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# Sexual Misconduct, Religion, And Culture

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## **Sexual Misconduct, Religion, And Culture**

No boy was born to disrespect, objectify, or mistreat women. Sexist behavior is generally a taught and learned behavior. We know who is learning the behavior. However, who is teaching it?

### **Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, Charlie Rose**

We have recently been seeing an increase in powerful males being exposed and taken down in public due to various forms of sexual misconduct. The fact that some men in power are paying for the horrific things they have done to countless women is a development that we can welcome. However, for every Harvey Weinstein, Bill Cosby, or Charlie Rose that we expose, there are countless women who have been violated; countless new Harvey Weinsteins are emerging, and countless more women are being violated as we speak.

If we want to put an end to misogyny in the long-term, we need to examine what led to its wide-spread status in the first place.

### **Mistreatment Of Women, A Recent History**

Much of the conduct we consider unacceptable today was not recognized as a problem until recently. For example, marital rape was not even a concept, given that it was a woman's duty to serve her husband by making her body available to him at all times. Subsequently, many U.S. states had marital rape exemptions in their books until recently. The Violence Against Women Act was only passed in 1994 and was left to expire during the recent government shutdown.

In other (advanced) countries such as Germany, raping one's wife became [punishable under the law in 1997](#). Similarly, until the end of the 70s, it was the legal duty of married women in Germany to "run the household." Women could only work outside of the home if they had the permission of their husbands. Women could not open a bank account without the input of a male until 1962 in Germany.

### **Agriculture, Hoarding, And Sexual Control**

Let us now discuss how women ended up being the primary targets of sexual oppression.

The main purpose of sexuality is reproducing, release of tension, and pleasure. Let us repeat release of tension and pleasure here. Sexuality can also function to exert power over another being; an aspect of sexuality that, by the way, humans did not "invent," but took to extremes, like no other animal on the planet.

Civilization is the reflection of a constant effort to increase reproduction while suppressing pleasure. This is because civilized societies are artificial systems that are governed by rulers. They are militarized and operate through production, consumption, exchange of goods and services, and the transfer of wealth. Unlike reproduction, pleasure and release of tension do little to benefit the rulers (unless they are involved in the process themselves, of course). The higher the number of births, the better for the rulers because of the increased opportunities for economic and military exchange. Naturally, there are [exceptions to this rule](#). However, such exceptions, too, are generally driven by the interests of the rulers.

Efforts to control sexuality by targeting women started early, long before Christ. Records show that sexual oppression and differential treatment of women had set foot before the first civilization known to wo/mankind, in Mesopotamia. However, the emergence of the male-dominated, monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—substantially strengthened the patriarchy.

The initial targeting of women, however, started with the introduction of agriculture. After the hunter and gatherer societies, humans began to hoard, which led to the accumulation of wealth. In order to control the distribution of wealth, it became critical to identify the father of an offspring. The most viable way to do this was to control women because one could accurately identify the mother of a newborn. Therefore, efforts were made to limit the number of partners with whom a female could have sexual intercourse. From there, history took its course. The result is a highly oppressive system that became more and more exploitative and sophisticated over time.

## **Sexism And Science**

Oppressive systems require constant attention to survive. Narratives that de-humanize and objectify arbitrary targets help minimize the amount of interference needed to keep the system going. Scientists and other highly regarded intellectuals generally deliver the much-needed narratives to justify the status-quo, as in the case of sexism. However, sexism isn't the only construct to which scientists made major contributions. Scientists have also [made major contributions to racism](#). They claimed that human beings can be divided into different races and that some races are inferior to the others. To-date, they also claim to have discovered biological differences between men and women, particularly, as it pertains to their brains. What they don't tell us is, first of all, where they are finding the non-conditioned boys and girls on which to conduct their studies. Secondly, biological study of differences between men and women is based on flawed premises that there are two clearly distinguishable sexes and that each group has somewhat identical biological sex-traits because, otherwise, they cannot be studied the way scientists claim to study them. However, today, we know that that biological sex is somewhat fluid and even if a person fits into one biological category, their levels of female/male hormones can differ. Additionally, there are persons who cannot be assigned to either category altogether, e.g. because they have a combination of biological sex traits.

However, let us give the scientists the benefit of the doubt and assume that the [differences they claim are true](#). What exactly would that change in the way we would treat an *individual* boy, girl, or anyone who does not fit into the two categories? Let us hope that the answer is: "nothing."

### **Sexual Misconduct And Religion**

Throughout centuries, the clergy has played a major role in keeping the population in line, most importantly by aiding to demonize and suppress sexuality. The Catholic Church is one of the most prominent examples for this, but certainly not the only one.

After 9/11, it has become popular to cut Islam some slack when it comes to women and the Koran. Due to the anti-Muslim sentiments that emerged in the free world since 9/11, everyone seemed so keen to hear how progressive Islam is, among others, to counteract the increase in racist narratives that emerged as a result of the attacks. Only, interpreting Islam in a progressive manner exclusively and claiming that there is one true way to interpret Islam or any other religion, is hardly an acceptable way

to correct racist backlashes, because the truth remains that there is no “right” way to interpret *any* religion.

Nobody is qualified to tell others how to exclusively interpret the “word” of any God, but we are able to objectively claim that Islam is a male-dominated monotheistic religion. However, all three monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—have the same root and tend to encourage oppression of women.

Religion is a personal matter. Everyone has the right to believe in whatever they please or interpret a religion the way they see fit, with the only limitation being that one's freedom (of religion) stops as soon as it interferes with someone else's freedom.

### **Sexism And Men**

Even though males historically ended up in more powerful positions, sexism affects males negatively too. After all, the purpose of sexism is to control society as a whole, not just women. Its goal is to provide a blueprint by which everyone has to live by, to limit individuals' choices and freedoms. Like women, males have little say in what roles they get assigned: the role of the provider, warrior, the one who does not show emotions, spreads his semen, mistreats women, and the long list goes on.

Sexist narratives teach us what a stereotypical man, woman, and anyone who does not fit into the two categories, is allegedly worth, and when, what we should look like, what we should do with our bodies, who we can share it with, and how we share it.

### **MeToo Movement**

[Regardless of contrary claims](#), public shaming and the MeToo movement have contributed tremendously to creating an environment that discourages sexual misconduct. In the future, predators are at least going to think twice before preying on women (and men). The year 2018 will go into history as a key year for women's liberation from sexual exploitation. However, we are going to need many more 2018s before the sickness called sexism is driven out of our hearts and minds, from our homes, workplaces, mosques, churches, and synagogues, schools, and kindergartens.