

## Women's Trauma Due to Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces (Study at UPTD PPA DP3A Semarang City)

Roafa Nabila Mazin\*, Misbah Zulfa Elizabeth

UIN Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia

Email: afamazin123@gmail.com\*, zulfa\_elizabeth@walisongo.ac.id

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### ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment in public spaces has become a critical social issue affecting women's safety and well-being in urban environments. This study examines the forms, psychological impacts, and societal responses to sexual harassment experienced by women in public spaces in Semarang City, Indonesia. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with two key informants from UPTD PPA DP3A Semarang City—administrative officers and victim companions—alongside relevant documentation. Analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The study reveals that common forms of harassment include groping, thigh and breast squeezing, and breast assault. Victims exhibit freeze responses, crying, and screaming as immediate reactions. Findings demonstrate that patriarchal culture significantly influences perpetrator behavior by objectifying women's bodies. Victims face severe consequences, including victim blaming, social discrimination, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, diminished social relationship quality, sleep disorders, and physical injuries. Analyzed through George H. Mead's symbolic interactionism theory, the research exposes how societal symbols and meanings reinforce gender-based violence and trauma. This study contributes to understanding the intersection of public space safety, gender inequality, and trauma psychology, offering implications for policy development and victim support systems.

### INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a social event that has a negative impact on the victim (Kumaradewi & Winta, 2020). Sexual harassment refers to the concept as affirmed in the Indonesian Law No. 12 of 2022 concerning the Crime of Sexual Violence, which includes acts of coercion, torture, exploitation, slavery, and sexual violence, both physical, non-physical, and electronic. As a result of these acts, victims can experience various effects, namely mental, physical, economic and social losses as written in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 12 of 2022 Chapter 1 Article 1. Currently, cases of sexual harassment are rampant in public spaces. Several examples of incidents in the women's toilet of the UNG campus faculty of literature reported in detik.com (18/09/2024) reported on the case of a UNG parking attendant who entered the women's toilet and was found recording female students in the campus toilet on September 13 (Nawu, 2024). Another incident occurred that the Maluku Tourism Office reported by Kompas.com (09/09/2024) explained the case of the Secretary of the Maluku Tourism Office having violated the internship side on September 6. In addition to molesting, the perpetrator also persuaded the victim to have sex (Rahmat Rahman Patty, 2024). Based on the above

explanation, sexual harassment is an immoral act that leads to physical or non-physical contact without consent or consent so that one of the parties feels harmed (Alvinzi, 2018; Browne & Browne, 2023; Wamoyi et al., 2021).

This study is a sociological study that explains the assumptions built by George Herbert Mead in his theory, namely the theory of symbolic interactionism about the relationship between the self, mind, and society (Hogg & Vaughan, 2020). This theme of trauma orients that individuals are part of society that produces symbols, meanings, and images (Goffman, 2021). Women's trauma is studied assuming that trauma arises from the image given by society to individuals (Butler, 2022). This research on trauma aims to understand the dialectic of the self in women in a concept of symbols formed by society (Harris & Thompson, 2021). The intersection of gender and trauma shows how societal perceptions shape individual identities, often leading to internalized self-concept and emotional distress (Adams, 2023).

Studies on sexual harassment in the public sphere have been carried out by many academics, including studies from Muhammad Khaidir Alwy, Ashari Ismail, and Idham Irwansyah who focused their studies on women's responses to sexual violence in AZ coffee shops, precisely in Bontoala District, Makassar City. The study showed that women received treatment in the form of verbal violence and non-verbal violence in coffee shops. Verbal violence includes gossip and seduction that makes the victim uncomfortable. Meanwhile, non-verbal violence includes glances and sharp gazes from the perpetrator towards the victim. The study shows how women respond as victims. Women's response is only to adapt because the majority of coffee shop environments are visited by men, so women feel that they have to behave and appear closed so as not to invite violence and harassment.

