

Violent porn now a political issue

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Carys Moseley comments on the rise of sado-masochism and violent pornography.

The horrendously dangerous effect of internet porn on women has finally become a political issue in this year's general election, thanks to a new campaign on behalf of women who have been murdered by men who then use the excuse that they consented to sado-masochism. The BBC recently reported that 'violence during consensual sex has become normalised'¹. Survey research by Savanta ComRes for BBC Radio 5 live recently discovered² that "more than a third of UK women under the age of 40 have experienced unwanted slapping, choking, gagging or spitting during consensual sex."

The Centre for Women's Justice rightly blamed this on the mainstreaming of extreme pornography, and Women's Aid highlighted how common sexual violence has become for young women.

'The Fifty Shades of Grey defence'

Writing in the Huffington Post, MPs Harriet Harman and Mark Garnier call this 'the Fifty Shades of Grey Defence', a reference to the blockbuster film glorifying sado-masochism. They are leading a political campaign to change the law to protect victims. They have tabled amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill³ which the government introduced in the last Parliament. This Bill is likely to return to the House of Commons after the general election. They are asking people to get election candidates to commit to supporting these amendments if they become MPs⁴.

The first amendment prohibits a defendant in a case of domestic abuse accused of "actual bodily harm, more serious injury or death" from using the defence that the victim "consented to the infliction of injury", regardless of whether any of these "occurred in the course of a sadomasochistic encounter."

Fiona Mackenzie, who founded the group *We Can't Consent To This*, which is behind this campaign, explains that this 'defence' has had a bad influence on the criminal justice system in that it undermines the likelihood of such murders being treated as domestic violence⁵. The group is particularly keen to argue that

women cannot consent to their own murder, hence its name 'We Can't Consent To This'.

Consent is not enough

Harriet Harman and Mark Garnier went on to argue that case law on sado-masochism can already be used to protect victims. They cite the case of *R v Brown* from the House of Lords in 1993, saying this:

"[The House of Lords] ruled that if the injuries were serious, a defendant cannot claim as a defence that the victim consented. That was a case where a man had inflicted GBH on his gay lover. But we need that in statute so that it is under the noses of the Crown Prosecution Service and judges."

The truth is that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is already part of the problem⁶.

Last year the CPS consulted on relaxing the prosecution guidelines for the Obscene Publications Act 1959⁷ so that publication of extreme pornography would no longer be an offence. The CPS used the very arguments that sado-masochism fanatics use to justify their perversion, namely that it involves consent between adults. This is because the CPS was lobbied by sado-masochism fanatics, who argued that they were claiming their 'human rights'.

We responded to that consultation warning that the CPS plans would lead to the further normalisation of sado-masochism⁸ in society, with dire consequences for female survivors of child sexual abuse, who are more likely to practice sado-masochism. Our arguments were ignored by the CPS. We then did a Freedom of Information Request to the CPS asking for the names of all the organisations that responded to that consultation. None of the organisations that are now panicking about how women are in danger because of violent porn responded. It is also noteworthy that both Harriet Harman and Mark Garnier were silent on that consultation.

Anti-Christian legal philosophy to blame

Fiona MacKenzie says her team of volunteers have been researching newspaper archives

and discovered the 'she consented to it' defence being used in court as far back as the 1970s⁹. This is unsurprising, for sado-masochism is inherently anti-Christian and could only have become gradually normalised due to the deliberate rejection of Christian moral norms in the 1960s sexual revolution. What ended up happening in the common law was that consent was made more important than any other moral consideration, and that a person's relationship to his or her body was reconfigured: the body was now understood more or less as one's possession, disposable at will.

Looking around this new campaign and the sudden chorus of approval it has gained from the press, we find no disapproval of sado-masochism as inherently degrading and corrupting in any newspapers covering the issue. On the contrary, writing in *The Sun* Tanya Gold says this¹⁰:

"But these killings have nothing to do with sado- masochism, which isn't about violence at all, but about trust. This fetish is actually tender and intimate, requiring a deep mutual respect between consenting parties. The thrill, I understand, is in the trust, not the violence."

Nothing to do with sado-masochism? Nonsense. Sado-masochism IS the slippery slope here. Isn't it blatantly obvious that sadism is dangerous to women? Male sex offenders are often sadists as this perfectly fits with their wicked inclinations. Sado-masochism is NOT normal, and it is time that the majority of us who still think that speak up.

