

Trauma, Violence, & Abuse

<http://tva.sagepub.com/>

The Role of Parent–Child Bonding, Attachment, and Interpersonal Problems in the Development of Deviant Sexual Fantasies in Sexual Offenders

Roberto Maniglio

Trauma Violence Abuse 2012 13: 83 originally published online 30 March 2012

DOI: 10.1177/1524838012440337

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://tva.sagepub.com/content/13/2/83>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://tva.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://tva.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

Citations: <http://tva.sagepub.com/content/13/2/83.refs.html>

>> [Version of Record](#) - May 15, 2012

[OnlineFirst Version of Record](#) - Mar 30, 2012

[What is This?](#)

The Role of Parent–Child Bonding, Attachment, and Interpersonal Problems in the Development of Deviant Sexual Fantasies in Sexual Offenders

Roberto Maniglio¹

Abstract

To understand the origin, development, and functions of deviant sexual fantasy in sexual offenders, the present article investigates three areas of the literature on sexual offenders (i.e., parent–child relationships, attachment, and interpersonal problems), hypothesizing a possible path through which dysfunctional parent–child relationships might lead to deviant sexual fantasies. The review of the literature provides indirect evidence that an insecure attachment style developed in response to dysfunctional parenting practices may generate feelings of inadequacy and inferiority to others and a lack of the self-confidence and social skills to initiate or maintain consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others. It is hypothesized that such problems, in turn, might promote low levels of intimacy and satisfaction in romantic relationships and serious and chronic emotional loneliness, withdrawal, and negative attitudes (such as anger and hostility) toward potential partners, leading to a progressive retirement from the real world and refuge in an internal world of deviant sexual fantasies in order to satisfy attachment-related needs for intimacy, emotional closeness, or power. Such a combination of insecure attachment, interpersonal problems, and use of deviant sexual fantasies as a means to achieve the intimacy, power, or control absent from reality might predispose to sexual offending.

Keywords

parent–child bonding, attachment, interpersonal problems, sexual abuse, sexual offending

The origin, development, and motivations of sexual offending have attracted considerable interest from researchers, clinicians, investigators, and other field practitioners aimed at preventing the occurrence of sexual crimes. The amount of scientific research in this area has suggested that the etiology of sexual offending is multifactorial, since several psychological, social, and biological risk factors may enhance the likelihood of developing sexual offending.

Several theoretical, phenomenological-descriptive, and empirical studies addressing the development and motivations of sexual offenders have focused on deviant sexual fantasies (i.e., fantasies that include themes involving illegal, nonconsensual, socially unacceptable, or otherwise inappropriate sexual behavior, or infliction of harm or pain during sexual intercourse; Carabellese, Maniglio, Greco, & Catanesi, 2011; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Maniglio, 2010). Several reviews have summarized such large body of research with findings of high rates of deviant sexual fantasies among sexual offenders. These findings suggest that deviant fantasy might play an important role in the development of sexual crimes (see, e.g., Carabellese et al., 2011; Drieschner & Lange, 1999; Howitt, 2004; Leitenberg & Henning, 1995; Marshall & Eccles, 1991; Ryan, 2004), especially youth sexual offending (Seto

& Lalumière, 2010) and sexual homicide (see, e.g., Chan & Heide, 2009; Dent & Jowitt, 2003; Gellerman & Suddath, 2005; Heide, Beauregard, & Myers, 2009; Maniglio, 2010; Meloy, 2000; Myers, Reccoppa, Burton, & McElroy, 1993).

Nonetheless, recent attempts to quantitatively summarize the findings of part of the empirical literature on the issue have provided mixed findings. In fact, while in a meta-analysis of eight studies on youth sexual offending adolescent sexual offenders ($N = 1,135$), compared to adolescent nonsexual offenders ($N = 3,937$), had more atypical sexual fantasies, behaviors, or interests (Cohen's $d = 0.67$, 95% confidence interval [CI] = [0.28, 1.06]; Seto & Lalumière, 2010), in a meta-analysis of three studies on child abuse perpetration, it was found that, although sexual offenders against children ($N = 396$) were more likely to report deviant sexual fantasies

¹ Department of Pedagogic, Psychological, and Didactic Sciences, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy

Corresponding Author:

Roberto Maniglio, Department of Pedagogic, Psychological, and Didactic Sciences, University of Salento, via Stampacchia 45/47, 73100 Lecce, Italy
Email: robertomaniglio@virgilio.it

than nonsexual offenders ($N = 195$), such likelihood was statistically nonsignificant (Cohen's $d = 0.23$, 95% CI $[-0.12, 0.57]$; Whitaker et al., 2008).

Thus, it is not clear whether deviant sexual fantasy might be a specific risk factor for specific types of sexual crimes, rather than a generic risk factor for general sexual offending behavior. Most importantly, it is unknown how and why sex offenders put such deviant fantasies into practice. In sum, it is clear that, despite efforts to address the role of fantasy in sexual crimes, further investigation for the origin, development, and functions of deviant sexual fantasy is required.

