RESEARCH ARTICLE

(Re)Mapping the Grey Area: How Sexual Violence is Normalized in Discussions with University Students

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Abstract

Despite efforts by feminists to educate people about healthy sexual interactions and to promote the benefits of affirmative consent, a heterogendered imbalance in sexual intimacy persists. Much of the societal and research attention has focused on clear cases of nonconsensual sex, but a wider lens that incorporates social pressures and coercion is needed. (Mostly) cis-men continue to pressure and coerce their partners (mostly people who identify as women) to acquiesce to sexual intimacy. Our heteropatriarchal culture continues to perpetuate the belief that men are *owed* sex from women in many situations. Feminist scholars have argued that, instead of a stark line between consensual and nonconsensual sex, there is a continuum or spectrum ranging from sexual consent to sexual assault, creating a large "grey area" in which partners must navigate sexual intimacy. This grey area is not gender neutral. Gendered structure, culture, discourse, and practices help to normalize heterogendered dominance in everyday life, undermining women's sexual agency while also mobilizing rape. Drawing on interviews with university students (N=45) who have navigated this spectrum, we seek to map the grey area, exploring how consent is often hijacked through relentless pressure and coercion. When pressure and coercion are encoded into the gendered order as entitlements granted to men, the line between sexual assault and agentic, "consensual" sex becomes less and less discernible. We conclude that, in order to foster sexual autonomy, gendered power dynamics must be disentangled from sexual intimacy.

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Introduction

Two decades into the 21st Century, the conceptualization, legislation, and practice of sexual consent on college campuses remains contested (Metz, 2021), shaped by larger social trends. For example, the #MeToo movement, launched in 2006 by sexual assault survivor Tarana Burke, has helped catalyze, deepen, and hone feminist interrogations of consent, sexual autonomy, and gendered power (Cherniavsky, 2019). Sexual "hook-ups" between casual acquaintances are increasingly common (Anders, et al 2019; Allison & Risman, 2014), as is the proliferation of dating apps used to find sexual partners (Hanson, 2021). Many colleges and universities have adopted ostensibly sex-positive affirmative consent policies aimed at reducing sexual assault, while also emphasizing mutual pleasure and communication (Kulbaga & Spencer, 2019). On the surface, the synchronicity of these social trends could indicate that U.S. college students are enjoying a new era of sexual liberation for all. Unfortunately, the data on sexual assault tell a different story. Nonconsensual sexual practices remain common (Barroso 2020). (Mostly) cis-men continue to pressure and coerce their partners (mostly people who selfidentify as women, including cis- and trans-women) to acquiesce to sexual intimacy (Jeffrey & Barata, 2017; Jones & Gulick, 2009). College students report challenges in balancing sexual pressure, ambiguous consent practices (both verbal and nonverbal), and their own sexual gratification (Goodcase, et al 2019). Popular conceptualizations of sexual assault are still largely informed by rape myths, which erroneously purport that all sexual assault is perpetrated by strangers through violent surprise attacks (Ryan, 2011). As such, it is challenging for many people to recognize and problematize the range of behaviors that constitute coercive, nonconsensual sex. Rather than a stark line between consensual and nonconsensual sex, there is a continuum ranging from sexual consent to sexual assault, creating what Gavey (2005) and Cahill (2014) call a "grey area" in which partners must navigate sexual intimacy. In this paper, we argue that, in order to understand the limitations of affirmative consent as it is typically defined within university policies and to prevent sexual assult, we must examine the power dynamics occurring in the "grey area." Specifically, we analyze 45 college students' accounts of their negotiations of sexual intimacy, situating them within larger structures of gender and heteronormativity, or "heterogender" (Ingraham, 1994). We find that, when pressure and coercion were encoded into the gendered order as entitlements granted to men, the line between sexual assault and agentic, "consensual" sex became less and less discernible. Most of our subjects' negotiations of sexual consent were ambiguous and potentially problematic, helping to normalize sexual assault. We conclude that the grey area may be larger and more pervasive than previously theorized. In order to foster a culture that promotes and normalizes sexual autonomy, gendered power dynamics must be disentangled from sexual intimacy. We recognize that achieving this ideal may not be possible given the persistence of the heterogendered power structure in the U.S.

Sexual Consent

Affirmative consent policies and laws have developed from feminist critiques of gender imbalances in sexual intimacy and assertions that one person's desires need not be subjugated to another's (Fjær et al. 2015). Feminist movement has highlighted women's ability to participate in and enjoy casual sex (Dyhouse, 2013). Although it has only recently gained traction, the concept of affirmative consent is not new. In the 1990's, a group of women at Antioch College in Ohio, successfully lobbied for an affirmative consent policy, adopted in 1991. Since then, the concept of affirmative consent has gained popularity across the US. Affirmative consent policies aim to prevent sexual assault from happening by improving communication and respect for bodily autonomy and personal boundaries of people of all genders. Rather than relying on outdated oppressor/victim frameworks, affirmative consent arguments focus on sexual empowerment and women's "bad ass-ness" grounded in "girl power" (Dyhouse, 2013). Instead of shaming women or creating the illusion that women are not actively engaged in sex, affirmative consent intentionally emphasizes all participants' enthusiasm for and active role in sexual encounters, no matter their gender. Affirmative consent necessitates that women also have an active and eager role in their own sexual experiences.

Most affirmative consent policies adopted by universities are similar to one another. For example, the home university of co-author, Patricia, Northern Illinois University, defines affirmative consent in great depth in their annual Clery report. Here is the first part of that definition:

> Clear, unambiguous, informed, voluntary and freely given agreement between all participants to knowingly engage in sexual activity. Consent must demonstrate that all individuals understand, are aware of and agree to the "who" (same partners), "what" (same acts), "where" (same location), "when" (same time), and "how" (the same way and under the same conditions) of the sexual activity
>
> (https://www.niu.edu/clery/annual_security_report.pdf).

This university goes on to specify that consent must be mutually understandable and sober, that no force can be used, and that consent can be withdrawn at any time. This definition of affirmative consent is typical (Novack, 2017)— all definitions of affirmative consent emphasize enthusiastic, coherent and informed "yeses," which can be revoked at any time. Importantly, this means that people can consent to one form of intimacy and deny consent to another within the same sexual encounter.

