

## BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

**Javaid, Aliraza.** *Male Rape, Masculinities, and Sexualities: Understanding, Policing, and Overcoming Male Sexual Victimization.* Cham: Palgrave Hate Studies, 2018, pp. 292, \$129.00 hardcover/softcover, (9783319526386).

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**R**esearch on rape and sexual victimization has predominately centred on female victims at the hands of male perpetrators. Aliraza Javaid situates himself within the limited, but growing, body of research that examines the male experience of sexual victimization, providing well-grounded and refreshing insight on the issue of male rape. Javaid notes two specific gaps within the male rape literature. First, more broadly, Javaid emphasizes much research lacks intersectional and reflexive theory, especially in relation to gender and sexualities. Javaid also highlights that previous work has failed to adequately assess the ideology and practice of state and voluntary agencies (e.g., sexual assault centres) in responding to male victims. It is here Javaid aims to position himself.

In *Male Rape, Masculinities, and Sexualities: Understanding, Policing, and Overcoming Male Sexual Victimization*, Javaid explores how conceptions of male rape, masculinities, and sexualities permeate into state and voluntary agencies' attitudes, discourse, culture, and responses to male rape victims. Empowered by Connell's multiple masculinities theory (and Messerschmidt's contributions), as well as heteronormativity, Javaid critically analyzes hegemonic and subordinate masculinities and (non-)heteronormative sexualities as they intersect with male rape and organizational bodies. Using semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires with the police (as the only state agency) and the voluntary sector (e.g., male rape counsellors or voluntary agency caseworkers) in England, Javaid makes three considerable contributions to the literature, which this review will centre on.

First, Javaid demonstrates how male-on-male rape victims are often stripped of their hegemonic masculinity (if they previously embodied it) by the police and voluntary agencies, instead displaced into non-hegemonic forms of masculinities as they threaten the current gender structure. Male rape victims are commonly positioned within subordinate masculinities, as "male rape *legitimizes* an unequal *relationship* between men by constructing the perpetrator as masculine and the

victims as feminine and subordinate” (156). Javaid illustrates how the police and voluntary agencies manifest and reproduce hegemonic and heteronormative assumptions of masculinities and sexualities which subordinate male rape victims, especially homosexual victims, to the rest of the male gender. A novel contribution, Javaid elucidates how these hegemonic and heteronormative ideologies are constructed by male rape myths, such as real men can defend themselves or only gay men can be raped, which in and of themselves are shaped by hegemonic and heteronormative dogma. For example, some police and voluntary agency personnel mirrored the gendered acceptability and expectation of male promiscuity, calling into question the legitimacy behind male victims raped by the gender that aligns with their sexual orientation. The result is a system of hegemony and heteronormativity that filters into police culture and police and voluntary agencies’ beliefs of and responses to male victims. Correspondingly, this system affects the perceived willingness of male victims to seek help or justice from these organizational bodies and increases the likelihood of secondary victimization from these agencies.

Arguably because of this limited and harmful hegemonic and heteronormative view of gender and sexuality, Javaid demonstrates a clear lack of readiness, capacity, and training in police and voluntary agencies to adequately respond to male rape victims. Interestingly, most police and voluntary workers are aware of the debilitating support state and voluntary agencies provide male rape victims; for example, one male rape counsellor stated that “it would be helpful if the victims didn’t seek any help at all” (179). There is also a lack of understanding within these organizations regarding whose *duty* it is to support male rape victims. The police argue they are not service providers and similarly, voluntary agencies, which generally have more knowledge than the police about male victimization, also do not consider themselves well-suited to support male victims. This miscommunication further increases the likelihood of secondary victimization.

Lastly, through the intersections of masculinities and sexualities, Javaid argues that notions of male-on-male rape can also be explained through a struggle for hegemonic power and control, much the same as in male-on-female rape. This is a particularly interesting and important insight, as research on male victimization has loosely analyzed the role of power and control in male rape. Yet, Javaid exclusively evaluates male-on-male rape, forgoing female perpetrated rape (although it is briefly recognized throughout the book). The reasoning behind this exclusion is unclear. As Javaid interviewed police and voluntary agencies about the concept of male rape, not male victims about their

experiences, it is peculiar to limit analysis to only one gender, especially given his emphasis on the intersections between gender and sexuality. This omission of female violence may stem from England's gendered rape laws that renounce female-perpetrated rape; still, however, the issue of female perpetrators was a salient theme within Javaid's data, where most respondents contested the rape myth that women cannot rape men (voluntary agency workers more so than police). The exclusion of female violence in the examination may further perpetuate the hegemonic and heteronormative rhetoric prominent within the male victimization discourse.

While the intersections of masculinities and sexualities are well presented, in stressing the importance of intersectionality within the male experience of victimization, it is curious as to why race/ethnicity was excluded from evaluation. Javaid spends considerable time emphasizing the importance of such a variable, specifically noting how his Muslim identity intersected with his sexuality and gender within his own rape experiences. An evaluation of his use of multiple masculinities further complicates this issue. Particularly, while he stresses the use of Connell's multiple masculinities, he only specifically assesses hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. This is problematic as he alludes to marginalized masculinities throughout his chapter/section summaries (e.g., that service providers place male rape victims within subordinate *or* marginalized masculinities), but he never actually analyzes the *embodiment* of marginalized masculinities like he does hegemonic or subordinate masculinities. That is, evidence for the displacement of male rape victims into marginalized masculinities is never fully presented. As Javaid did not assess race/ethnicity, a variable commonly linked with marginalized masculinities (Connell 1995/2005), evidence for this masculinity may not have arisen; its inclusion within his summaries reads as an afterthought. As such, discounting race/ethnicity may have missed important nuances, especially as it relates to marginalized masculinities.

In *Male Rape, Masculinities, and Sexualities*, Javaid provides a notable intersectional analysis of state and voluntary agencies' understandings, discourse, and responses to male rape victims. Specifically, he analyzes the intersections between sexualities and masculinities, demonstrating that hegemonic and heteronormative assumptions guide state and voluntary culture, attitudes, and subsequently, their standard of care regarding male victims. Problematically, state and voluntary organizations are ill-equipped in responding to male rape victims, where personnel are undertrained, reinforce harmful rape myths, and organizational members are unclear about their relative duties to victims. The result is the reproduction of hegemonic and heteronormative beliefs

and practices which revictimize male rape victims and contribute to the under-reporting of male rape. A noteworthy contribution, Javaid also demonstrates the struggle for hegemonic power and control within male-on-male rape. Yet, in stressing the importance of intersectionality and multiple masculinities, it is confusing as to why female-perpetrated violence, ethnicity/race, and marginalized masculinities are not more concretely analyzed within his book.

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## REFERENCES

Connell, R.W. 1995/2005. *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

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