

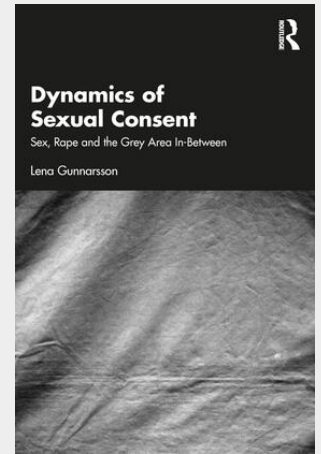
Gunnarsson

## Dynamics of Sexual Consent

Sex, Rape and the Grey Area In-Between

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How does sexual consent work? How do we know that another person really wants to have sex with us? Why do people sometimes give in to sex that they are not in the mood for? And how come it is sometimes difficult to draw a sharp line between sex and assault? Dynamics of Sexual Consent addresses these questions based on deeply personal interviews with twenty Swedish women and men of various ages and sexual orientations. In doing so, it contributes to understandings of sexual consent and sexual grey areas through its combination of conceptual rigour, analytical detail and empirical richness. While starting in the legal definition of consent as voluntary participation, the book broadens the discussion to a wider sociological and philosophical sphere where gendered power dynamics and relational dependencies challenge simplistic understandings of voluntariness. Contesting tendencies to see miscommunication as the key problem related to consent, it shows that emotional aspects are often the main factor standing in the way of genuinely consensual interactions. While the analysis is informed by a gender perspective emphasizing the gendered power asymmetries of heterosexuality, it also foregrounds men's vulnerability and the power dynamics of same-sex interactions. A key argument of the book is that, given the contextual and ambiguous nature of sexual interactions, it is impossible to delineate unequivocal and concretely applicable and guidelines for what counts as consent. To compensate for the lack of universal, fail-safe rules, what is needed is an intensified collective reflection on consent and sexual grey areas, which can make individuals better equipped to identify and respect their own and others' boundaries. An empirically rich and conceptually sophisticated contribution to understandings of sexual consent and sexual grey areas, Dynamics of Sexual Consent will be of interest to scholars and students of gender studies, sociology and criminology.



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