Affirmative consent may be the most popularized progressive sexual assault intervention at the moment, but it is by no means a panacea for sexual violence. Students at universities with affirmative consent policies can define it, but they reportedly find it too ambiguous to practice effectively (Metz, et al. 2021; Curtis & Burnett, 2017). Feminists remain concerned that women will continue to be victimized and exploited even when employing affirmative consent practices, due to entrenched sexism in society (Metz, et al. 2021; Halley, 2016; Novack, 2017). As Foucault (1990) said, "We must not think that by saying yes to sex one says no to power" (pg. 157; See also Angel, 2021). Thus, despite feminist progress, consent negotiations remain intricately tied to power—specifically who has the power to assert their control in and through sexual intimacy (Metz, et al. 2021; Fischel, 2019). For the purposes of our analysis, we build on the current definitions of affirmative consent, defining it as freely given, enthusiastic, informed, and subject to change. We explore the ways that negotiations of affirmative consent are affected by the larger social context of unequal gendered and heteronormative dynamics (Fischel, 2019).

Heterogendered Power

As many scholars have effectively argued, gender is heteronormative (Myers & Raymond, 2010; Pringle 2008; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009), and presumptions of heterosexuality are baked into gendered expectations, rules, and performances, therefore taken for granted in the very definition of gender itself. In pointing this out, Ingraham (1994) suggests we use the term, "heterogender" rather than "gender" to more accurately capture these intersecting structures and practices.

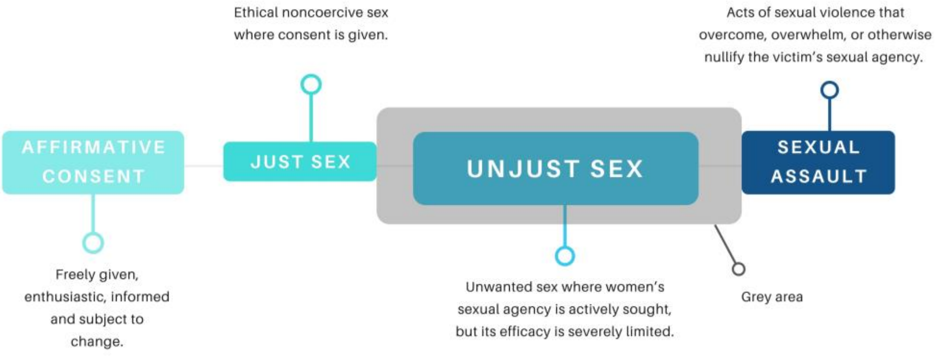
Sexual intimacy is often shaped by entrenched heterogendered power dynamics, emphasizing men's sexual desires and pleasures over women's (Cahill, 2014). Within heterosexual relationships (whether they last less than an hour or years), women report feeling obligated to have sex with men, regardless of their own wants and desires, which are often ignored by their male partners (Gavey, 2005; Cahill, 2014). Attempts to disrupt and undermine heterogendered power dynamics in intimate relationships have been ongoing for decades (Fischel 2019). Contemporary conversations around affirmative consent (Dyhouse, 2013; Fjær et al. 2015) are only one of the most recent iterations of feminist work to decouple unequal heterogendered structures from sexual intimacy, with the aim of ending sexual violence and increasing women's sexual autonomy and agency. This work is ongoing and fraught.

The Grey Area

In *Just Sex*?, Nicola Gavey (2005) grappled with how and when to define unwanted sex as "just sex"—a play on words, capturing both the ethical sense of the word as well as the sense of something unremarkable ("It's just sex")—and when to define it as sexual assault. Gavey argues that there is a grey area between just sex and sexual violence in which "unjust" sex takes place, as we illustrate in Diagram 1. Unjust sex includes cases where women have unwanted, ambivalent sex, but it does not rise to the level of sexual violence or assault. Gavey argues that we cannot define or measure a clear line between ethical sex and sexual assault. She refers to a heteronormative cultural scaffolding that supports the grey area, blurring and legitimizing sexual pressure and coercion in everyday life.

DIAGRAM 1: MAPPING THE GREY AREA

Illustration of the Spectrum of Sexual Assault
[Based on Gavey (2005) and Cahill (2014)]


Ethical noncoercive sex where consent is given.
Acts of sexual violence that overcome, overwhelm, or otherwise nullify the victim's sexual agency.
AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT
JUST SEX
UNJUST SEX
SEXUAL ASSAULT
Freely given, enthusiastic, informed and subject to change.
Unwanted sex where women's sexual agency is actively sought, but its efficacy is severely limited.
Grey area

Building upon Gavey, Ann Cahill (2014), explains that the unjust sex includes cases where having unwanted sex is the least bad option in the face of pressure. Women describe these incidents as normal and unremarkable, “as common features of the heterosexual landscape, experiences that most heterosexual women have had, sometimes frequently” (5). Unjust sex is enabled, complicated, and exacerbated by contemporary heterogendered patriarchal structures in society. Cahill (2014) works to flesh out what constitutes unjust sex vs sexual assault. She argues that sexual violence is difficult to categorize and measure because it is “an intersubjective, embodied, lived, social, and political phenomenon” (6). Cahill says that unjust sex is characterized by ambiguity and ambivalence. She says that, although there is no distinct line between unjust sex and sexual assault, sexual agency is the lynchpin in determining which is which:

> [Unjust sex occurs when] women's sexual agency is actively sought, but its efficacy is severely limited in a variety of ways… In contrast, acts of sexual violence serve not to use the consent of the target, but to overcome, overwhelm, or otherwise nullify the victim's sexual agency. It would be a mistake, however, to claim that the sexual agency of the victim is rendered meaningless by this overcoming; instead, that very overcoming is a central element to the phenomenon of sexual violence” (12).

Cahill argues that women's agency is often limited to responding to what men have offered. This is not true agency, which only can occur when women make their own offers on their own terms to their sexual partners. Cahill says that women's consent is often used against them, deployed in ways to legitimize men's sexual pressure and coercion. Cahill explains that a man can “hijack” a woman's agency in a sexual encounter, acknowledging her consent but redirecting or dismissing it in favor of his own interests or desires. For example, when a woman initially hesitates but eventually acquiesces, her agency has been hijacked. Theoretically, unjust sex and sexual assault can be differentiated by the nature of the woman's agency – limited versus nullified, respectively.

Both Gavey and Cahill grapple with the ways that unjust sex and sexual assault overlap conceptually, coming to somewhat different conclusions. In this paper, we apply this conceptual framework to our data, bringing the concept of affirmative consent into the spectrum, using it to understand subjects' accounts of navigating this grey area. We find that the overlap between unjust sex and sexual assault is even more pronounced perhaps due to the sociocultural context. Indeed, our data show that there is more overlap between just and unjust sex than theorized.