It is well known that merely having deviant sexual fantasies does not mean that these fantasies will be acted out. Many people engage in deviant sexual fantasies in order to create or intensify sexual arousal during masturbatory or interpersonal sexual acts (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Most of these people entertain such fantasies without putting them into practice. Therefore, it is important to know how and why some people develop deviant fantasies and act on them. In other words, it is essential to understand the mechanisms by which deviant sexual fantasies originate, develop, and translate into reality. However, few authors have attempted to elucidate the mechanisms that promote the development of deviant sexual fantasies in sexual offenders. Some of these authors have proposed that deviant sexual activity and masturbation to deviant sexual fantasies might originate from social difficulties and interpersonal problems resulting from a history of dysfunctional parent-child bonding and poor attachment (see, e.g., Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Ward & Beech, 2006). Similarly, a systematic review on the role of deviant sexual fantasy in the etiopathogenesis (i.e., the cause and development) of sexual homicide has suggested that, in sexual murderers, deviant sexual fantasies might develop from emotional loneliness and lack of social skills resulting from early adverse experiences (Maniglio, 2010).

In light of these suggestions, to better understand the origin, development, and functions of deviant sexual fantasy in sexual offenders, the present article aims at critically reviewing three areas of the literature on sexual offenders (i.e., parent-child relationships, attachment, and interpersonal problems in sexual offenders). Furthermore, the present article proposes a possible path through which, in sexual offenders, dysfunctional parent-child relationships might lead to deviant sexual fantasies.

Parent-Child Bonding and Child Attachment in Sexual Offenders

A large body of the literature on sexual offending has addressed the family environment in which sexual offenders have grown up. The findings from these studies suggest that a family climate characterized by a series of interpersonal problems, others than child abuse (such as dysfunctional relationships, ineffective communication, high levels of conflict or dysfunction, and low levels of satisfaction), might play a role in the development of later sexual offending (Becker, 1998; Burk & Burkhart,

2003; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003). Importantly, several empirical studies, theoretical models, and literature reviews have indicated dysfunctional parent-child relationships in childhood as one of the most important characteristics that might increase the likelihood of sexual offending in later life (Burk & Burkhart, 2003; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003).

A style of parenting involving low levels of care, consistency, supervision, and discipline and high levels of control, rejection, and neglect has been found to be highly prevalent among sexual offenders (Craissati, McClurg, & Browne, 2002; Marsa et al., 2004; McCormack, Hudson, & Ward, 2002). Most sexual offenders describe their parents as cold, distant, uncaring, indifferent, unsympathetic, rejecting, hostile, aggressive, or emotionally detached (Awad, Saunders, & Levene, 1984; Hazelwood & Warren, 1989; Marshall & Mazzucco, 1995; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998). In addition, it has been shown that rapists and pedophiles identify less with their mothers and fathers than do nonoffenders and nonsexual offenders (Levant & Bass, 1991). Moreover, the severity of sexual aggression among sexual offenders has been found to be associated with the consistency of parental availability and response (Prentky, Knight, et al., 1989).

Sexual offenders appear to depict differently their mothers and their fathers. For example, some sexual offenders report dependent relationships with their mothers (McCormack et al., 2002; Tingle, Barnard, Robbins, Newman, & Hutchinson, 1986). Although some offenders may state that they felt close to their mother in youth, only few of them describe her as someone to whom they could turn to discuss their problems (Tingle et al., 1986). Instead, many sexual offenders report to have had frequent arguments with their mothers and low rates of positive mother-son communication (Blaske, Borduin, Henggeler, & Mann, 1989; Tingle et al., 1986). In contrast, the relationships with their fathers are depicted as characterized by hostility, discord, abuse, and violence (Kahn & Chambers, 1991; Kobayashi, Sales, Becker, Figueredo, & Kaplan, 1995; Lisak & Roth, 1990; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998). Most sexual offenders describe their fathers as cold, distant, uncaring, unsympathetic, rejecting, and unresponsive to their needs (Lisak, 1994; McCormack et al., 2002; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998; Tingle et al., 1986).

Since child attachment is developed in response to parental behaviors, such a problematic parenting style might be a potential impediment to secure attachment for these children who are to become sexual offenders. Indeed, as a result of uncaring, rejecting, and hostile parenting practices, sexual offenders are thought to have had an insecure attachment style in childhood (see, e.g., Marshall, 1989; Marshall, Hudson, & Hodgkinson, 1993). A number of theoretical models have proposed that an insecure attachment in childhood might be a risk factor for later sexual offending (see, e.g., Baker, Beech, & Tyson, 2006; Beech & Mitchell, 2005; Beech & Ward, 2004; Burk & Burkhart, 2003; Davis, 2006; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Ward & Beech, 2006). Furthermore, results of a number of studies have shown that sexual offenders are likely to report an insecure child attachment style to their

parents (see, e.g., Marshall & Mazzucco, 1995; Marshall, Seran, & Cortoni, 2000), especially an avoidant attachment (see, e.g., Simons, Wurtele, & Durham, 2008; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2003).

