

Construction of female sexuality with a gender approach: an approach to sexual crime



Original Article

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ABSTRACT

Objective. To analyze the gender mandates that construct women's sexuality and their influence on the prevalence of sexual offending. **Methods.** A quantitative research with a non-experimental, cross-sectional and exploratory design was carried out. An online questionnaire of 25 items on the Likert scale was applied to 250 cisgender Mexican women and university students, selected through convenience sampling. Quantitative analysis was performed by item and age ranges. Descriptive statistics and contingency table analysis were used, for which a chi-square test of independence was performed for the variables "age" and "areas of sexuality"; these were analyzed from a gender perspective. **Results.** The relevant data show that gender mandates related to the areas of society, body and violence in women's sexuality have a greater influence on the way women construct their sexuality, mainly in young women. It is highlighted that 74% of the participants are afraid to go out at night because they think they may be sexually violated. **Conclusions.** The gender perspective is a useful analytical tool for judicial authorities, as it makes it possible to explain the psychosocial and cultural characteristics involved in the prevalence of sexual crime.

Keywords: gender; sexuality; sexual crime; forensic psychology; female.

Construcción de la sexualidad femenina con enfoque de género: una aproximación al delito sexual

RESUMEN

Objetivo. Analizar los mandatos de género que construyen la sexualidad de las mujeres y su influencia en la prevalencia del delito sexual. **Métodos.** Se realizó una investigación cuantitativa con diseño de tipo no experimental de corte transversal y exploratoria. Fue aplicado un cuestionario en línea de 25 ítems en la escala de Likert a 250 mujeres mexicanas cisgénero y universitarias, seleccionadas a través del muestreo por conveniencia. Se realizó un análisis cuantitativo por ítem y rangos de edad. Se empleó la estadística descriptiva y el análisis de tablas de contingencia, para lo cual fue realizada una prueba de chi-cuadrado de independencia para las variables "edad" y "áreas de la sexualidad"; estas fueron analizadas con perspectiva de género. **Resultados.** Los datos relevantes muestran que los mandatos de género relacionados con las áreas de sociedad, cuerpo y violencia en la sexualidad de las mujeres tienen mayor influencia en la manera en que estas construyen su sexualidad, principalmente en mujeres jóvenes. Se resalta que el 74 % de las participantes tienen miedo a salir a la calle de noche porque piensan que pueden ser violadas sexualmente. **Conclusiones.** La perspectiva de género es una herramienta de análisis útil para las autoridades judiciales, pues permite explicar las características psicosociales y culturales que intervienen en la prevalencia del delito sexual.

Palabras clave: género; sexualidad; delito sexual; psicología forense, femenino.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual violence in Mexico presents a wide gap with respect to the gender of the victims. According to the National Survey on Victimization and Perception of Crime (ENVIPE) of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2024), per every 100,000 inhabitants, 456 men are victims of a sexual crime, in contrast to 4,290 women. In addition, there is a higher incidence in women who are in the age range between 18 and 30 years, representing 91.9% of the victims of sexual crimes in our country (Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination of Mexico City, 2022).

According to the General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2024), sexual violence is defined in Article 6 as:

Any act that degrades or damages the body and/or the sexuality of the victim and that therefore violates her freedom, dignity, and physical integrity. It is an expression of abuse of power, which may occur in the public or private sphere, and which implies male supremacy over women, by denigrating them and conceiving them as objects. (p. 5)

The previous definition places the sexual offense from unwanted impositions of sexual demands reflected in sexual harassment and sexual stalking, sexist comments and objectifying looks at the body that are expressed in street sexual harassment, groping and touching without consent as examples of sexual abuse, to forced sexual penetrations that deprive women of their freedom in the crime of rape. Consequently, according to the Federal Criminal Code (2024), sexual crimes are located in Title Fifteenth entitled "Crimes against Sexual Freedom and Normal Psychosexual Development," which includes the crimes of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, statutory rape, and rape, in the integration of five chapters, from Articles 259 bis to 276 bis.

These articles describe the protection of the legally protected interest related to the freedom that women and men have to decide the free expression of their sexual identity and the sexual practices they wish to have, as well as the normal psychosexual development of children and adolescents, which safeguards the capacity that a person has to decide about their body and their sexuality without the presence of violence or intimidation.