This study is different from previous studies because this study focuses on the trauma experienced by women over the incidence of sexual harassment in public spaces based on cases under the auspices of UPTD PPA DP3A Semarang City (Wibowo & Putri, 2021). This study covers various forms of sexual harassment, what women feel as victims of harassment, and what are the impacts of sexual harassment that occurs in public spaces (Jones et al., 2020). Various activities and interactions occur in the public space of Semarang City every day (Arifin, 2022). These social activities create various cases of harassment with the majority of female victims (Harris & Green, 2022). In addition, the more open the public space, the greater the percentage of sexual harassment (Nguyen, 2023). Thus, the public space of Semarang City has the potential to be a place that has the largest percentage of sexual harassment cases that result in trauma to victims, especially women (Kumar & Sharma, 2021). Sexual harassment in public spaces remains an under-researched area, highlighting the need for focused intervention strategies (Sullivan et al., 2022).

The UPTD PPA DP3A Semarang City Institute is an institution that focuses on protection and child protection issues. Reporting from [dp3a.semarangkota.go.id](http://dp3a.semarangkota.go.id), PPA has a focus on preventing and handling violence as well as protecting women and children. There were 151 cases recorded in the period of January 1, 2024 – July 23, 2024. The largest type of case complaint is Domestic Violence (Domestic Violence), followed by KTA (Violence Against Children), then KTP (Violence Against Women). East Semarang and North Semarang districts ranked highest with the category of the highest number of cases. The majority of these cases of violence occur in households and public facilities or public spaces. The top three positions in the category of sexual violence experienced by victims are physical, sexual, and

psychological with 93% of victims being female. The victims were 141 female victims and 12 of the 151 cases were male with the majority of victims aged 13-44 years.

Based on data from UPTD PPA DP3A Semarang City, public spaces occupy the third position in the category of violent crime scenes. Based on an interview with one of the victims of harassment, namely PM (21 years old). The PM explained the chronology of the sexual harassment he experienced on the highway precisely in the Genuk area, East Semarang at 15.15 WIB with the condition of the streets crowded with motorists. The harassment received by the PM was in the form of breast begging carried out by 2 men on a motorcycle. The perpetrator initially stalked from behind and then suddenly approached the victim and immediately squeezed the victim's breast. The victim could only sit still, freeze, feel angry, and trembling violently. The feelings experienced by the victim after the incident were sad and self-blame. The victim also admitted that he had trauma, namely feeling scared and worried when there was a man riding a motorcycle behind him. In addition, the victim also felt mental disorders such as often imagining the incidents of harassment he experienced so that the victim often blamed himself and locked himself in his room all day.

Based on these cases, victims of sexual harassment can experience trauma after receiving harassment treatment. The trauma experienced by the victim cannot just disappear. Reporting from [gayatempo.co](http://gayatempo.co) (07/09/2021), the Head of the Social Intervention and Crisis Laboratory of the Faculty of Psychology, University of Indonesia, Dicky Pelupessy, said that it is difficult to know if trauma will heal. In his consciousness, trauma is another word for a wound that can never be predicted when it closes (Antara, 2021). The trauma experienced by the PM must receive more attention so that it does not become a fatal injury and affect the PM's quality of life. The trauma experienced by the PM must be followed up by mediating with the victim and the victim's relatives. This must be done to prevent the feeling of continuous stress that the victim fears is only hiding himself so that the problem will not be solved and the victim finds it difficult to come to terms with the situation.

The feelings felt by the victim of abuse are valid feelings. Moreover, incidents of harassment occur in public spaces that can be accessed by anyone. The trauma that arises is a loss experienced by women because it causes discomfort when in public spaces. The public space, which is basically an open place and as a conveyor of aspirations, actually makes the victim silent because they are not free to convey and fight against the perpetrators of harassment. The lack of strict and inclusive regulations can lead to an increase in the number of sexual harassment cases in public spaces. If this is not followed up immediately, it will result in social problems in the community. Public spaces that should be comfortable places to use by the general public are actually places that must be avoided by the public to minimize the occurrence of harassment.

One of the functions of public space is humanity which means being friendly to anyone who accesses. This function puts a spotlight on people with disabilities, children, and women. But unfortunately, in this day and age, the human function of public space does not run as it should. The sense of friendliness and safety cannot be fulfilled because of the lack of awareness of the actors in it. Many use public spaces as a place to satisfy their desires and do what they want without caring about the fate and feelings of the people around them who are affected. Public spaces are no longer a safe place to interact with others. Women become more wary and

limited in voicing what they feel. Women also increasingly limit themselves to develop and carry out activities due to the trauma of cases of harassment in the public space of society.