Mobilizing Rape

Similar to Gavey (2005), who conceptualized a cultural and structural scaffolding that contributes to unjust sex and sexual assault, Pascoe and Hollander (2016) conceptualize sexual violence not (only) as a specific, isolated act. They argue that sexual assault is an “interactional accomplishment,” achieved as a result of a “wide-ranging constellation of behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and talk that work to produce and reproduce gendered dominance in everyday interaction” (69). Accordingly, they claim that rape is mobilized through a variety of resources including doing gender appropriately (Fenstermaker and West 2002; West and Zimmerman 1987). When rape is mobilized effectively, many women may acquiesce to sex with men, even when they do not want to have sex (Muehlenhard et al. 2016). Although all people, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, may experience sexual pressure (Budge et al. 2015), gendered power imbalances in heterosexual relationships lead to the normalization of men's use of sexual coercion of women and other experiences resulting in unjust sex (Jeffrey & Barata 2017; Jones and Gulick ,2009; Cahill, 2014).

Sexual pressure and coercion begin early for young people, framing their introduction to sexual intimacy, regardless of sexual orientation, and they continue throughout many people's sexually active years (Morrison-Beedy & Grove 2018). Heterosexual intimacy is often shaped by heterogendered power dynamics that disregard whether or not a woman desires to have sex (Cahill, 2014). Within this context, women are believed to *owe* men sex for spending money, time, and other resources on them. They learn early that engaging in unwanted sex is a regular part of sexual intimacy (Hlavka, 2014). Hattery and Smith (2019) show that coercion specifically is intentional and strategic on the part of fraternity members in their study. By “riffing,” these men talked their way into a situation where they would be able to have sex with a woman. In “working a ‘yes’ out,” men worked to “seduce” women after they refused to have sex with them the first time, such as giving them something else to drink. Finally, men used "rape baiting"—or strategies to increase their probability of having sex, like specifically targeting first year students—to identify women with whom they could easily "work out a yes." Although men reported using these strategies, they also defined the resultant sexual intimacy as consensual, because the women finally "gave in" (28). These men manipulated the definition of consent to prioritize and fulfill their own sexual gratification, deploying their heterogendered role as the initiator of sex to do so.

The sociocultural process of mobilizing rape helps to expand the grey area of ambiguous sex and to normalize unjust sex and sexual assault. In the studies described above, many of the girls and women reported a willingness to have sex with a partner, despite their lack of desire or "wantingness" (Muehlenhard et al. 2016), in order to accomplish specific goals such as creating intimacy, satisfying their partner, or preventing their partner from feeling upset/angry. In instances of unjust sex, such as when women have sex to prevent conflict, out of a sense of duty, or because they are obligated to, women's "wantingness" to engage is completely unaccounted for (Cahill 2014; Muehlenhard et al. 2016). Women's consent and ability to use sex to achieve their own needs in these situations may suggest sexual agency. However, when women feel as though they owe someone sex or must have sex for their own safety, their agency is severely limited and disregarded. This disregard is enabled by the systems of sexual inequality in heterosexual sex that are maintained and strengthened through the mobilization of rape.

Recent efforts to reduce sexual assault have centered around consent, but most of these efforts have failed to seriously interrogate or interrupt heterogendered power dynamics that undergird heterosexual intimacy. To understand and prevent sexual assault, we must research sex in the grey areas, analyzing the heterogendered power dynamics that undermine consent, normalize unjust sex, and mobilize rape. In this paper, we seek to better understand the practice of sexual consent in the context of a heterogendered power structure. We attempt to map the boundaries of the grey area, using Cahill's (2014) conceptualization of sexual agency to delineate between just sex, unjust sex, and sexual assault, exploring the degree to which these categories overlap and blur. This paper contributes to the literature by expanding our understanding of the ways that rape is mobilized and normalized in ostensibly consensual heterosexual sexual encounters with a particular focus on the experiences of American college students given their exposure to affirmative consent programs.

Research Methods

This project is part of a larger study designed to understand young adults' knowledge of changing definitions of consent, use of consent practices, and experiences with consensual and nonconsensual sex, including hook ups. To date, we have completed 45 face-to-face semi-structured interviews and eight focus group interviews with 23 subjects, and we received responses from 14 survey participants. The data for this paper come from the face-to-face interviews only. The sample size was larger than required for code saturation in qualitative analysis (Hennick, et al 2017), but we wanted to recruit as diverse a sample as possible. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to answer questions openly while also giving interviewers the ability to direct the flow of conversation (Hesse-Biber, 2011). This method was particularly useful in this project for the following reasons: First, face-to-face interviews allowed for students to give in-depth, highly detailed descriptions of their sexual encounters and their understandings of consent. Second, we were better able to understand the processes through which students developed their understanding of consent over time. Third, these in-depth interviews revealed experiences with nonconsensual sex and sexual violence that students possibly had not self-identified as such outside of the interview context.

The interview guide was 5 pages long, and questions focused on the following: participants' experiences with casual hookups (Bogle, 2008; Allison & Risman, 2014) [e.g., Can you tell me what hooking up is to you? Let's focus on your most recent hook-up; Can you describe the atmosphere? Was alcohol involved?]; understandings of consent [e.g., How would you define consent? What do you typically do to show that you are consenting to sexual activity? Have you ever had a sexual encounter where you or the other person did not give verbal consent?]; and understandings of and experiences with sexual assault [e.g., Since being in college, have you helped others who were dealing with their own experiences with sexual assault? Did the person consider reporting the incident to university authorities? How have you changed your daily routine after hearing about the event?]. The interview guide included numerous probes to encourage subjects to share details. Interviews were conducted from April 2018 to October 2018. Each lasted about an hour. Participants were offered $10 for their participation in the study. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed.

Sample and Research Context

Data were collected at a midsized (about 17,000 students) public university in the Midwest. College campuses are a particularly important location to explore issues of consent. Despite having to complete trainings that focus on sexual assault prevention and Title IX policies, campuses continue to be sites in which students are constantly surrounded by messages that condone or ignore sexual violence (Hattery & Smith, 2019). This combination creates conflicting messages about consent and sexual assault. Furthermore, studies find that at least one in five bachelor's degree-seeking women will experience sexual assault before graduating from a four-year university (Muehlenhard et al 2017). Although men are also sexually assaulted, the incidence is less frequent, and regardless of whom is targeted, cis-gendered men are usually the perpetrators (see Krebs et al. 2007). Many campaigns that are focused on sexual assault awareness and prevention (e.g., the No More Campaign and It's On Us Campaign) have specifically targeted universities as sites for focusing their efforts. The university where we collected data for this current study requires all students to complete a Title IX training course at the beginning of the fall semester. These trainings cover the university's new affirmative definition of consent, the definition of sexual assault, bystander awareness, safety practices, and resources on campus. We selected this site because participants had been exposed to (at least one) unifying message(s) about consent and affirmative consent policies. Thus, the focus on college students is justified; however, the nature of the sample should be considered along with the interpretation of the findings.