The need for Christian influence

Amending the Domestic Abuse Bill to get rid of consent to sadomasochism as a defence for actual bodily harm, more serious injury or death is a good start but hardly sufficient to confront the problem which is primarily cultural and therefore spiritual. The human dignity of a woman who is subjected to any of the above-mentioned abuses is already undermined regardless of the outcome.

The real problem is the normalisation of pornography in general and sado-masochism in particular in our culture. Because of these evils young men and women now **expect** heterosexual relations to be violent and 'edgy'. This is due to the abandonment of Christian ethics in law, public

policy, education and social service. There is a crying need for clear, uncompromising Christian influence in society to counter the normalisation of sado-masochism. Nothing else will really succeed.

I recently attended the annual conference for the International Federation for Therapeutic and Counselling Choice¹¹. Although the main focus was helping people with unwanted same-sex attraction and gender confusion, one of the speakers conducted a more general seminar on getting people to quit using pornography. He was a Christian and had himself succeeded in this respect and saved his own marriage. This speaker revealed that most teenage boys he met through his work watched internet porn and because of this, expected women to want to hit and abuse them during sex. I put it to him that what this is, is the normalisation of sadism and masochism, a complete counterfeit of what the Bible teaches, and he agreed.

He now goes around schools and mainstream media in his home country talking to young people about the dangers of porn and promoting a Christian view of sexuality based on marriage, emphasising the love depicted in the Song of Songs in the Bible. However, he lives in a country where, like the UK, LGBT campaigners and their allies in government are pushing for a ban on 'conversion therapy'. This turns out to be relevant because the CPS consultation actually admitted that sado-masochism is more common among the LGBT population. This means that any ban on 'conversion therapy' could trap LGBT people and also people with unwanted same-sex attraction who are victim of sexual violence.

Will the new RSE help or not?

How can the prevailing culture be challenged successfully? Many experts in education would argue that the notion of consent needs to be highlighted in schools, and would say so to defend some elements of the new RSE curriculums that are being rolled out as we speak. The idea is that children need to be able to talk about sexual consent in order to defend themselves later on in life. The problem, as is evident, is that the notion of consent can be abused.

What most people do not realise is that the Standards for Sexuality Education of the World Health Organisation¹² are probably behind many of the more dubious elements of RSE. Among the topics to be discussed in class are sexual consent, sexual violence and

aggression, and pornography. It is very doubtful whether the new 'progressive' RSE, in its zeal to discuss all manner of sexuality 'openly', will truly succeed to tackle the normalisation of sado-masochism. This is because the new RSE has no concept of sexual perversion, let alone of the clear distinction between good and evil, and truth and counterfeiting. There is a risk that young people will have to hear arguments for sado-masochism and sexual violence in class from unscrupulous classmates and even teachers, all as part of a lesson where all are free to express themselves. Nothing would surprise me given how low society has sunk.

Time for Zero Tolerance

Secular arguments that aim to protect victims are weak and could be undermined by clever manoeuvring by criminals infiltrating the system and influencing MPs. It's not enough to say, 'we can't consent to this'. 'We won't tolerate porn and sado-masochism' is the message we need to be giving out and acting on. A lot more Christian 'zero tolerance' is the way forward.

To find out more about helping people to break free from dangerous sexual addictions, join us at our January conference, *Championing Sexual Purity*¹³.

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- ¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-50546184>
 - ² <https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/bbc-radio-5-live-womens-poll-november-2019/>
 - ³ https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0422/amend/domestic_rm_pbc_1007.1-3.html
 - ⁴ <https://wecantconsenttothis.uk/actnow>
 - ⁵ <http://www.swlondoner.co.uk/tag/we-cant-consent-to-this/>
 - ⁶ <https://christianconcern.com/comment/relaxing-obscenity-prosecution-guidelines-will-normalise-sado-masochism-and-extreme-pornography/>
 - ⁷ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/consultation/public-consultation-obscene-publications-prosecution-guidance>
 - ⁸ <https://christianconcern.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CC-Resource-Consultation-Response-Obscene-Publications-181012.pdf>
 - ⁹ <http://www.swlondoner.co.uk/we-cant-consent-to-this-murder-defence/>
 - ¹⁰ <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10232726/tanya-gold-50-shades-sex-defence/>
 - ¹¹ <https://christianconcern.com/comment/visible-and-vocal-against-aggressive-lgbt-ideology/>
 - ¹² <https://www.bzga-whocc.de/en/publications/standards-in-sexuality-education/>
 - ¹³ <http://www.christianconcern.com/sexualpurity>