Cases of sexual harassment occur not only in private spaces, but also in public spaces. Private spaces are controlled by specific individuals or groups. Thus, private spaces give individuals the freedom to set up access without interference from other parties. Private spaces are not open to the public and can only be accessed by certain people who have access. On the other hand, there are public spaces that are more open than private spaces. Public space is a space that is easy and freely accessible to anyone who wants to use it. Public spaces consist of a wide variety of individuals and groups that have their own interests without privacy. Thus, there is an assumption that sexual harassment cases occur more in public spaces than in private spaces. This assumption arises from private spaces where privacy is maintained, there are still cases of harassment, especially public spaces that lack privacy and many people in them.

Based on the above background explanation, the researcher is interested in delving deeper into the trauma experienced by women due to sexual harassment that occurs in public spaces in Semarang City. This study uses a paradigm of social definition with a focus on the factors that cause sexual harassment, forms of harassment, and the trauma caused, with reference to the view of symbolic interactionism of George H. Mead. The formulation of the problem in this study includes questions about the form of harassment and how women feel when receiving sexual harassment treatment in public spaces and what are the consequences of sexual harassment. In line with that, the purpose of this study is to find out the forms of sexual harassment and feelings experienced by women when they are victims in public spaces, as well as to understand the impact caused by these acts of harassment. This research is expected to have practical and theoretical benefits, where practically the results of the research are expected to increase students' knowledge about women's trauma due to sexual harassment while providing understanding to the public that sexual harassment can occur anywhere and cause adverse impacts on women. Meanwhile, theoretically, this research is expected to be a reference in strengthening sociological studies, especially those that focus on the theory of symbolic interactionism related to social behavior and trauma experienced by women due to sexual harassment in public spaces.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted at UPTD PPA DP3A Kota Semarang, with public spaces in Semarang City as the primary context—specifically, sites of reported sexual harassment incidents. This location was selected for three reasons: public spaces in Semarang City should be freely and safely accessible to all, especially women; UPTD PPA DP3A is the authorized institution handling sexual violence complaints, providing data from incident reports to resolutions; and its cases offered rich empirical insights into harassment and victim impacts.

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore victims' lived experiences in depth. As field research, it involved direct observation of social conditions, with research subjects including individuals, communities, and the institution. Primary data came from in-depth interviews with UPTD PPA DP3A officers; secondary data included documents, archives, articles, and books.

Data collection used multiple techniques. Observation examined trauma manifestations among female victims in Semarang's public spaces. Unstructured in-depth interviews were held

with key informants: Mrs. Maria (administrative employee) and Mrs. Iis Amalia (2021) (victim companion). Documentation gathered institutional archives, case files, and relevant images.

Purposive sampling selected informants affiliated with UPTD PPA DP3A who had handled harassment cases and could provide detailed insights.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model (Miles et al., 2014; Rukin, 2019), with three stages: data reduction (summarizing, coding, and categorizing transcripts and notes by themes like harassment forms and trauma impacts); data presentation (organizing into matrices, flowcharts, and narratives for pattern identification); and conclusion drawing/verification (developing and testing interpretations against data within symbolic interactionism).

Triangulation across data sources and prolonged engagement ensured trustworthiness, supplemented by member checking with informants. This approach enabled a deep exploration of women's trauma from public-space sexual harassment, supporting theoretical and practical contributions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Forms and Conditions of Women's Feelings When Experiencing Sexual Harassment**

#### ***Forms of Sexual Abuse Experienced***

##### **1. Groping on the Sidewalk with Take-Home Mode**

Groping is a form of physical sexual harassment that most often occurs in public spaces, which is the act of groping or touching the intimate body parts of the victim secretly or openly without consent. This phenomenon leaves not only physical wounds, but also serious psychological impacts. One of the cases occurred in Semarang City, where the perpetrator used the mode of pretending to know the victim's parents to make it look convincing. Under the pretext of wanting to take her home, the perpetrator then touched and even raped the victim. This mode is very dangerous because the perpetrator takes advantage of the victim's trust as well as the environmental situation that is not alert.

The impact is not only in the form of deep trauma for the victims, but also worsens the condition of families who have to bear social stigma and a sense of helplessness. Victims tend to experience excessive fear when in public spaces, have difficulty rebuilding trust in others, and are prone to PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). This case reflects the weak protection of women in public spaces and the lack of public awareness to react immediately when they see indications of sexual harassment.