Talking about sexuality entails a vast field of knowledge and diverse social meanings. For this study, it will be understood as a set of values, practices, and meanings of a symbolic and cultural order that are constructed from the social determinants of each gender, beyond biological and physiological conditions, to express pleasure and the reproduction of people (Villasmil, 1997).

In this sense, sexuality is presented as a formative axis of people's daily life that governs and structures their identity, gender expression, and gender orientation. Franca Basaglia (as cited in Villasmil, 1997) comments that female sexuality is a body socially constructed for other(s), where functions regulated by gender mandates converge (motherhood, care of the family, virginity as a bodily value, female sexual abnegation, repudiation of extramarital relationships, among others). Likewise, it is constituted as one of the structures of women's socialization, marked by limitations and prohibitions. An example of this is the freedom to decide with whom they wish to have sexual relations, the number of sons and daughters they wish to conceive, and the ways to care for their sexual and reproductive health.

The relevance of the decision-making that women have regarding their sexuality becomes paramount in the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights. However, the domination of the masculine over the feminine reproduces violent behaviors toward women in the sexual sphere.

Historically, sexual violence has been categorized from a gender perspective as a social pact of subordination of women in relation to men, resulting from unequal power

relations that the patriarchal sociocultural system establishes within male hegemony. Weeks (2012) mentions that “sexual violence is an act of power that uses sexuality to ensure the perpetuation of relations of domination and subordination” (p. 266). Social determinants or gender mandates, defined as prescriptive gender stereotypes that are accentuated in socialization processes to make visible female subordination and male supremacy (Macías-Valadez and Luna-Lara, 2018), are responsible for reproducing sexual differentiation among people and lead to sexist attitudes or discrimination toward women and socially vulnerable people (Penagos et al., 2021).

Through socio-legal discourses, sexual crimes represent an expression of power as a constitutive fact of exercised sexuality. This is a tool used by feminist collectives to position women as subjects of rights, legitimizing their place in society (Cano, 2024).

In this sense, the importance of the protocol for judging with a gender perspective issued by the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation (2020) is one of the products that arises from the struggle for women’s civil and political rights in Mexico, prepared to address the reparation measures ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in cases of sexual violence against Mexican women. Its objective is to materialize the gender perspective in judicial practice in which gender—understood as the attributes socially established for people based on a cultural construction—has relevance within the controversy.

Since gender influences people’s social practices, its relevance transcends as a category of analysis within the jurisdictional sphere. Therefore, the gender perspective serves as a methodological tool in favor of human rights, to ensure substantive equality and non-discrimination. The existence, within judicial praxis, of differentiated, unjust, and biased treatment by gender is recognized, motivated by prejudices and traditional patriarchal ideologies, dominant in the decisions of judicial authorities, which makes it necessary to take responsibility to reflect on judgments that transgress freedom and the exercise of female sexuality.

The aforementioned protocol describes the judicial obligations to judge with a gender perspective, which are classified into two major areas:

- A. Obligations prior to the analysis of the controversy: where it is identified whether there are situations or contexts of structural inequality or gender violence that show the imbalance of power between the parties to the controversy, as well as ordering the necessary expert evidence to make visible these situations of violence, vulnerability, or discrimination for reasons of gender.
- B. Obligations at the time of resolving the controversy: when analyzing the facts and the evidence of the case from a gender perspective and discarding any gender stereotype or prejudice that influences the controversy. Likewise, human rights standards will be applied with an intersectional approach, when evaluating the differentiated impact of the proposed solution and the neutrality of the norm. Finally, there will be a generic obligation regarding the use of inclusive and gender-inclusive language throughout the judgment, re-victimization, reproduction of sexist inequalities.

The interest of scientific studies in addressing female sexuality and its relationship with sexual crime has focused on the characteristics involved in sexual education in people (Aguilera et al., 2022; Bernardos et al., 2022; Brenes, 2020; Mederos, 2021; Molina, 2020). However, the subjective formation of sexuality goes beyond the teaching of body parts, their hygiene, and protection. In this sense, Cano (2024) mentions that human bodies are sexed bodies that are socially and culturally constructed, which are represented as part of sexual heteronormativity, which implies the subjugation of the body—in particular the female body—which becomes docile, permissive, available, and submissive.

