The present study directly compared sexual and aggressive motives for sexual aggression in Chinese college students. One hundred and forty-six males completed self-reported measures of sex and aggressive drives, sex and aggressive guilt, social desirability response set, and history of coercive sexuality. As expected, sex guilt and aggressive guilt acted as inhibitors of their respective drives. In this sample, sexual aggression appeared to result from aggressive rather than sexual motives. A comparison with similar research in a North American sample suggests that motives for sexual aggression may be moderated by cultural differences in general aggressiveness, sex guilt, and the social desirability of aggressive behavior.

Motives in Sexual Aggression

The Chinese Context

CATHERINE SO-KUM TANG
Chinese University of Hong Kong

JOSEPH W. CRITELLI
JAMES F. PORTER
University of North Texas

The literature on sexual aggression variously describes its motives as primarily sexual or aggressive (e.g., Cohen, Garafalo, Boucher, & Seghorn, 1971; Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965). In general, the older literature has emphasized a sexual motive, suggesting that sex drive is stronger and more uncontrollable in sexually aggressive males (e.g., Kanin, 1967; Karpman, 1954; Tieger, 1981). More recent work has focused on an aggressive motive, arguing that sexual aggression is used to express control, dominance, and power over women (Briere & Malamuth, 1983; Brownmiller, 1975; Groth & Birnbaum, 1979; Koss & Leonard, 1984; Malamuth, Check, & Briere, 1986; Russell, 1984).

Among various internal inhibitory mechanisms, guilt has been linked to a number of social behaviors. For example, Mosher and Cross (1971) found that subjects with high sex guilt had engaged in less intimate sexual behavior than those with low sex guilt. Schill (1972) found that subjects with high hostility guilt expressed less aggression against a frustrating confederate.

Authors’ Note: Requests for reprints should be addressed to Catherine So-Kum Tang, Psychology Department, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T., Hong Kong.