It has been hypothesized that an insecure childhood attachment to father might be more important in predicting adult sexual offending than an insecure attachment to mother (see, e.g., Lisak, 1994; McCormack et al., 2002). However, those studies that have compared the childhood attachment to father to that to mother have provided mixed findings. Specifically, while some studies have found that an avoidant attachment to father is an independent predictor of coercive sexual behavior both in rapists (Smallbone & Dadds, 1998) and in nonoffenders (Smallbone & Dadds, 2000), other studies have revealed that an avoidant attachment to mother, rather than an avoidant attachment to father, is independently associated with later coercive sexual behavior in nonoffenders (Smallbone & Dadds, 2001).

It has been also proposed that, while an insecure childhood attachment might be related to general sexual offending behavior, specific attachment styles might be associated with specific kinds of sexual offending. For instance, it has been shown that rapists may be more likely to report an avoidant childhood attachment (Simons et al., 2008), especially with fathers (Smallbone & Dadds, 2003). In contrast, child molesters, especially intrafamilial abusers, may show an anxious-ambivalent childhood attachment (Simons et al., 2008) or a combination of anxious and avoidant attachment, especially with mothers (Smallbone & Dadds, 2001).

Although several studies and a number of qualitative reviews have shown that sexual offenders, compared to nonoffenders and nonsexual offenders, are more likely to report dysfunctional parent-child relationships and an insecure attachment in childhood, two meta-analytic reviews of studies on specific typologies of sexual offenders have provided inconsistent findings. More precisely, in Whitaker et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis, sexual offenders against children, in comparison to nonoffenders, were significantly more likely to exhibit poor histories of family functioning, including more harsh discipline (3 studies comparing a total of 84 sex offenders against children to 68 nonoffenders: $d = 1.00$, 95% CI [0.50, 1.51]), poorer attachment, or bonding (11 studies, 2,026 sex offenders against children vs. 32,489 nonoffenders: $d = 0.47$, 95% CI [0.28, 0.66]), and generally worse functioning of their family of origin (14 studies, 2,121 sex offenders against children vs. 32,591 nonoffenders, $d = 0.52$, 95% CI [0.31, 0.74]); however, comparisons between sexual offenders against children, sexual offenders against adults, and nonsexual offenders produced nonsignificant effect sizes on measures of poor attachment or bonding (4 studies, 170 sex offenders against children vs. 87 sex offenders against adults: $d = 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.22, 0.32]; 3 studies, 117 sex offenders against children vs. 102 nonsexual offenders: $d = 0.08$, 95% CI [-0.20, 0.35]) and poor family functioning (5 studies, 224 sex offenders against children vs. 100 sex offenders against adults: $d = 0.02$, 95% CI [-0.24, 0.27]; 4 studies, 171 sex offenders against children vs. 116

nonsexual offenders: $d = -0.05$, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.20]). Similarly, in Seto and Lalumière's (2010) meta-analysis of 15 studies comparing male adolescent sexual offenders ($N = 917$) with male adolescent nonsexual offenders ($N = 1,490$), differences between the two groups on variables pertaining to problematic family relationships, communication, and satisfaction, including parent-child relationships and child attachment, were nonsignificant ($d = -0.01$, 95% CI [-0.34, 0.32]). Therefore, it is not clear whether inadequate parent-child relationships, including dysfunctional parental behaviors and insecure child attachment styles, might be specific risk factors for sexual offending. Instead, it is possible that a dysfunctional parent-child relationship might be a significant risk factor for general offending behavior, rather than for sexual offending behavior.

In light of these suggestions, it is essential to understand whether parent-child relationships and, in particular, child attachment might lead to sexual offending. Since attachment styles, once established, are stable over time and refractory to change, it has been suggested that an insecure child attachment might result in an enduring set of social difficulties and interpersonal problems in youth and adulthood which, in turn, might predispose to sexual offending (see, e.g., Marshall, 1989, 1993; Marshall et al., 1993; Ward, Hudson, Marshall, & Siegert, 1995; Ward, Hudson, & McCormack, 1997; Ward & Siegert, 2002). These suggestions serve to address the next sections' investigation for adult attachment and difficulties in intimate relationships among sexual offenders.

Adult Attachment in Sexual Offenders

It has been proposed that, because of the poor quality of childhood attachment the sexual offenders developed in their childhood in response to the dysfunctional parenting practices, these insecurely attached individuals might exhibit negative internal working models of relationships (i.e., thoughts about self and thoughts about others; Bowlby, 1973) that include not only a view of self as unworthy of love and caregiving from others or of others as unreliable providers of love and caregiving but also the use of aggression to gain love, caregiving, intimacy, control, or power (Davis, 2006; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall & Marshall, 2000). Such negative internal working models might be brought to their adult relationships, resulting primarily in an insecure adult attachment style in intimate relationships (see Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Results of several studies have shown that sexual offenders, compared to nonsexual offenders and nonoffenders, are more likely to report an insecure attachment style in their adult relationships, either a dismissive-avoidant, a fearful-avoidant, or an anxious-preoccupied attachment style (Abracen, Looman, Di Fazio, Kelly, & Stirpe, 2006; Baker & Beech, 2004; Hudson & Ward, 1997; Jamieson & Marshall, 2000; Lyn & Burton, 2004, 2005; Marsa et al., 2004; McCormack et al., 2002; Sawle & Kear-Colwell, 2001; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998; Stirpe, Abracen, Stermac, & Wilson, 2006; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 1997; Ward, Hudson, & Marshall, 1996).