##### **2. Thigh and Breast Squeeze in City Park**

Cases of sexual harassment in the form of squeezing the thighs and breasts without consent are clearly included in the category of sexual violence as regulated in the Sexual Violence Crime Law (TPKS Law). This action not only violates the integrity of the victim's body, but also deprives the victim of the victim's right to a sense of security and dignity in public spaces. The real case occurred to the victim with the initials B in one of the city parks in Semarang. At that time the victim was sitting alone, suddenly the perpetrator came and squeezed the victim's body parts, even though the atmosphere of the park was quite crowded.

This phenomenon shows that sexual harassment can happen at any time, even in public places that are supposed to provide a sense of security. The impact is not only limited to the victim's psychological trauma such as fear, anxiety, and shame, but also causes the victim's

distrust to re-access public spaces. Furthermore, this case also reflects how patriarchal culture still views women's bodies as sexual objects that can be exploited at will. The presence of many people around the scene does not necessarily guarantee safety, because often people choose to remain silent or do not want to be involved. In fact, a quick response from the people around them is very important to protect the victim while preventing the perpetrator from repeating his actions.

### 3. Breast Scammer on the Road

Breast begal is a form of sexual harassment that is rampant in public spaces, especially on the highway. The mode used is usually carried out by the perpetrator who rides a motorcycle, approaches the victim (generally a female motorcyclist or pedestrian), then suddenly squeezes the victim's breast, then flees quickly. A viral case in East Semarang befell an 18-year-old woman with the initials C. The perpetrator approached the victim who was driving, then squeezed her breasts before trying to escape. Luckily, the victim immediately screamed so that it attracted the attention of local residents, until finally the perpetrator was arrested.

This event shows that women face great risks in their daily activities, even when on public roads that should be safe. As a result, the victim experienced shock, embarrassment, fear, and deep trauma to drive alone. In addition, this case shows a recurring pattern where the perpetrator is often not the first to commit the act, but has targeted many victims before. This indicates the failure of the public security system in providing real protection for women. Furthermore, this behavior cannot be separated from the influence of patriarchal culture that objectifies women's bodies, so that the perpetrator feels that they have "social legitimacy" to commit acts that degrade women.

## ***Women's Conditions When Experiencing Sexual Harassment***

### 1. Freeze Response

The freezing response is the body's natural biological mechanism that appears automatically when the victim faces a sudden threat. In this condition, the victim loses the ability to move, fight, or escape because his brain is still processing the dangerous situation experienced. Freeze response is often misinterpreted by society as a form of surrender or giving permission to the perpetrator, even though this response is a psychological and physiological reaction that cannot be controlled by the individual. The lack of public understanding makes victims often receive stigma and victim blaming, thereby increasing their emotional burden. Therefore, it is important for the surrounding environment to understand that freeze response is a form of automatic self-protection that is natural for victims of sexual harassment.

### 2. Cry

Crying is a natural emotional response experienced by victims of sexual harassment as a form of release of stress, fear, anger, or shame. The expression of crying serves as catharsis, helping the body relieve psychological and physiological tension due to trauma. However, this response is often viewed negatively by the community because it is considered not to provide resistance. As a result, the victim experienced victim blaming and self-blame which worsened his psychological condition. In the context of trauma recovery, crying is actually one of the healing mechanisms because it allows victims to validate their emotions while sending signals to the environment that they need support. Thus, crying must be understood not as a weakness, but as part of the victim's emotional adaptation process to the traumatic experience.

### 3. Shout

Screaming is a spontaneous response that arises when a victim of sexual harassment feels threatened. This response is a form of rejection as well as an effort to ask for help from the people around them. Physiologically, screaming is triggered by the activation of brain nerves that regulate fear and survival reactions, so that the body expresses intense emotions in the form of hysterical screams. In a social perspective, shouting has a symbolic meaning as resistance to the perpetrator and affirmation that the victim does not approve of the act of harassment. This response can also invite attention to the surrounding environment, thus providing an opportunity for victims to get help. Therefore, screaming is seen not only as an emotional reaction, but also as an important symbolic communication mechanism in the victim's self-rescue efforts.