Although women are mostly the ones who are more vulnerable to being victims of a sexual crime, there are few studies on the influence of social determinants or gender mandates that construct female sexuality as an influential variable in sexual crimes. That is, the way in which women have learned to live their sexuality may be influenced by gender mandates and, in turn, determine greater vulnerability to a sexual crime. Therefore, the objective of the present research was to analyze the gender mandates that construct women's sexuality and that influence the prevalence of sexual crime.

METHODS

Type and area of study

A study was conducted with a quantitative approach, a non-experimental design, exploratory in nature, and cross-sectional (Hernández et al., 2018). Its application was carried out in a virtual modality from April 2024 to February 2025, in Mexico City and in the metropolitan area of the Valley of Mexico.

Population and sample

The sample consisted of 250 university women between 18 and 35 years of age, an age range that represents 91% of women victims of sexual violence in Mexico (Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination of Mexico City [COPRED], 2022). These women were originally from Mexico City or from the metropolitan area of the Valley of Mexico. For the selection of the sample, non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used (Hernández et al., 2018), used to create samples according to the ease of access and availability of the people who are the target of the study within a specific time interval.

The inclusion criteria were: being cisgender women, that is, those whose biological sex corresponds to their gender identity; having university studies (in progress or completed); and having a mobile device or computer equipment to respond to the instrument.

Variable and data collection instruments

An instrument on gender mandates in the construction of female sexuality was specifically designed, which was submitted to the judgment of three experts with more than five years of experience in the subject. A pilot study was also carried out with 25 women with characteristics similar to the target sample, obtaining an internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.779, as part of the process of validity and reliability of the content of the instrument.

The final instrument was applied through a Google Forms questionnaire and consisted of 25 items that included five areas linked to sexuality: society, body, eroticism, partner, and violence. The questionnaire included reverse items to prevent the evaluated person from detecting the tendency of the items (Supo, 2013). A Likert-type scale was used for the responses of the sample in five levels, ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree".

Techniques and data collection procedures

The data were collected from the form in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software and, subsequently, the statistical program for the social sciences SPSS version 25 was used, where the collected data were analyzed from the age indicator and areas linked to sexuality.

Data analysis

A graphical representation of the data was carried out by analyzing the results through descriptive statistics, obtaining frequencies, means, and percentages for each item. Contingency tables were created, where the hypothesis was linked to those who were

“Strongly agree” or “Agree” with the gender mandates that they responded to confirm such mandates in the construction of their sexuality. The trend of the variables was examined and Pearson’s chi-square test of independence was used. Finally, the data were analyzed from a gender perspective.

Ethical aspects

The present study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, obtaining a favorable opinion for its application with code CE/FESI/012024/1678. In addition, the instrument included informed consent, which complied with all the regulations and laws established to safeguard the confidentiality of personal, sensitive, and delicate data (National Autonomous University of Mexico, 2021).

RESULTS

Within the general data of the participating women, 61% were heterosexual, 35% were between 21 and 25 years of age, 65% were studying a degree within the area of biological and health sciences; 51% did not position themselves as feminist activists, 49% did not profess any religion, and 48% were exclusively dedicated to studying.

Within the results analysis, first, the sum of all the points of the instrument was carried out, where the participant with the highest score obtained 87 points, while the one with the lowest score obtained 44 points. The participant with 87 points was 24 years old, from the State of Mexico, heterosexual, did not practice any religion, was not feminist, and studied a degree in the physical-mathematical area. On the other hand, the participant who obtained 44 points was 21 years old, from Mexico City, heterosexual, did not practice any religion, did not consider herself feminist, and studied a degree related to the health sciences. In this first analysis, the differences were age, place of origin, and area of professional training; that is, the age indicator shows a prevalence of gender mandates in women with greater longevity, residents of the metropolitan area of Mexico City, and coming from basic sciences careers.