It has been suggested that the three insecure adult attachment styles might be related to different types of sexual offending. More specifically, it has been hypothesized that rapists may have a dismissive-avoidant attachment style, which leads them to demonstrate hostility to others by sexually coercing adult partners, whereas sexual offenders against children may have an anxious-preoccupied attachment style which leads them to seek approval from others by engaging in sexual contact with children perceived as less threatening than age peers (see Ward et al., 1996). However, research has provided mixed findings. Specifically, there is some evidence that rapists have a dismissive attachment (McCormack et al., 2002; Stirpe et al., 2006; Ward et al., 1996). A dismissive-attachment style has been also related to sexual coercion among male students (Smallbone & Dadds, 2001). In contrast, child molesters are more likely to report a fearful-avoidant (Jamieson & Marshall, 2000; Marsa et al., 2004) or a combination of fearful and preoccupied attachment (McCormack et al., 2002; Ward et al., 1996), although it has been also shown that a preoccupied style may be more likely prevalent among extrafamilial child molesters, whereas intrafamilial child offenders may have a dismissive attachment (Stirpe et al., 2006). However, other studies (Baker & Beech, 2004; Smallbone & Dadds, 1998) have failed to distinguish among different subtypes of sexual offenders. In sum, to date, it is not clear whether specific adult attachment styles are associated with specific types of sexual offending.

It has been also proposed that the relationship between attachment style and interpersonal issues, such as social competency and coping skills, among sexual offenders might be more important than the relationship between attachment style and offender type. For example, it has been shown that sexual offenders with a fearful attachment are more likely to be lonely (Hudson & Ward, 1997; Marsa et al., 2004) and have greater hostility toward women (Hudson & Ward, 1997) or abnormal anger management (Marsa et al., 2004). In contrast, sexual offenders with a dismissive-attachment style are more accepting of rape myths (Hudson & Ward, 1997) and use higher levels of aggression in their offenses (Jamieson & Marshall, 2000). However, both fearfully and dismissively attached offenders show great fear of intimacy, anger expression, and anger suppression (Hudson & Ward, 1997). Significant loneliness is also reported by preoccupiedly attached offenders (Hudson & Ward, 1997).

Therefore, it is apparent that all typologies of sexual offenders are highly likely to have an insecure attachment in adulthood that results from an insecure attachment style in childhood and is related to a number of problems in intimate relationships (such as fear of intimacy, loneliness, anger, aggression, and hostility toward women). However, it is unknown whether an insecure adult attachment might be a specific risk factor for sexual offending, or whether it might be a generic risk factor for deviant behavior. In fact, although some studies suggest that sexual offenders, compared to other criminal populations, are more likely to have an insecure adult attachment, attempts to quantitatively summarize the results of studies comparing sexual offenders to nonsexual offenders

on measures of adult attachment have provided inconsistent findings. Specifically, in Whitaker et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis, sexual offenders against children were significantly more likely to show a lack of secure adult attachment than non-offenders (8 studies, 402 sex offenders against children vs. 322 nonoffenders: $d = 0.79$, 95% CI [0.57, 1.01]); however, comparing sexual offenders against children, sexual offenders against adults, and nonsexual offenders on measures of secure adult attachment produced nonsignificant effect sizes (4 studies, 175 sex offenders against children vs. 103 sex offenders against adults: $d = 0.25$, 95% CI [-0.18, 0.68]; 5 studies, 211 sex offenders against children vs. 210 nonsex offenders: $d = 0.10$, 95% CI [-0.16, 0.37]). Therefore, it is apparent that a lack of secure adult attachment might be a risk factor for general offending behavior, rather than for sexual offending behavior.