Subjects were recruited in various ways. Professors from Sociology, Psychology, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies departments advertised the study with their students in classes. We posted advertisements on social media platforms. We gave out flyers and small recruitment cards announcing the study and the contact email address for anyone interested in participating. Although attempts were made to diversify the potential participant pool, our own departmental affiliations very likely influenced the make-up of the final group. We are aware that students with a stronger social science background may have come into the interviews with a different perspective than might be found otherwise, and the findings should be interpreted in light of this.

After students emailed the researchers expressing interest in participating in the study, we sent them a follow-up email explaining that the interview would discuss consensual and nonconsensual sexual experiences. Potential participants were informed that we would also ask them about experiences with assault. Interviews were scheduled based on participants' availability. Interviews took place in private offices or meeting rooms on campus. At the start of the interview, participants were given a consent form that reiterated the research purpose and included crisis hotlines for those who felt any distress after completing the interview. We assured participants that interviews would be confidential. Each subject created their own pseudonym.

All researchers conducted interviews over the course of the study, but no one interviewed a subject with whom she had a personal or professional relationship. For the larger study, we interviewed a diverse group of students: 27 identified as women (one a trans woman) and 18 identified as men (all cis-men). They had different majors and academic backgrounds. Most participants (N=39) were undergraduate students. Three were graduate students, and three had recently graduated. The overall sample was diverse along several other dimensions, as well. The average age of participants was 23.8, ranging from 18 to 47 years old. Racially, 22 subjects identified as white, nine were Latinx/ Hispanic, seven were Black, four identified as bi-racial, and three participants were Asian-American. Rather than asking participants to categorize their sexuality, which may be fluid, we collected data on the reported gender of their sexual partners (Manning et al. 2014). Three women discussed having sex with both men and women, 22 women reported having sex with only men, and one woman reported only having sex with women. Among the men, 14 reported having sex with only women, three reported having sex with only men, and two participants only used gender-neutral pronouns to describe their partners.

Analysis

For this paper, we used an iterative, grounded theory method of analysis (Corbin & Strauss 1990; Charmaz, 1996), creating "analytic codes and categories developed from data, not from preconceived hypothesis" (Charmaz, 1996:28). We began by identifying a list of broad but relevant codes/themes from within the interview guide, and transcriptions were coded using NVivo software. Several important codes emerged in this open coding phase: coercion, reason for use of consent, misconceptions about consent/ sexual assault, feelings of safety. Next, we began axial coding, in which "categories are related to their subcategories, and the relationships tested against data" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990:13). The use of axial coding was particularly helpful for establishing relationships and patterns within each of the codes and allowed for deeper investigation of the conditions in which the patterns arose. In this stage of the research, several patterns emerged. For this paper, we focus on only one major pattern: participants' descriptions and explanations of ambiguous consent in sexual intimacy. It is important to note that findings from qualitative data analyses, although empirically-grounded, are not generalizable. Nonetheless, findings can be used to help us derive deeper understanding of social processes related to gender and power in different contexts.

Ethical Considerations

Although many students reported that the interview helped them gain insight into their own beliefs about consent, others compared the interview to talking to a therapist. During the interviews themselves, we noticed a pattern of misinformation about sexual assault among students. Many reported events that involved sexual assault without recognizing that what they described was assault until they discussed it in the interview context. When this occurred, we deviated from the interview schedule to say things like, "We need to talk about that some more." We took time after the interview to review the university's definitions and policies on consent and sexual assault with the participants, and occasionally we referred subjects to counseling. As feminist interviewers (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2012), we believe that this step was crucial in practicing ethical research. Misinformation about sexual assault and confusion about resources on campus could potentially lead to further violence against students or prevent them from accessing resources that may be crucial for dealing with sexual violence. As such, our debriefing process involved an educational component.

Findings

In this study, we find that subjects navigated the grey area of sex in their intimate encounters of all kinds—during casual hook ups, at parties and in bars, on dates, and in committed relationships. The grey area blurred the distinction between just sex, unjust sex, and sexual assault for most subjects. Few subjects problematized either unjust sex or sexual assault. The mobilization of rape helped normalize unjust sex and sexual assault, and women worked within the heterogendered order to, as Cahill (2014) put it, find the least bad route through their untenable situations.

Deploying Consent

Subjects reported experiencing relentless sexual pressure regularly from cis-men in many different contexts. This pressure evidenced men's heterogendered sense of entitlement to sex, and their overt strategies to deploy women's consent in their own favor (Cahill 2014). For example, Dave (28, white, cis) described how he pressured women sexually during a hook up, relying on "body language" instead of verbal consent:

> I would slowly just, you know, a touch around her waist, her hair, and just from there, you know, kissing, making out. And from there usually I would just go for it. I wouldn't even ask her, and that was wrong of me. Like, in the past, I would just unbuckle slowly as I'm touching, unbuckle her pants and um, I wouldn't let up. And if she does not do anything as I'm unbuckling her pants, um, then for me, it goes back to that assumption. I'm assuming that she's saying, okay, even though she physically didn't tell me with her words, didn't tell me verbally. Like, "Hey, I want to stop." Honestly, the times where I've had girls tell me, "Hey, I don't want to do this," or "Hey, I want to take it slow," I would stop. But then I would continue again and see. Maybe she's just afraid. So I've stopped for a couple seconds, and this happened a couple of times for me. Where I stopped for a couple seconds or maybe a minute and was just like, "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you feel uncomfortable," because I personally don't like making someone feel uncomfortable. But I would go again assuming like, you know, she let me unbuckle her pants, maybe I can get further. And so that was my mindset and that was really wrong.

> But, um, that was my mindset. Like, okay, I'm going to continue. And I'm a very persistent person. I was always persistent. I was always, you know, making sure she's gonna hook up that night.

Although Dave problematized his own use of sexual pressure, he also acknowledged the benefits of relying on silence rather than affirmative consent. He knew that he was pressuring his partners. Later in the interview he went on to admit, "...there was times where I was forcing it in terms of the persistence." Similarly, Jason (24, white, cis) knowingly pressured women, deliberately avoiding asking women for consent. When Kristen asked Jason how he could tell if a woman was interested in sex, he said: "This is going to sound bad. I'm not really asking them to do something. I'm kind of telling them to do something… Most of the time it's not, it's not really up for too much debate." Jason said he "drives the conversation," ensuring the encounter goes his way. Like Dave, Jason was aware of his coercive approach to his own sexual gratification.