For the second analysis of results, the sum of the scores obtained in the items was carried out, in which a higher score implies greater influence of gender mandates in the construction of sexuality. In this sense, the participant with the greatest influence of gender mandates obtained 60 points, while 16 points were the result of the participant who had the lowest score. The participating woman with 60 points was 26 years old, from Mexico City, did not profess a religion, heterosexual, considered herself feminist, and studied a degree in arts and humanities; meanwhile, the participant with 16 points was 21 years old, from Mexico City, heterosexual, did not consider herself feminist, did not profess a religion, and studied a degree related to the health sciences. In this case, the differences continue to be age, area of professional training, and positioning as feminist. Again, greater gender mandates are found in women of greater age, with a new variable related to their consideration as feminists, which reflects a contradictory result, since it would be expected that, the greater the knowledge and ideologies about women’s rights the respondents had, the lower the influence of gender mandates would be found.

In the third analysis, the sum of the scores of the items was carried out, in which a higher score implies lower influence of gender mandates in the construction of sexuality. The participant who obtained 43 points was the one who had the least influence of gender mandates, being a 19-year-old woman, from the State of Mexico, bisexual, did not practice any religion, did not consider herself feminist, and studied a degree related to the health sciences. In contrast, the participant with 17 points was 23 years old, from Mexico City, bisexual, practiced the Catholic religion, did not identify as feminist, and also studied a degree in the area of health sciences. The differences in this analysis were again age, place of

origin, and religion, which coincides with the two previous analyses regarding the presence of gender mandates in older women.

With these first three results, the age indicator is found, repeated in the three analyses, and the presence of gender mandates related to the construction of female sexuality, mainly in women of greater age. This age indicator will be the one used to carry out concordance correlations with the variables of the five areas of sexuality, which divide the items of the instrument.

On the other hand, in Table 1, the response percentages of the participants to each of the items are examined, according to the Likert scale, and the analysis is carried out based on the five areas of construction of sexuality (society, body, eroticism, partner, and violence).

Table 1
Percentage of responses by area of gender mandates

Area	Item	TA	DA	NAND	ED	TD
Sexuality and society	My main goal in life is to be a mother.	1.2	5.2	27.6	32.4	33.6
	I cannot imagine life without a partner.	0.4	9.6	31.2	32.8	26
	I dress fashionably according to the gender to which I belong.	5.2	25.2	38	20.8	10.8
	Getting married is one of the most important goals of my life.	3.2	9.6	22.4	32.8	32
Sexuality and body	I follow beauty routines to look prettier.	13.2	44.8	20	14.8	7.2
	If I had a body different from the one I have, I would be happier.	16.4	26.4	24.4	20	12.8
	I would like to make permanent changes to my body.	12.4	30.8	18.7	20.4	17.6
	I like how I look without makeup on my face.	28.8	40.4	20.4	8.8	1.6
	I exercise to have the body I want.	18.8	27.6	28	20	5.6
Sexuality and eroticism	I wear clothes that other people will like, even if they are uncomfortable for me.	1.6	6	8	31.2	53.2
	I like violent erotic practices in my sexual relationships.	6	23.2	21.2	23.6	26
	I could agree to have sexual relations to obtain something in return.	0.8	7.2	10	26	56
	I like feeling desired by other people.	10.8	40.4	23.6	14.8	10.4
	When I enter a place, I like people to turn and look at me.	6.8	26.4	31.6	22.8	12.4
	I like to dance to express the erotic part of my body.	6	17.6	24.4	27.6	24.4
Sexuality and partner	I think my partner no longer likes me when we stop having sexual relations.	2.8	16	22.4	26.4	32.4
	I feel embarrassed to have to ask my partner to have sexual relations.	2	13.2	16	26.8	42
	Sending sexual images to my partner is something important in our relationship.	1.2	5.6	24.4	32	36.8
	I like to wear lingerie when I am with my partner.	17.2	44	26.4	4.8	7.6
	I must have sexual relations with my partner, even if I do not want to.	0.4	1.2	4.8	23.2	70.4
	With my partner, we regularly use sex toys.	3.2	12.8	32.8	28.8	22.4
	I think I should go out accompanied on the street so that I will not be assaulted.	7.2	26.8	24	24.4	17.6
Sexuality and violence	When I drink alcohol, it is easier for someone to touch my body without my consent.	5.2	20	15.6	20	39.2
	I am afraid to go out at night because I think I could be raped.	29.6	44.8	14	7.2	4.4
	I can avoid being a victim of a sexual offense if I take precautionary measures.	15.2	28.8	24.8	18.4	12.8

Note. TA = Totally agree, DA = Agree, NAND = Neither agree nor disagree, ED= Disagree, TD= Totally disagree.