Nonetheless, it has been hypothesized that an insecure adult attachment style might lead to sexual offending as a means of achieving intimacy and emotional closeness (Marshall, 1989, 1993; Marshall et al., 1993). More precisely, it has been proposed that individuals with a dismissive-avoidant attachment style in adulthood, because of their fear of intimacy resulting from early attachment experiences, minimize the importance of close relationships and might be angry and hostile toward potential partners, whereas individuals with a fearful-avoidant attachment, because of their attachment-related fear of rejection, might choose to seek intimacy through impersonal sexual encounters, by expressing their aggression indirectly rather than directly (Ward et al., 1996). In contrast, adults with a disorganized attachment style that involves both anxiety and avoidance, because of their needs for control resulting from early attachment experiences, might use force and coercion as a sexualized means of control, dominance, and power in relationships (Burk & Burkhart, 2003), whereas individuals with an anxious-preoccupied attachment style as adults have an own sense of unworthiness which might lead them to seek approval from others by sexualizing their need for security and affection (Ward et al., 1996). In sum, it has been hypothesized that, because insecurely attached individuals lack the self-confidence and social skills to initiate or maintain consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others, they might experience emotional loneliness and low levels of intimacy and satisfaction in their romantic relationships. Consequently, they might attempt to satisfy their needs for intimacy, emotional closeness, control, or power through inappropriate sexual behavior (Burk & Burkhart, 2003; Marshall, 1989, 1993; Marshall et al., 1993; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Ward et al., 1995, 1996, 1997).

Social Difficulties and Interpersonal Problems in Sexual Offenders

There is consistent evidence that all typologies of sexual offenders are highly likely to experience a wide range of serious social difficulties and interpersonal problems, especially a lack of the social skills necessary to establish adequate relationship

with appropriate peers (see, e.g., Davis & Leitenberg, 1987; Geer, Estupinan, & Manguno-Mire, 2000; Hudson & Ward, 2000; Maniglio, 2010; Marshall, 1996; Mulloy & Marshall, 1999; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003; van Wijk et al., 2006). Such problems have been suggested to play a role in sexual offending (see, e.g., Barbaree, Hudson, & Seto, 1993; Maniglio, 2010; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003).

One of the most commonly discussed characteristics of sexual offenders is their significant lack of social skills (see, e.g., Geer et al., 2000; Shaw, 1999). For example, a number of studies have shown that, compared to nonsexual offenders and non-offenders, sexual offenders, especially juvenile sexual offenders, are likely to display more social deficits and less social competence in interpersonal relationships (e.g., Ford & Linney, 1995; Katz, 1990; Knight & Prentky, 1993; Moody, Brissie, & Kim, 1994).

Most importantly, much research on interpersonal problems among sexual offenders has focused on social skills and competence involved in establishing heterosocial relationships with appropriate peers (see Geer et al., 2000). The findings from these studies suggest that sexual offenders have general deficits in the manner in which they relate to others, particularly women, and deficits in the way they manage interpersonal relationships, especially heterosocial relationships, because they lack the skills which lead to the successful performance of heterosocial behavior (see Clark & Lewis, 1977; Geer et al., 2000; Keenan & Ward, 2000; Ward, Keenan, & Hudson, 2000). For example, several studies have found that, compared to nonsexual offenders and nonoffenders, sexual offenders are more likely to be significantly inadequate and deficient in basic social skills and behaviors important in initiating and maintaining a heterosocial relationship, because they exhibit a series of deficits in such skills as approaching someone, engaging someone in conversation, and accurately decoding affective cues during interactions with peers (Abel, Blanchard, & Becker, 1978; Barlow, Abel, Blanchard, Bristow, & Young, 1977; Katz, 1990; Lipton, McDonel, & McFall, 1987; Overholser & Beck, 1986; Segal & Marshall, 1985a, 1985b, 1986; Stahl & Sacco, 1995). In addition, sexual offenders show significant social anxiety symptoms, such as fear of negative evaluation, in heterosocial interactions (Overholser & Beck, 1986; Segal & Marshall, 1985b).

Moreover, a number of studies have found that, compared to nonsexual offenders and nonoffenders, sexual offenders are more inadequate and deficient in the manner in which they manage intimate relationships because they are more likely to show significant deficits in intimacy skills that create difficulties in romantic relationships (Bumby & Hansen, 1997; Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Garlick, Marshall, & Thornton, 1996; Lisak & Ivan, 1995; Marshall, Bryce, Hudson, Ward, & Moth, 1996; Seidman, Marshall, Hudson, & Robertson, 1994; Ward, McCormack, & Hudson, 1997).

Although few studies have found no significant differences between sexual offenders and controls on some measures of heterosocial skills and social competence (see, e.g., Alexander & Johnson, 1980; Marshall, Barbaree, & Fernandez, 1995;

Stermac & Quinsey, 1986), Whitaker et al.'s (2008) meta-analytic review has found that child abusers, compared to non-offenders, showed lower social skills and competence (8 studies, 552 sex offenders against children vs. 403 nonoffenders: $d = 0.28$, 95% CI [0.02, 0.54]) and more difficulties with intimate relationships (10 studies, 452 sex offenders against children vs. 375 nonoffenders: $d = 0.84$, 95% CI [0.63, 1.05]).

