell further elaborates that since the very childhood, boy are taught to be aggressive, forceful, tough, and dominating, which is named as the ‘virility mystique’, the belief that the feelings of love, respect and affection must be dissociated from sexual feelings (Russell, 1985). In addition, men love to express and exhibit their masculine traits, which in some instances is threatened by sexually aggressive women that lead to infliction of forced-sex and violence for reinforcement of men’s masculinity (Russell & Bolen, 2000). Instead of being more and most masculine, the context and concept of sociological perspective is denied by the empirical data to confound that socialization is not responsible for becoming a rapist, such as

“… yes, we are taught to be harsh, hard, rough, and tough, aggressive, and retaliative, but we are never taught to be disgraceful to women. We can never imagine molesting women. Rape is an obnoxious word (spera lafz dai), I should
emphasize not to use it, because it doesn’t make any sense. How can a man be so cheap and coward to molest women, considering that she is either inferior or weaker”.

Conclusively, the literary information comprising of different perspectives and elaborations of experts in the field of feminism and studies of pertaining to rape; solemnly confess the existence of rape as a global concern. Rape has been in practice since very long and has prevalence almost in all kinds of structures. The theoretical perspectives and social researchers have validated their information through solid evidence, which are serving as fundamental knowledge for further research in rape and sexual assault. Contrary to the mentioned notions, the current research study has found-out contradicting facts. The Pakhtun culture and society comprises of a discrepant social structure always dominated by men (Khan, 2009; Khattak, Mohammad, & Lee, 2009; Barth, 1959). In such a patriarchic and male dominant structure, almost all kinds of violence can be easily found where the absence of sexual assault and violence is noteworthy.

Considering the primary data, the existence of rape and practice of sexual assault has been ultimately regretted by all the respondents. In addition, inclination towards women’s disrespect in terms of sexual exploitation is always abhorred and the culprits are extensively stigmatized. The dominant values of Pakhtun culture also comprise of proverbs addressing hatred towards the rapists that is positively and strongly supported by the religious (Islamic) values. Both the cultural and religious values emphasize that the committers of sexual violence especially rape should be harshly dealt in terms of infliction of painful and strict punishment. The famous proverb in Pakhto i.e., Pakhtun ya pa khaza mry aw ya pa zmaka (a Pakhtun embraces death or kills others (ecstatically) in matters pertaining to women’s chastity and land (property)); while in Islam, the punishment for a rapist is stoning to death, which explicitly reveals the sense of disliking towards rape. In this context, Sonpar & Kapur (2001) reflect that women are sexually exclusive, and their modesty are considered as cultural dignity and especially men’s honor in society. Furthermore, few of the respondents strongly emphasized over the issue of sexual assault and rape being the most rarely or missing phenomenon among Pakhtuns in the following manner (when asked about the prevalence of rape, inclination of men towards rape and the cases where they have been the committers, observers and/or if they have heard about it):

“No and never. I have never ever observed any case of sexual inclination or sexual attempt among Pakhtuns in my life. The reason may be that the Pakhtun women usually used to be inside home and rarely move out of home. Even if they are moving outside, they are accompanied by a male member. Our women never dare to move out of home alone and without permission and company of a male members. If the circumstances are worsened and there is no male a home, at least a little boy or girl must accompany; she will die at home but will not move out alone” (2M03-46RL).

“No sir, Pakhtuns are extremely honorable people, who take care of own respect as well as others’ honor. Furthermore, women’s honor is the most precious among all,
and Pakhtun never compromise on it. On the contrary, Pakhtuns are the protectors of women’s honor even of enemy’s honor, in which women’s honor is at risk” (3A01-34RL).

“No, obviously not practiced. In my life, I have never heard that such act has been practiced in our community. It is the most contemptuous act among Pakhtuns. Pakhtun respect women and desire that their women must be respected. So, when you consider that your women must be respected; in response, you must respect the others’ as well” (4M03-41RL).

Conclusion

Rape is a universally prevalent phenomenon often dealt and explained as a social monster. The literary information palpably exhibits and endorse the fact that rape exists almost in every society, everywhere and women are most likely fearful of rape. Criminological scholarships believe that every woman in her lifetime has experience of rape, attempted rape, molestation, harassment, or being witness of any of these actions. On the contrary, the empirical data denies rape in its all forms, either that is practiced in the wake of physical power and dominance (evolutionary perspective), or socialization and learning (sociological approach), or being attracted to beauty of women (symbolic interactionism) or feminist perspective of men’s filthy and offensive nature and nurture towards women. The data in this research is taken from convicted prisoners of assault and murder who qualify almost all the attributes mentioned in literary debate which signify the committing of rape, but still they were unanimously regretting and abhorring rape as a social reality. Neither their (Pakhtuns’) physical prowess, nor their socialization allow them to be sexually offensive towards women. The contemporary literature exhibit Pakhtun as one of the harshest, violent, and insane race or tribe on the earth, which to an extent is true and can be witnessed from the history, but the history is also witness that the incidents of rape are scarcely reported and found among them. After a thorough investigation, the study finds that the parameters in “Masculine Hypothesis” by Talcott Parsons, like greater delinquency of boys when compared to girls and violent and aggressive nature result in more criminal instincts are valid but found invalid and unauthentic and thus rejected in commission of rape among Pakhtuns. As social phenomena are always open for research, so there is room for further research to find out such extent in other patterns of the Pakhtun society especially from women’s perspective.

References