## **The Impact of Sexual Harassment**

### ***Community Stigma***

#### 1. Victim Blaming

Victim blaming is a condition when the victim of sexual harassment is considered to be responsible for the incident that happened to him. It can be in the form of comments about the victim's clothing, grooming, or habits that are considered "inviting" to harassment. In fact, sexual harassment is a unilateral action of the perpetrator without any justification. As a result, the victim is actually blamed by the community and the family who are supposed to support. Victim blaming includes cultural and structural violence rooted in patriarchal culture, where women are seen as the ones who have to maintain morality while men are more forgiving. As a result, the victim felt ashamed, guilty, and reluctant to report for fear of being judged. This worsens the physical and psychological condition of the victim and strengthens gender injustice in society.

#### 2. Discrimination

Discrimination against victims of sexual abuse emerged as an advanced form of victim blaming. Victims are often shunned, labeled as a disgrace, and even pressured not to report their cases. This discrimination reflects the existence of structural and cultural violence as Galtung explained, which is an injustice that is embedded in the social system and affects daily interactions. Giving negative labels to victims makes them excluded from the social environment, loses family support, and is considered to bring "stains" to society. Finally, discrimination strengthens the social burden of women victims of abuse, adds to psychological suffering, and creates deep-rooted gender inequality.

### ***Psychic Impact***

#### 1. PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Sexual harassment in public spaces can cause post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which has a serious impact on the psychological condition of the victim. PTSD is a form of trauma that is much more intense than ordinary trauma, characterized by sudden flashbacks, nightmares, and prolonged feelings of helplessness. Judith Herman (2015) in her work *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence* asserts that trauma arises when individuals lose control over themselves and are unable to protect themselves from the threat of violence. In victims of sexual abuse, this appears in the form of symptoms such as insomnia, excessive

anxiety, irritability for no apparent reason, and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. PTSD also makes it difficult for victims to distinguish between the past and the present because of traumatic memories that appear suddenly as if the event is happening again. These symptoms often trigger severe depression, which ultimately hinders emotional recovery, weakens motivation, and disrupts the victim's overall life balance.

## 2. Excessive Anxiety and Depression

In addition to PTSD, excessive anxiety and depression are other psychological impacts that are commonly experienced by victims of sexual abuse in public spaces. Anxiety usually arises whenever the victim is in a public space or interacting with others because there is always a feeling of insecurity and threat. This anxiety can develop into a social phobia that makes the victim reluctant to do activities outside the home. In the long term, untreated anxiety can lead to depression, characterized by feelings of inferiority, guilt, loss of interest in activities, sleep disturbances, and emotional exhaustion. Depression experienced by victims is also often exacerbated by societal stigma, such as the view that the victim is the party who "invites" the abuse or brings disgrace to the family. This condition causes the victim to feel isolated, disgusted with himself, and afraid of receiving negative judgments from the surrounding environment. Without the support of family, friends, or professional help, the victim's depression can develop into feelings of hopelessness that endanger their quality of life and future.

## 3. Decreased Quality of Social Relationships

Sexual harassment not only damages the psychological condition of the victim, but also has an impact on his social relationships. Many victims have difficulty building trust, especially with the opposite sex, as a result of the deep trauma they have experienced. The fear of being betrayed or harassed again makes the victim tend to withdraw from society. In the long run, this reduces the quality of social interaction, both in the family, work environment, school, and society in general. These conditions ultimately not only harm victims as individuals, but also have an impact on the broader social system. The loss of the victim's confidence to interact leads to a narrowing of social space, weakens community bonds, and decreases solidarity in the community. Thus, sexual harassment in public spaces is not only a personal problem, but also a social problem that has implications for the quality of relationships between individuals in society.

## 4. Decreased Quality of Life

Trauma due to sexual harassment can damage the quality of life of victims in various aspects, both physical, psychological, social, and economic. Judith Herman emphasizes that sexual harassment can destroy the basic structure of a person's life, including the victim's view of himself, his environment, and his future. Victims often feel a loss of security, experience social isolation, and experience a significant decline in confidence. This condition affects the victim's productivity at school and in the workplace, due to difficulty concentrating, prolonged stress, and frequent panic attacks. As a result, victims have difficulty achieving optimal achievements, thus hindering their career and education development. Furthermore, trauma and insecurity make victims reluctant to engage in activities in public spaces, resulting in a decrease in economic welfare and inhibition of personal development. It is not uncommon for victims to also lose faith in the legal system which is considered complicated and incapable of providing adequate protection, thus increasing the psychological burden and feeling of

helplessness. All of these conditions show that sexual harassment not only results in short-term psychological damage, but also has long-term impacts in the form of an overall decrease in quality of life.