With regard to the results of this first table, in the area of sexuality and society, the participants showed disagreement with gender mandates regarding their aspirations and place of being in the world as women (between 32.8% and 33.6%). Regarding the topic of the body, there was a variety of responses, as enjoyment of their own body was observed (40.8%), but also interest in modifying it or thinking that its intervention would bring positive changes (53.2%). In the area of eroticism, there was greater rejection of novel practices (40.4%), which would imply an impact of gender mandates on erotic issues. For the area of partner relationships, resistance to exploring new sexual topics was present (36.8%), although pressure to exercise an unwanted sexuality is not visualized (32.8%). Finally, gender mandates remained present when potential situations of violence were discussed (44.8%).

On the other hand, Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the five areas of construction of sexuality of the instrument. Greater variation in responses was identified in the area of eroticism (between 12 and 24), body (between 7 and 25), and partner (between 19 and 27), whereas in society and violence the tendency to respond was more homogeneous.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics of the areas of sexuality

Factor	Society	Body	Eroticism	Partner	Violence
N	250	250	250	250	250
Mean	9.46	16.07	17.35	15.68	11.86
Median	9	16	18	16	12
Minimum	4	7	12	19	15
Maximum	16	25	24	27	19
Standard deviation	2.76	3.80	2.19	2.96	2.70
Range	12	18	12	19	15

Based on these results, contingency tables were constructed between age and the five areas of sexuality. Table 3 shows that, for the area of society, there was a low tendency of 51% in the influence of gender mandates among women aged 26 to 30 years, while in the area of body the influence reached a mean of 55% in the 21 to 25 age range. In the area of eroticism, a mean tendency of 31% was identified in the 26 to 30 age range. In the area of partner, a similarity with the area of body was shown, oscillating at the mean with 57% for ages 21 to 25, in a manner similar to the area of violence, with a tendency toward the mean of 66% in the same age range.

Table 3
Correlation between age and the five areas of sexuality

		Age				Total
		18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	
Sexuality Area Society	4-9 Low	44	49	51	5	149
	10-14 Medium	25	35	29	3	92
	15-20 High	3	4	2	0	9
	Total	72	88	82	8	250
Sexuality Area Body	8-13 Low	17	19	27	0	63
	14-19 Medium	49	55	38	7	149
	20-25 High	6	14	17	1	38
	Total	72	88	82	8	250

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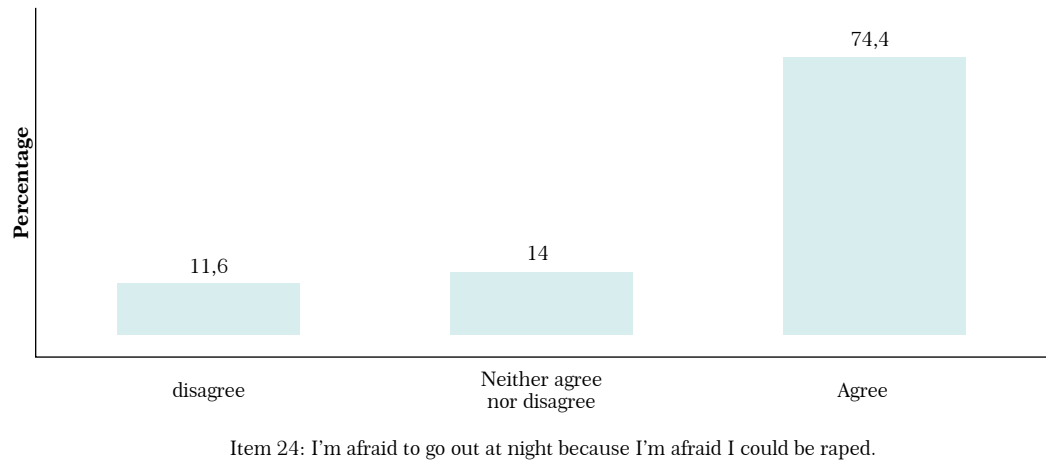
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Table 3
Correlation between age and the five areas of sexuality