Some narrative reviews of studies addressing social difficulties and interpersonal problems in different typologies of sexual offenders have suggested that evidence for social incompetence and social skills deficits in child abusers is more robust when compared to the findings with regard to sexual offenders with adult victims (see, e.g., Geer et al., 2000; Hudson & Ward, 2000). Nevertheless, attempts to quantitatively summarize the results of these studies have provided mixed findings. Specifically, a meta-analytic review of 14 studies (yielding a total of 119 effect sizes representing the responses of 5,295 participants) addressing heterosocial competence (i.e., social skills in interactions with opposite-sex peers) among rapists and child molesters, has found that child molesters had significantly lower heterosocial competence than rapists (Hedges' $d = -0.33$, 95% CI [-0.46, -0.19], $r = -0.16$, $p < .001$; Dreznick, 2003). In contrast, Whitaker et al.'s (2008) meta-analytic review has shown that comparing sexual offenders against adults and sexual offenders against children on measures of social skills and competence (3 studies, 87 sex offenders against children vs. 84 sex offenders against adults: $d = -0.15$, 95% CI [-0.50, 0.21]) and difficulties with intimate relationships (7 studies, 261 sex offenders against children vs. 181 sex offenders against adults: $d = -0.02$, 95% CI [-0.29, 0.25]) produced effect sizes that were all small to null and nonsignificant, with no consistent direction. Therefore, it is unknown whether impairment of social competence and social skills might be more predictive of sexual offending against children. Instead, there is consistent evidence that all typologies of sexual offenders, compared to nonoffenders, have more social difficulties and interpersonal problems.

A number of theoretical models have proposed that interpersonal problems, especially difficulties in intimate relationships, might be a significant risk factor for sexual offending (see, e.g., Barbaree et al., 1993; Starzyk & Marshall, 2003). Specifically, as previously indicated, it has been proposed that, since sexual offenders do not have the social skills to satisfy their sexual, intimacy, and emotional needs in age-appropriate and consensual relationships (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall et al., 1993; Ward & Siegert, 2002), they might seek intimacy and emotional closeness through sex, even if it must involve aggression, coercion, dominance, or control over others, in effect confusing sex with intimacy (Marshall, 1989, 1993; Marshall et al., 1993).

However, it is unknown whether interpersonal problems, especially difficulties in intimate relationships, might be specific risk factors for sexual offending behavior or whether they might be generic risk factors for general offending behavior. In fact, although some studies suggest that sexual offenders,

compared to other criminal populations, are more likely to have interpersonal problems, attempts to quantitatively summarize the results of studies comparing sexual offenders to nonsexual offenders on measures of social difficulties and interpersonal problems have provided mixed findings. Specifically, Seto and Lalumière's (2010) meta-analytic review has shown that, although adolescent sexual offenders, compared to adolescent nonsexual offenders, tended to have more heterosocial skills deficits, general social skills deficits, and other social problems that can interfere with the development or maintenance of relationships with others, none of these comparisons reached statistical significance (heterosocial skills deficits: 5 studies, 196 adolescent sex offenders vs. 207 adolescent nonsex offenders, $d = 0.29$, 95% CI [-0.21, 0.78]; social skills deficits: 8 studies, 342 adolescent sex offenders vs. 482 adolescent nonsex offenders, $d = 0.13$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.31]; social problems: 6 studies, 308 adolescent sex offenders vs. 498 adolescent nonsex offenders, $d = 0.10$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.24]). In contrast, Dreznick's (2003) meta-analytic review has found that both rapists and child molesters had significantly lower heterosocial competence than nonsexual offenders (all sex offenders vs. nonsex offenders: $d = -0.36$, 95% CI [-0.41, -0.30], $r = -0.18$, $p < .001$; rapists vs. nonsex-offenders: $d = -0.23$, 95% CI [-0.30, -0.16], $r = -0.11$, $p < .001$; child molesters vs. nonsex offenders: $d = -0.54$, 95% CI [-0.62, -0.45], $r = -0.26$, $p < .001$). Similarly, Whitaker et al.'s (2008) meta-analytic review has shown that sexual offenders against children, compared to nonsexual offenders, exhibited lower social skills and competence (4 studies, 143 sex offenders against children vs. 130 nonsex offenders: $d = 0.42$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.66]) and more difficulties with intimate relationships (10 studies, 350 sex offenders against children vs. 361 nonsex offenders: $d = 0.42$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.70]). Therefore, it may be possible that social difficulties and interpersonal problems might be specific risk factors for the perpetration of sexual offences in adulthood, whereas they might be generic risk factors for general offending behavior in youth.

However, it has been suggested that such social difficulties and interpersonal problems, especially difficulties in intimate relationships, might result in serious and chronic social isolation among sexual offenders (Davis & Leitenberg, 1987). Several studies have shown that all typologies of sexual offenders, such as child abusers (Bumby & Hansen, 1997; Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Curnoe & Langevin, 2002; Marshall et al., 1996; Seidman et al., 1994; Tingle et al., 1986), rapists (Bumby & Hansen, 1997; Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Curnoe & Langevin, 2002; Seidman et al., 1994; Tingle et al., 1986), sexual murders (Grubin, 1994; Keppel & Walter, 1999; Ressler, Burgess, Hartman, Douglas, & McCormack, 1986), and juvenile sexual offenders (Awad et al., 1984; Fagan & Wexler, 1988; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky & Deisher, 1986; Katz, 1990; Knight & Prentky, 1993; Saunders, Awad, & White, 1986), experience high levels of social isolation and loneliness. The findings of these studies are supported by Whitaker et al.'s (2008) and Seto and Lalumière's (2010) meta-analytic reviews that have found among child abusers and juvenile sexual offenders, in