Several women subjects reported being pressured in this way. For example, Christiana (19, black, cis) said,

> He took his shirt off and he started kissing on me. And I wasn't enjoying it. I was like, "Okay." You know, "Stop. Get off me. No." You know, like, no. "No. No." And like he would stop, but you know, minutes later, he would still try again and again and again. And it's like, and I see him now at parties. He's a big predator. A lotta girls know him as that. Wish I would have known that, you know.

Christiana reported specifically saying "no," and being ignored. Even when faced with a clear verbal no, her aggressor, like Dave and Jason, kept on pressuring until he "worked out a yes" (Hattery & Smith 2019).

Dave's description of using "body language" to determine whether consent was given could be interpreted to fall in line with Cahill's description of "unjust sex" (12). Dave did not think about what actions he could take to make his partner feel more at ease, but he did not dismiss his partner's comfort entirely. He focused on what he needed to take to achieve his own pleasure without seeing himself as doing something he didn't like — making his partner "uncomfortable". Jason reported similar strategies, acknowledging the power dynamics that benefitted him. Christiana shared the ways in which this tactic of stopping and then trying again overcame and nullified her consent. Christiana's description of her experience seems to align with Cahill's description of sexual violence (12) even though these men use their heterogendered role as initiator to satisfy — or attempt to satisfy — their own sexual desires. These examples show the complexities of the sexual landscape, exemplifying how the overlap between the grey area and sexual assault are more dangerous than what it would seem. If men perceive consent is given when women acquiesce to pressure, men can disassociate their own behavior from sexual violence despite it being experienced as such. Many men described in this study apparently expected sexual gratification after investing time, money, and attention on a woman. Women subjects perceived that, if they turned men down, they would be shamed for denying men what they expected, what they were "owed." Maintaining sexual agency while navigating pressure from men was challenging for many women. For example, Maria (21, Asian, trans) explained the inherent pressures of flirting with men. She said that, after flirting, men felt entitled to sex. If a woman said no, then she would be "shamed." In our interview, Maria used this metaphor:

> Maria: It's almost like some kind of weird meter that fills up. Men are like, "I've gotten there. I get sex now, right?" Like, "I earned it." That's what the guy's thinking, and it's just so annoying, because it's like all of their little actions and all their little compliments and all their little talking and exchanging numbers is like mostly for the purpose of building towards that meter...And it eventually gets to a hundred. It's like, "Damn. I'm done. It's time." [laughter]. Right? "It's time."
>
> Interviewer: And then if you're like, "Nope. Thanks for the drink..."
>
> Maria: …Then it's like they lost their meter. It's like the points are gone.

Although Maria spoke about this dynamic in a light-hearted manner, she described how she navigated pressure from men, minimizing conflict and postponing what she saw as inevitable shaming for saying no:

> If I don't wanna have sexual relations with some guy, then I'll always be, like, uh, "Maybe." I'll be like kind of like stammering and then I'll eventually be like, "Maybe not now." Like, "Now's not the time." or something. It's always downplaying. And it's always

> sugar coating. Um which kind of leads them to believe like, "Oh, maybe they're interested in like an hour." Or like something silly like that. So it's almost, you know, a struggle to be assertive in my language and tell them no.

Maria used semantic maneuvers to continue to spend time with men—which she found enjoyable—without being forced into unwanted sex. Anna (20, white, cis) also described the importance of language in managing sexual pressure. She argued that women's use of vague language should be read by men as a "no" not a "yes:"

> If a woman's like, "Yeah, maybe, oh, yeah, sure." Wait! Just, like, wait. Don't keep pressuring her. Be like, "Oh, maybe some other time. We can just watch a movie or go get something to eat." Like, if she has to say "no" or like, "maybe," or "sure," more than once, then you're just harassing her.

Rape was mobilized through the routine sexual pressure put on women, regardless of whether women responded passively or with a firm "no." When the price of flirting was sex, women felt the need to strategize ways to keep men at a distance, especially if sex was not a shared goal.

Navigating the Grey Area

Women prepared themselves for persistent sexual pressure from men, strategizing for ways to navigate the grey area so as to avoid unwanted sex. Women shared information and strategized to protect each other when they went into spaces dominated by men. Many men and women subjects asserted that, simply by attending parties or using hook-up/dating apps such as Tinder, women had tacitly consented to unwanted, aggressive sexual behavior by men. For example, Samantha (23, white, cis) explained why she did not attend parties at fraternities:

> I hear about the butt grabbing. I hear about guys just starting to grind on girls that they don't even know. Like, the biting thing is apparently really common in some black fraternity, I guess. And the sorority girls are like, "Yeah, my mom even told me that's going to happen to me." And I was like, "Oh my god." Like because like their mom was in the sorority, or whatever.... This is a tradition. I was like, wow that's pretty shitty. [laughter]. "Oh, by the way, when you go to the party, just let the guy bite your ass." Who does that?

In her interview, Samantha explained that, should one attend a fraternity party, one did so knowing that she would be grabbed, grinded on, and possibly bitten by men. Thus, women who went to these parties had been forewarned and are therefore seen as "consenting" to unjust sex. However, it is highly questionable whether women being informed and still choosing to attend these parties would constitute as agency being "actively sought" (Cahill 2014: 12). This example illuminates more of the blurriness within the grey area and the struggle to map instances that occur within public domains where we cannot locate if or how agency and wantingness are accounted for.

Women employed a range of strategies to navigate the grey area. Some women learned self-defense to protect themselves from sexual assault. When going to parties or bars, women learned to avoid going out or drinking alone, to monitor each other's drinking, and to use the buddy system. As Anastasia (19, white, cis) explained:

> One thing that I really love about my sorority is that our girls look out for each other and also, for other girls. Like if a girl has had quite a few drinks and you know, it's very easy to tell when they're walking, you know, very slumped, they're holding a wall, and then talking very slurred, and they're trying to go home with a guy. You know, a good majority of our girls will stop that. They'll call the girl an Uber or will take them home personally. That sort of thing. So usually, you're tipsy or you're like getting to the point where you're drunk is when girls will hook up. Anything past that is not really [good]. A lot of girls will hook up sober. Just because they want to have casual sex.

Similarly, Maddie (18, white, cis) explained, "But like if we're at parties, we always, no girl is ever allowed to go by herself especially. And usually, two girls aren't allowed to go together, it's usually in a group, you know?"

Women in our study discussed looking out for both themselves and other women when attending parties because they expected men to pressure and coerce them into having sex with them. Women did not see this as particularly exceptional behavior or like they were defending or protecting their friends. Rather, these experiences were a normal part of socializing with men. Many women in our study were highly aware of men's normalization of sexual aggressiveness at parties and bars. Like Samantha's friend, when going to parties these women understood that men might perceive their presence as "consent" to any and all sexual advances, although we still must question whether this knowledge could really be considered "actively sought" (Cahill, 2014:12).