		Age				Total
		18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	
Sexuality Area Eroticism	12-16 Low	11	5	5	1	84
	17-20 Medium	41	53	46	4	144
	21-24 High	20	30	31	3	22
	Total	72	88	82	8	250
Sexuality Area Partner	8-14 Low	27	25	22	2	76
	15-21 Medium	39	57	56	6	158
	22-27 High	6	6	4	0	16
	Total	72	88	82	8	250
Sexuality Area Violence	4- 9 Low	17	11	20	0	48
	10- 14 Medium	35	66	47	6	154
	15-20 High	20	11	15	2	48
	Total	72	88	82	8	250

A relevant finding is presented in Figure 1, which shows the percentage of responses with respect to item 24, which was the one that obtained the highest score of the entire instrument by the sample, and refers to the 74.4% of women who stated that they agree with being afraid to go out on the street at night when thinking that they may be raped. This confirms the impact of the gender mandate in relation to the sexual offense, which influences their emotional state and, therefore, their sexed behavior, as a risk factor in the existence of this criminal conduct.

Figure 1
Percentage of responses to item 24: “I am afraid to go out on the street at night because I think that I may be raped”



Finally, the results of the application of the independence test, Pearson’s chi-square test, showed an asymptotic significance of $p < 0.05$ in the areas of society, body, and partner, which reflects a significant association between variables. In the case of the area of violence, a $p < 0.05$ was found in item 24 previously graphed regarding the fear of being raped, with .000, which reflects consistency in the responses of the sample.

Table 4
Pearson's Chi-square Test by Area

Area	Value	<i>p</i> < 0,05
Society	39,431	,025
Body	56,032	,018
Partner	54,326	,000
Eroticism	23,899	,353
Violence	38,159	,145

DISCUSSION

In general terms, the results highlight the presence of greater gender mandates that influence the construction of sexuality in the older women of the sample. Macías-Valadez and Luna-Lara (2018) mention that gender mandates are internalized by individuals through social practices related to sexuality. These mandates reinforce stereotyped gender roles, as models of normativity proposed by patriarchy to dictate how a person should behave, feel, and act.

The new legal provisions surrounding the vindication of women's rights cause these mandates to cease to have influence on the new sexual and gender expressions of younger women, allowing change in the face of submission and subordination in the social construction of their sexuality, which leads this study to coincide with this theoretical framework of reference.

Likewise, three of the five areas that make up the instrument (society, body, and violence) converge with the gender determinants established for the construction of female sexuality. According to this data, social aspirations that tend to represent generational and cultural influences do not present the same attribution among younger participants as among older ones (Miller, 2021). This is related to what Pi Cholula (2021) establishes regarding the fact that current changes in sexual practices carried out by young women run counter to generationally established gender mandates.

In this first analytical indicator of sexuality–society, gender mandates represent less influence in the sample of younger women, which would imply the existence of a process of female empowerment regarding their rights in the face of sexual crime. Criminal law, in its function as the coercive power of the State, has evolved toward the recognition of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, which requires particular attention on the part of society to allow changes in social practices among individuals and, in particular, in women's sexual expressions (Tarancón, 2020).

However, the incidence of sexual crimes within the databases of the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (SESNSP) has not decreased. For the crime of rape alone, there are 6,904 reports in 2025 (January–April), with the states of Chihuahua, Baja California, Nuevo León, State of Mexico, and Mexico City showing the highest incidence; all of them filed by women.

On the other hand, the impact of gender mandates in the area of the body, especially for the 26–30 age group, shows a medium trend linked to reinforcing the bodily relationship with the influence of social gender determinants, particularly in responses regarding “beauty routines to look prettier,” as well as “having a different body that would make them happier,” or “wearing comfortable clothing to feel safe.”