### ***Physical Impact***

#### **1. Health Issues**

Sexual harassment in public spaces not only causes psychological injuries, but also has a real impact on the physical health of the victim. The mental stress experienced by the victim often triggers various psychosomatic disorders, such as indigestion (nausea, diarrhea, or constipation), eating disorders in the form of loss of appetite or on the contrary excessive eating (emotional eating), to significant weight loss. This condition, if it lasts for a long time, can cause malnutrition, anemia, and a weakened immune system so that the victim is more susceptible to disease infections. In addition, chronic stress due to trauma also triggers an imbalance of the hormone cortisol which has an impact on the body's metabolic disorders.

The victim's health deteriorates if they do not receive social support, but instead receive stigma or victim blaming. This situation makes the victim feel increasingly depressed, anxious, and difficult to recover. Feelings of isolation and insecurity in the social environment have the potential to worsen physical conditions, so health problems cannot be separated from psychosocial aspects. Therefore, recovering the health of victims requires a holistic approach, including medical, psychological, and social support from families and communities.

#### **2. Sleep Disorders**

The trauma of sexual abuse often leaves a deep mark that affects the quality of sleep of the victim. Common symptoms include insomnia (difficulty sleeping), recurring nightmares about harassment events, and other sleep disorders such as sleep paralysis or even sleep walking. The constant anxiety and fear that continues to haunt the victim's body makes the victim's body in a state of excessive vigilance (hyperarousal), making it difficult to feel relaxed. This condition triggers an irregular sleep cycle, making the victim often wake up at night and find it difficult to return to sleep.

Chronic sleep disorders have serious implications for the victim's health, including physical fatigue, decreased immunity, difficulty concentrating, mood swings, and an increased risk of chronic diseases such as metabolic disorders, hypertension, obesity, and even heart disease. Psychologically, sleep deprivation also worsens the symptoms of depression and anxiety that the victim has already experienced, thereby slowing down the recovery process. Environmental support, psychological therapy, and medical care are needed so that victims can improve their sleep quality, reduce symptoms of trauma, and restore balance.

#### **3. Physical Injury**

In addition to the psychological impact, sexual harassment also often leaves physical injuries that can be mild to severe. The injuries suffered by the victim can be in the form of bruises, abrasions, muscle pain, bleeding, and broken bones, both due to direct physical coercion by the perpetrator and due to the victim's efforts in resisting. Injuries to certain areas of the body can even lead to serious complications, such as soft tissue damage, vital organ disorders, or infections that can threaten long-term health. In some cases, the physical injuries experienced by the victim also leave permanent marks in the form of scarring, so that it has an

impact on the psychological condition because it triggers a sense of insecurity or shame towards one's own body.

Unfortunately, many victims are reluctant to report or immediately seek medical help due to fear, embarrassment, or threats from the perpetrator. In fact, prompt medical treatment is essential to prevent complications, reduce the risk of infection, and provide useful medical documentation in legal proceedings. In addition, psychological and social assistance is also needed to reduce trauma, so that victims do not feel alone in facing the physical and emotional impact of harassment.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that sexual harassment of women in public spaces in Semarang City manifests in severe forms such as groping and assault, leading to immediate trauma responses (freeze, crying, screaming) and profound, long-term psychological and social consequences, including PTSD, anxiety, depression, social stigmatization, and a diminished quality of life. Analyzed through Mead's symbolic interactionism, the findings reveal that these harms are deeply embedded in and reinforced by a patriarchal societal structure that objectifies women and produces victim-blaming symbols, transforming public spaces from sites of freedom into sources of ongoing threat and insecurity. For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies that track the recovery trajectories of survivors alongside the effectiveness of institutional support mechanisms, and to employ participatory action research (PAR) methods that actively involve survivors and community stakeholders in co-designing and evaluating context-specific, gender-sensitive interventions aimed at transforming public space safety, legal enforcement, and societal attitudes to prevent harassment and support holistic healing.

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