comparison to nonoffenders and nonsexual offenders, significant more social isolation, withdrawal, and introversion (16 studies, 872 adolescent sex offenders vs. 1,019 adolescent nonsex offenders, $d = 0.25$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.46]) and significant more loneliness (10 studies, 484 sex offenders against children vs. 385 nonsex offenders: $d = 0.44$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.73]; 11 studies, 602 sex offenders against children vs. 1,260 nonoffenders: $d = 1.02$, 95% CI [0.49, 1.55]). In addition, sexual offenders against children appear to exhibit significant more loneliness than sexual offenders against adults (6 studies, 289 sex offenders against children vs. 215 sex offenders against adults: $d = 0.19$, 95% CI [-0.04, 0.41]; Whitaker et al., 2008). Taken as a whole, the results of these meta-analytic reviews suggest that loneliness and social isolation might play an important role in the origin of sexual offending. These suggestions are useful to introduce the next section's examination of deviant sexual fantasies in sexual offenders with difficulties in intimate relationships, social isolation, and loneliness, resulting from an insecure attachment.

Insecure Attachment, Intimacy Problems, and Deviant Sexual Fantasies

As indicated in the introduction section of this article, some authors have suggested that social difficulties and interpersonal problems resulting from a history of dysfunctional parent-child bonding and poor attachment may lead to deviant sexual activity and masturbation to deviant sexual fantasies (see, e.g., Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Ward & Beech, 2006). Furthermore, a systematic review on the role of deviant sexual fantasy in the etiopathogenesis of sexual homicide (Maniglio, 2010) has shown that, in sexual murderers, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority to others, resulting from early negative experiences, including poor attachment experiences, predispose to a lack of social skills and subsequent difficulties in intimate relationships, which, in turn, may lead these offenders to escape from the real world and take refuge in an internal world of deviant sexual fantasies.

In light of these suggestions, it is possible to hypothesize that, in sexual offenders, social difficulties and interpersonal problems, especially difficulties in intimate relationships, resulting from an insecure childhood attachment, may result in social isolation and loneliness which, in turn, may lead to refuge in an internal world of deviant sexual fantasies.

More specifically, as shown in the previous sections of this article, most sexual offenders developed an insecure attachment style in response to dysfunctional parenting practices characterized by low levels of care, consistency, supervision, and discipline and high levels of control, rejection, and neglect. Although it is uncertain whether dysfunctional parental behaviors and insecure child attachment styles might be risk factors for sexual offending, rather than for general offending behavior, the studies reviewed in the present article suggest that social difficulties and interpersonal problems, especially difficulties in intimate relationships, resulting from insecure child attachment styles, might be risk factors for the perpetration

of sexual offences, rather than for the perpetration of general offences. As shown in the previous sections of this article, it is possible that an insecure attachment style may predispose those children who are to become sexual offenders to feelings of inferiority to others and inadequacy in social interactions with peers, leading to difficulties in social relationships. Such social difficulties, in turn, have the potential to reinforce the sense of inadequacy and inferiority, leading to social isolation and loneliness. Because such an attachment style may be stable over time and refractory to change, these insecurely attached children may grow into insecurely attached youths and men who lack the self-confidence and social skills to initiate or maintain consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others. As a result, these insecurely attached individuals experience not only low levels of intimacy and satisfaction in their romantic relationships but also serious and chronic emotional loneliness, withdrawal, and negative attitudes (such as anger and hostility) toward potential partners. Consequently, they might begin to progressively retire from the real world and take refuge in an internal, imaginary world of deviant sexual fantasies as a means to achieve the intimacy, power, or control absent from reality.

Lacking the self-confidence and social skills to initiate or maintain consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others, it may be possible that these individuals may entertain fantasies involving coercion, power, and control over potential partners, and the representation of partners as objects or instruments of sexual pleasure, power, or intimacy, in order to satisfy their attachment-related needs for intimacy, emotional closeness, or power through fantasy. For example, it may be possible that individuals with an enhanced need for intimacy might engage in fantasies in which they entertain an adult-like love relationship with a child perceived as less threatening, more available, and more accepting than age peers in the real world. In contrast, individuals with needs for control, dominance, and power in relationships might entertain sexual fantasies in which they are powerful and omnipotent and may achieve the dominance and power absent from reality.

