

The **Department of Law** at the **University of Cyprus** kindly invite you to a research seminar on

‘Toward a Socio-Legal Theory of Male Rape’

Wednesday, 1 March 2023 at 18:00-19:15

by Dr. Orna Alyagon-Darr & Dr. Ruthy Lowenstein Lazar

Chair: Associate Professor Charalambos Papacharalambous

Abstract

In this Article, we attempt to formulate a new theoretical framework for the analysis of male rape, a phenomenon that has been neglected by legal and jurisprudential scholarship for a long time. We dispute common perceptions of male rape, most notably the centrality of consent in rape discourse, and show how male and female rape myths, while distinct, are upheld by similar paradigms of gender. Although it focuses on male rape, the Article proposes a broad theory of rape and gender.

The Article offers a comparative review of the scholarship on male rape in two settings: the community and prison. It collates the various studies on male rape in these settings, classifies the main elements of male rape, and points to the interrelations between the various scholarly works.

Based on the comparison, the Article develops a sixfold framework containing three recurring and three missing themes. The recurring themes are otherness—the construction of male rape as something that occurs to others, at the margins of society; masculinity—pivotal for the understanding of male rape; and the embeddedness of male rape in social power relations. The three missing themes are consent—possibly the most discussed aspect in current theories of female rape but hardly elaborated with respect to male victims; racial aspects of male rape in the community; and female perpetrators of male rape. The burgeoning literature on male rape dwells mostly on the first three themes.

The Article argues that a meaningful theory of male rape requires further study of the missing themes. The sixfold analytical framework suggested in this Article can assist in identifying blind spots in the academic discourse, accurately conceptualizing this phenomenon, and offering a better general understanding of it. It is also a first step toward the creation of a more inclusive and general theory of rape that accounts for sexual abuse of all victims, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, or other social traits.

Speakers Bio

Prof. Orna Alyagon Darr is an Associate Professor at the Law School of Sapir Academic College, Israel, where she also serves as the President's Gender Equity and Diversity Advisor. She is the author of *Marks of an Absolute Witch: Evidentiary Dilemmas in Early Modern England* (Ashgate, 2011) and *Plausible Crime Stories: The Legal History of Sexual Offences in Mandate Palestine* (Cambridge University press, 2019). Her work explores evidence law, criminal law and criminal procedure in their cultural, social and historical context, and her articles have been published in leading academic journals such as *Law and History Review*, *Law and Social Inquiry*, *Continuity and Change* and *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities*.

Dr. Ruthy Lowenstein Lazar, (L.L.B (University of Haifa, Israel); L.L.M. (University of Ottawa); PhD. (Osgoode Hall Law School), post-doctorate fellowship (University of Haifa, Israel); Visiting Scholar (Columbia University). Dr. Lowenstein Lazar is the Dean of the Law faculty at the College of Management, teaching and researching in the following areas: gender and criminal law, violence against women, sexual violence, victims' rights, and law and social change.

Practical Details

Language: The seminar will be conducted in English

Registration: Please register for the Zoom meeting following [this link](#).