This is a finding consistent with what was mentioned by Verdú et al. (2021), who reaffirm the influence of mass media on the representation of the female body as aesthetic and attractive toward dominant male figures; media that present a distorted image of women's sexuality, thus objectifying female sexed bodies and enabling vulnerability to sexual assault (Cano, 2024).

In this sense, Segato (2019) refers to brutal rape as that sexual crime committed in the anonymity of the streets, by unknown persons and through the use of physical force. Although it is not one of the most frequent within crime statistics in Mexico, it is one of those with the greatest impact on women in terms of gender mandates and the exercise of power and violence against them. The meaning of sexual crime through the violent and non-consensual use of the woman's sexed body reinforces the hierarchical ordering of society: "the gender structure reappears as a structure of power in the abuse and use of the bodies of others" (p. 301), as subjects dominated by imposed gender mandates.

Within the area of sexuality-eroticism, little influence of gender mandates was found in the population aged 18 to 20 years, where the possibility of erotic expression through one's own body is relevant. This is similar to what was proposed by Miller (2021), who mentions that young women possess greater sexual positivity, agency, and communication of their desires in their sexual practices. Once again, age plays a modulating role in the relationship that gender mandates have in the construction of female sexuality (Ruiz-Pérez, 2019).

Finally, in the area of violence, where thoughts and actions related to the possibility of being victims of sexual violence are explored, most of the participating women agreed with the possibility of being sexually assaulted if they went out alone on the street, as well as that consuming alcohol at a party makes it easier for someone to touch their body without their consent. The participants also stated that they agreed that they can take precautionary measures to avoid a sexual crime without the initial fear of suffering rape disappearing as a gender mandate. This finding maintains what has been established by the literature regarding the existence of female fear modulated by the possibility of being raped and that there are environmental conditions—in this case, the time of day when one moves through the streets—that lead to feeling greater or lesser fear of sexual crime (Ferraro, 1995; Hee Min et al., 2022; Mellgren & Ivert, 2019; Nava & García, 2021; Olvera & Martínez, 2020; Sojo-Mora, 2020).

Whatever the sexual crime in question may be, the truth is that physical and psychological harm is caused to the victims, affecting their overall well-being. A person's sense of security is diminished, which affects the most intimate sphere of the individual: their sexuality. In the case of women, it not only presents effects in their personal, family, and social spheres, but their credibility and testimony are also called into question, which leads them to experience revictimization by justice institutions and, consequently, psychological, economic, and social harm derived from the judicial process itself (Miranda & Urban, 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

Sexual violence against women is not only present in criminal acts, but gender mandates that permeate societies contribute to the establishment of conditions that cause women to be in a state of defenselessness in the face of sexual crimes. In this study it was found that there is an influence, in different degrees, on the way in which young women currently construct their sexuality, and that gender determinants regarding stereotypes around this sexuality are present more frequently in older women than in younger ones; however, fear of the crime of rape continues to exist as part of the gender mandates of female sexuality, thus confirming the research hypothesis.

The influence of gender mandates in the construction of female sexuality not only influences women, but also the female and male actors involved in the administration of justice, which makes it necessary to analyze legal cases related to sexual crimes from a gender perspective that makes these gender mandates visible and allows decisions to be made without prejudice, myths, and stereotyped gender ideology.

It is necessary to point out that the research presented some limitations. The study was carried out in a virtual format, which restricts the generalization of the results. Likewise,

the heterogeneity of the sample may influence the representativeness of the data. In addition, the use of questionnaires with the Likert scale for the topic of sexuality may lead to social desirability biases. These limitations allow the results to be used with caution, and it is suggested that future research consider the possibility of evaluating its use in other populations and criteria different from the sample for greater representativeness of the results, as well as employing additional data collection methods to those used.

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Authorship contribution

ALRM: conception and design of the article, statistical advice, data analysis and interpretation, technical and academic advice on results, discussion, conclusions, drafting of the article, and approval of the final version.

CVDD: conception and design of the article, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, drafting of the article, updates and modifications of the article.

TERS: drafting of the article, discussion, and final review of the article.

ZGC: drafting of the article, discussion, and final review of the article.

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