Despite this persistent threat, women in our study did not think of themselves as "victims." Nor did they simply "allow" men to grope or assault them. Rather, preparing for routine sexual aggression was understood to be a normal part of doing gender, one that women must prepare for and manage. Although the incidents described here were not consensual, women understood them as unavoidable consequences of being a woman in a patriarchal society, in which men are cast as sexual aggressors entitled to sex, and women are cast as passive and compliant (Hlavka, 2014). In order to live their lives, enjoy parties, and take part in public life, women in our study strategized how to avoid sexual assault in male-dominated spaces. Furthermore, participants' vigilance around sexual assault normalized experiences with unjust sex.

Unjust Sex

As the literature shows, women often consent to and engage in unwanted sex because they feel that it is an obligatory part of an intimate relationship (Cahill 2014; Jeffrey and Barata 2017). Subjects in our study often acquiesced to unjust or unwanted sex when management strategies failed or when the heterogendered demands of the situation were too great to overcome. Some discussed the tension between willingness and wantingness (Muehlenhard et al. 2016). Subjects in our study often acquiesced to unjust or unwanted sex when management strategies failed or when the heterogendered demands of the situation were too great to overcome. For example, Mary (19, Latinx, cis) described her friend, Kara, who frequently had unwanted sex:

> Kara wants more than just sex, so maybe every time she goes over there she is not like "Oh, I wanna have sex right now" but that's what ends up happening. So, I don't think that… it is [nonconsensual], because that's not what she wants. But I feel weird because she's letting them do it. You know? Like I feel like, if you don't want it, say you don't want it. Like it doesn't have to happen and you know… but like with her it's such a fuzzy area because I'm like, "just say 'no.'" [Having sex] is not something she wants to do, but she will.

Mary explained that Kara was *willing* to have sex with men, despite not always *wanting* to do so. However, Mary struggled to identify whether this is consensual because Kara was starting a new relationship and did not want to offend the man. As Kara learned, the men she hooked up with were not looking for a relationship. These uneven power dynamics ironically help to rationalize having unwanted sex.

Participants described numerous incidents where women had sex in order to please their partners. This included women consenting to unwanted sex and specific unwanted sexual acts within consensual sex. For example, Erica (23, Asian, cis) explained:

> I try to, you know, go with things. I don't think I've ever really been like, like verbally said something was uncomfortable or stopped him or anything like that. Like even if it is uncomfortable. I've done things that are uncomfortable for me just to try to please the other person before, too, I guess.

Erica felt that it was very important to please her partner during sex, even if it meant she was uncomfortable with what is happening. While she might not have enjoyed— or even wanted — those experiences, she said that she consented to them because they brought her partner joy or sexual pleasure. Similarly, Steven (21, white, cis) recalled his most recent girlfriend doing this. He said:

> She pretended she was enjoying it quite a bit. I think she, you know, she was just trying to make me happy. Then we got in a fight or something and she kind of admitted she'd been lying the whole time. She said it just didn't feel like anything… Um I still don't understand it. So it was kind of—sex became the thing that she would do to make me happy, and I wasn't entirely comfortable with that, 'cause that wasn't the kind of uh like sexual relationship I wanted.

Steven did not need to coerce his girlfriend or directly pressure her into sex; in fact, he was uninterested in this type of sexual relationship. Steven's girlfriend did not only participate in unwanted sex but pretended she was enjoying it in order to make him happy and fulfill his needs, even if it did not fulfill her own. Despite both of these participants discussing unwanted sex, these experiences are described as being completely consensual—possibly even in ways that come off as enthusiastic.

The mobilization of rape undermines women's sexual agency by strengthening underlying heterogendered power dynamics. Femininity is still very much linked to people pleasing and nurturing the needs of men (Jeffrey & Barata, 2017). This is particularly true for women in relationships. For example, Ken (30, white, cis) explained:

> There have been situations with like my ex-wife where we've been in this conversation, and it's kind of like…um, "well, let's just do this 'cause you're my husband." And, and at the time, I was like "Okay, yeah, we're married, yeah, it's fine."

When in relationships, women felt a particular amount of social pressure to perform sexual acts or consent to unwanted sex with partners who were men (Muehlenhard et al. 2016). For women especially, doing gender correctly often required consenting to unwanted sex so as to fulfill men's sexual needs.

Women discussed participating in unwanted sex because they had previous, sometimes intoxicated hookups with another person. Chance (27, black, cis) stated:

> I think if you have a hook up that wasn't necessarily intended to be a hook up, it almost feels like you have to redo it, like in a better state of mind, whether that's sober or less drunk. It's almost like well what happened with this first hook up? I'm not really sure. Let's see again… I think it's just interesting how some people kind of get coerced into continuous hookups, even because then they think after the first hook up, the person may feel comfortable to kind of convincing you to hook up after that in other situations, and they don't necessarily consider that- you may not have wanted the first hookup, nor did you really plan for that.

In her interview, Chance talked about being sexually assaulted by a man, James, while she was drunk one night. After her assault occurred, she felt pressure to continue having sex with him in the future. James convinced her to "consent" by reminding her, they had already had sex before. Moreover, Chance felt pulled to "redo" the situation because she had hoped it would have a better outcome the next time around and she hoped it might help her better understand her first encounter with him. Chance identified two separate pressures that led her to eventually consent to unwanted sex: interpersonal pressure and social pressure. The interpersonal pressure (James convincing her to have sex because they had already done it once) was based on the common belief that if someone consents to sex once, they continue to consent to having sex. While the broader, less identifiable social pressure (the need to "make it work"), is influenced by expectations of femininity in which women are expected to maintain and nurture relationships to the best of their abilities.

Some women in this study participated in unwanted sex in order to maintain relationships and to prevent conflict. Lauren (22, white, cis), for example, talked about her friend, Lilly, consenting to unwanted sex:

> And she did have a sex partner, they weren't dating or anything, but they just like had casual sex for two years. And he like scared her. And so she kept having sex with him because he scared her, and she didn't want him to like scare her more. Although it is unclear if there was any specific coercion within the situation Lauren described between Lilly and her partner, she explained that Lilly continued to participate in unwanted sexual experiences to avoid making her partner angry. In this situation, Lilly consented to sex to protect herself from her partner's temper. She felt that refusing to have sex was potentially more dangerous or would lead to a conflict that would be more difficult to deal with than unwanted sex.

Other women discussed consenting in unwanted sex to prevent their partners from leaving them or cheating on them. Jasmine (20, black, cis) explained:

> The first guy I slept with, it wasn't even necessarily supposed to happen. I legit slept with him so he wouldn't leave me… we originally was supposed to have sex because he just plain out told me like, "If you don't have sex with me, you can't be my girlfriend." The first two times we had sex- the first time we had sex was actually because he complained, obviously. And I feel like as females, we are taught, like, it's been ingrained. We are taught to be pleasers and we're taught to like give in. Like I feel like it's a part of like social conditioning. 'Cause I mean, even when I was talking to my friend about the situation, he was like, "Oh, well, if he goes and cheats, then you know." No.

Jasmine was specifically told that her relationship was contingent upon having sex. Her partner felt that he was "owed" sex just by agreeing to be in a relationship with her. For Jasmine, participating in unwanted sex was a "trade-off" for getting the attention and affection she wanted. Not participating in unwanted sex or specific unwanted sexual acts comes with very real consequences. Jasmine discussed enduring rough, painful sex in order to prevent conflict and to get the love or affection she desired from her boyfriend:

> Sex with him became very rough. The last time we had sex, he got mad at me because I told him um it was really hurting [and made him change positions]… he wouldn't cuddle me anymore… Like, he completely stopped cuddling. He would turn on the other side of the bed with his arms like this crossed up like he was a two-year-old.

Jasmine was ultimately punished for not complying with her partner's demands. Despite continuing to have unwanted sex, she was no longer able to get the outcome she wanted to get out of it. Thus, women report very real emotional consequences when they refuse to participate in unwanted sex.

Women in this study chose to participate in the sex in order to get something out of it themselves: pleasure from knowing that they made their partner feel good; avoidance of conflict; earning their partner's affection; feeling like an appropriate partner. Even when consent was given affirmatively, some women willingly had sex without wanting it. In each incident, heterogendered power dynamics led to the prioritization of men's sexual needs and desires over women's. In accounts where the consent given satisfies criteria *typically* outlined in affirmative definitions — enthusiastic, informed, freely given, and subject to change — it often does not embody the ideals affirmative consent intends to uphold — agentic, affirming, mutually empowering sexual interactions. Affirmative consent consistent with this definition cannot exist in relationships entrenched in heterogendered power. In many cases within the grey area, like Jasmine's, men hijacked agency in order to coerce women into unjust sex without crossing the (blurry) line into sexual assault.

Sexual Assault

In this study, women's agency was not only hijacked, there were instances when it was also overcome and nullified (Cahill, 2014). In these cases, men crossed "the line" and sexually assaulted their partners. When sexual assault did occur, it was grounded in the heterogendered order, making it seem natural and inevitable. The grey area expanded beyond unjust sex to affect subjects' perceptions of and responses to sexual assault. In many cases, rape was normalized.

Women in this study reported instances where their sexual agency and consent was nullified or overridden while in otherwise consensual relationships. They often failed to problematize the sexual violence even when describing it. For example, Erica recalled one incident that happened to her:

> The sex was all like consensual and everything but like a certain aspect of it I guess surprised me [he penetrated her anally]. And I wasn't like… like I felt like certain things, you should maybe ask first, rather than like, "Oh surprise." You know "Here's this!" …I didn't say anything though. I just kind of like let it happen. I tend to try to want to cater to the other person's like sexual kinks and things like that.

Erica described nonconsensual anal penetration as a "surprise." Although she thought it was unpleasant and she was not asked if she wanted it, she did not feel like she had been sexually assaulted because she was already having consensual sex. She framed "letting it happen" as a sign of her open-mindedness, which could also be read as performing femininity appropriately. Erica normalized sexual assault, underscoring the importance of doing gender.

Subjects in this study perceived sexual assault as pervasive. For example, Maddie told this story:

> My friend, Kayla, was at a party and a guy was sitting next to her, and he like put his hand on her thigh and stuff. And then she like got up to move away from him and he followed her. And then he like stuck his hand down her pants. And she was like, "No I don't want this." And then finally, somebody had to like take the guy like off of her… people around her were like, …they were just saying like, "Are you okay?" And they kept asking her, "Are you okay?" And she kept saying that she was okay, like she didn't really mind it, which is concerning to me that she didn't care that somebody did that to her.

According to Maddie, Kayla "didn't really mind" that she was sexually assaulted, despite other people around her showing extreme concern. While we cannot know what Kayla was really thinking or know how she felt about this experience later, to Maddie, Kayla did not describe this experience as a form of violence despite even saying "no" and trying to get away. She needed outside intervention for the incident to end, but Kayla brushed off concerns. Maddie elaborated:

> And like, so like sometimes like they [men] just don't know that "no" is no. You know? And they think that just because you're like standing there and you're not like hitting them, that that's yes. You know? Some people don't know what no is.

Maddie argued that the problem was complex: rape myths distort people's ability to recognize and problematize sexual violence when they see it and experience it directly (Ryan 2011). The grey area of unjust sex may have blurred and impacted Kayla's ability to recognize and problematize sexual assault. However, we also recognize this reaction is a common trauma response and could be rooted in other (or multiple) reasons.The lack of concern that Kayla seemed to express after the fact exacerbated the problem in Maddie's eyes: How are men to know it is wrong when women smooth things over so easily? Although this explanation smacks of victim-blaming, Maddie was grappling with the mobilization of rape within the gender regime.

Although some women downplayed their assaults, many others described coming to terms with the fact that they had been sexually assaulted years ago, when they had not had the tools to recognize and name sexual violence. For example, Carmen (22, Latinx, cis) said,

> When I was 14, I had an older boyfriend who, like from what I understand now, everyone says I was coerced or whatever it's called. Because he would always tell me, "If you don't have sex with me, then I will lose my sex drive. I won't never able to get a boner again. And I will never be able to have kids in the future. And I need you to have sex with me so I can pretty much satisfy my sex satisfaction." And I'm like 14. I'm a freshman in high school. I don't want to do that. Especially like the pressure of it. I never said, "Yes, I want to have sex." It was more like I just did it because of that pressure from him and my friends.

In retrospect, Carmen described this sexual coercion as assault, but she did not see it that way in high school. Similarly, Anna described several incidents with her abusive high school boyfriend:

> Anna: I went to prom with him my sophomore year and it was his junior year. It kind of sucked. He got mad at me that I didn't wanna grind. Like just really childish. And then he drove me home, and we were like in the car and he drove past my house. And he parked and yeah. I didn't want to, but…
>
> Interviewer: So, do you feel like he raped you at prom?
>
> Anna: I didn't really think that he raped me until years after this happened. Like I mean, I knew it was abusive, but I didn't call it rape until maybe two years ago.

Anna went on to share this same boyfriend pressured her into sex on his 18th birthday and that she said no four times.

> The first few times I was like, "Stop, oh my god!" Whatever. Then the fourth time I was like, "Okay, I fucking said stop, stop!" And then he just looks at me with these puppy dog eyes and goes, "But it's my birthday." ... So, I gave in, we did it, whatever.

Despite openly resisting, Anna did not problematize her boyfriend's sexual aggression until recently. He regularly manipulated her, pitting her against other girls and pressuring her until he "worked out a yes" (Hattery and Smith 2019). Through her newfound knowledge of affirmative consent, Anna was able to name this sexual violence and begin to work through her past sexual assaults. But until then, there was too much overlap between the grey area of unjust sex and sexual assault.

Discussion and Conclusion

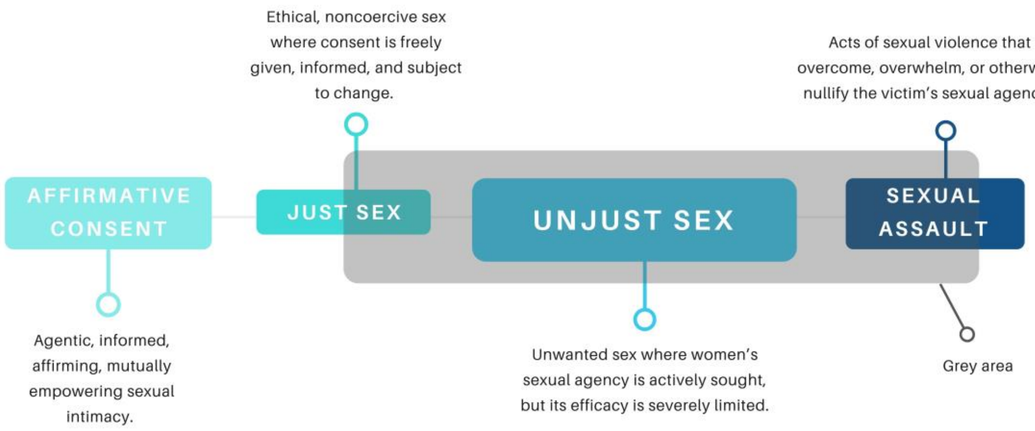
In this paper, we describe the ways that subjects navigated sexual intimacy in the context of an unequal heterogendered structure that mobilizes rape (Pascoe and Hollander 2016). We find that Gavey's (2005) grey area between "just sex" and sexual assault is wider and blurrier than theorized. Applying Cahill's (2014) operationalization of sexual agency as key to defining the line between unjust sex and sexual assault, we found the grey area to be a quagmire in which women blame themselves for men's sexual aggressions and where men deploy women's ambiguity around consent in order to satisfy their own needs. In this study, we found overlap between just sex, unjust sex, and sexual assault. As Diagram 2 illustrates, the grey area bleeds across the spectrum rather than being contained within one category. Consider Jasmine’s case, for example. She was relentlessly pressured and coerced, but she eventually consented to sex. Did Jasmine have unjust sex? Or was she sexually assaulted? Was her agency hijacked? Or nullified? We are unable to provide a clear-cut conclusion. We question whether, given its impact on Jasmine personally, this theoretical difference is actually meaningful. Was Jasmine’s situation that different from Carmen’s, which was clearly sexual assault given her young age? How does subjectivity or perception shape where an experience lands within this sexual landscape when affirmative consent is not accomplished? Affirmative consent is possible, but not the norm, due to the heterogendered landscape that is riddled with pitfalls (Fischel, 2019).

The grey area makes these distinctions unintelligible, leaving many subjects adrift in the aftermath of an ambiguous, coercive sexual encounter.

These data illustrate the large overlap between sex in the grey area and sexual assault. Even just sex includes some unwanted sex. Is that justice? We think not. Therefore, we argue that, in the context of rape mobilization, some just sex may also lie within the grey area, as when women consent not out of wantingness, but because they perceive that they owe their partner sex. Some sexual assault may as well, given the pervasive ambiguity that women express about whether or not their consent was nullified. Notably, as Diagram 2 illustrates, *most* sex falls within the grey area, with only a newly defined affirmative consent lying in the completely unobscured area. In Diagram 2, we revise our definitions of main categories and expand the grey area to fit the data. The fact that so much sexual intimacy falls within the grey area is deeply problematic.

DIAGRAM 2: (RE)MAPPING THE GREY AREA

A Re-conceptualization of the Spectrum of Sexual Assault
Within a Heterogendered Context


Ethical, noncoercive sex where consent is freely given, informed, and subject to change.
Acts of sexual violence that overcome, overwhelm, or otherwise nullify the victim’s sexual agency.
AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT
JUST SEX
UNJUST SEX
SEXUAL ASSAULT
Agentic, informed, affirming, mutually empowering sexual intimacy.
Unwanted sex where women’s sexual agency is actively sought, but its efficacy is severely limited.
Grey area

We conclude that consent and sexual agency remain troubled. Unjust sex and sexual assault are normalized and too common, at least among our subjects. Consent practices are limited when informed and shaped by the larger heterogendered structure, challenging people’s ability to achieve egalitarian, mutually empowering sexual intimacy. Within this context, even just sex can become coercive, and consent may be manipulated (Fischel, 2019). As Cahill (2014) notes:

> The consent model denies the ways in which patriarchy constructs feminine heterosexuality in specific ways, functioning as a coercive force that does not so much act against heterosexual women’s desires but rather shapes them so that they function contrary to those women’s well-being, equality, and freedom (3).

Despite efforts toward a safer society, free of sexual violence, we find that both men and women in our study have normalized the sexual violence that women face. Even college students with directed trainings in affirmative consent contend with challenges to their sexual agency. This research reveals important beliefs about what women are expected to endure and how they are expected to interact with sex throughout their lifetime. Women have normalized sexual coercion and violence within their lives and, often times, walk through life expecting to experience a certain level of unwanted sexual attention (Hlavka, 2014). The mobilization of rape persists, dialectically connected to heterogendered structures.

Although our study finds that affirmative consent is an important strategy for having mutually affirming, unambiguously agentic sex, we urge for continued adjustments to affirmative consent practices. Affirmative consent is certainly superior to ambiguous and coercive sex, but, because they take place in a hegemonic heterogendered society, even affirmative consent practices encouraged on college campuses may be undermined by the mobilization of rape and the prioritization of men's pleasure. The impact of the heterogendered structure may be even more pronounced outside of college settings where affirmative consent is less pervasive. Moving forward, we reiterate our call for better, earlier, feminist training around consent that undoes gender, decoupling sexual intimacy from heterogender (Metz, et al. 2021). Only then can we eliminate men's entitlement to sex and women's sense of sexual obligation to anyone but themselves.

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