Although empirical support for these suggestions is scant, there is some research that indirectly supports these assumptions. For example, a number of studies have suggested that sexual offenders may attempt to satisfy their needs for intimacy or emotional closeness through sexual fantasies involving coercion (e.g., Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, & Guild, 1977; Barbaree, Baxter, & Marshall, 1989; Earls, 1988), power (Groth, Burgess, & Holmstrom, 1977), and control over potential partners (Baumgartner, Scalora, & Huss, 2002; Scully & Marolla, 1993). Importantly, other studies have found social difficulties, interpersonal problems, and loneliness in various typologies of sexual offenders, such as child abusers (Curnoe & Langevin, 2002; Looman, 1995; Proulx, McKibben, & Lusignan, 1996), juvenile sexual offenders (Smith, Wampler, Jones, & Reifman, 2005), rapists (Curnoe & Langevin, 2002; MacCulloch, Snowden, Wood, & Mills, 1983; Proulx et al., 1996), and sexual murderers (Beauregard, Stone, Proulx, & Michaud, 2008; Grubin, 1994; Keppel & Walter, 1999; MacCulloch et al., 1983; Ressler

et al., 1986), having frequent and extreme deviant sexual fantasies. Most importantly, some studies have found that both sexual offenders against adults and pedophiles reported more frequent deviant sexual fantasies and increased masturbatory activities during these fantasies following episodes in which they experienced interpersonal conflicts or inadequacy, feelings of being humiliated or rejected by another person, loneliness, and arguments with wives or girlfriends (DiGiorgio-Miller, 2007; Gee, Ward, & Eccleston, 2003; Looman, 1995, 1999; McKibben, Proulx, & Lusignan, 1994; Proulx et al., 1996).

Two of these studies are particularly important for the purposes of the present article. In the first one, Curnoe and Langevin (2002) have examined personality and deviant sexual fantasies of a sample of 186 sexual offenders (14 heterosexual pedophiles, 23 homosexual pedophiles, 51 exhibitionists, 17 incest perpetrators, 24 sexual aggressives, and 57 miscellaneous/multiple sex offenders). Results have shown that sexual offenders with deviant fantasies (as determined by their replies to the Clarke Sex History Questionnaire Fantasy scales: Langevin, Paitich, Handy, & Langevin, 1990) were significantly more socially alienated and less emotionally stable on the Harris Lingoes subscales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory than offenders with nondeviant fantasies. More precisely, sexual offenders with deviant fantasies scored higher on social alienation (Pd3: $F = 7.66, p < .006$; Sc1a: $F = 8.556, p < .004$), emotional alienation (Sc1b: $F = 5.158, p < .024$), self-alienation (Pd5: $F = 3.12, p < .10$), family discord (Pd1: $F = 5.01, p < .05$), persecutory ideas (Pa1: $F = 6.86, p < .009$), defective inhibition (Sc2c: $F = 9.301, p < .003$), sexual identification with females (Mf2: $F = 13.86, p < .001$), and female occupational identification (Mf4: $F = 5.15, p < .024$); these findings did not reflect group differences, as there was no interaction effect of fantasy and sex offender group factors (Curnoe & Langevin, 2002). According to Curnoe and Langevin (2002), these results suggest that sexual offenders with deviant fantasies may be more likely to act on their deviant sexual impulses, as they show greater social and emotional alienation and sexual identity disturbance which more readily allow them to objectify their victims (see also Langevin, 1985; Prentky, Burgess, et al., 1989). The authors concluded that, in sexual offenders, fantasy proneness may be associated with escapism in general and less emotional stability (Curnoe & Langevin, 2002).

In the second study, Baumgartner, Scalora, and Huss (2002) have examined the differences between 64 child molesters and 41 nonsexual offenders on the Wilson Sex Fantasy Questionnaire (Wilson, 1978). Child molesters reported significantly higher levels of intimate fantasies (e.g., kissing passionately, oral sex, masturbation, and sex outdoors) than nonsexual offenders ($F = 8.18; p = .005$). The authors suggested that more intimate fantasies among child molesters may correspond to increased sexual preoccupation in this group, in comparison to nonsexual offenders. In addition, child molesters reported more active fantasies (i.e., fantasies where they were actor actively doing sexual behaviors, as opposed to passively receiving them, e.g., giving oral sex, or hurting a partner) than

nonsexual offenders ($F = 5.24$; $p = .024$), although both groups expressed relatively similar levels of passive fantasies (e.g., receiving oral sex, or being hurt by a partner; $F = 0.71$; $p = .401$). According to the authors, since active and passive fantasies are related to the offender's sense of power or control within the imagined sexual situation, "the majority of sexual fantasies child molesters experience involve placing themselves in a position of control and mastery rather than a position of submission. . . . Child molesters imagine being confident and sexually assertive, although they are markedly unassertive in daily life. . . . Similarly, a lack of significant differences in passive fantasies may support the notion that child molesters maintain a position of power within imagined sexual situations, more often than nonsexual offenders, as a way of compensating for a lack of confidence, unassertiveness, and feelings of powerlessness" (Baumgartner et al., 2002, p. 26; see also Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Marshall et al., 1995).

Taken as a whole, these results may support the idea that some sexual offenders might acquire a sense of intimacy, control, and mastery from their sexual fantasies. It thus becomes easier and more pleasurable for them to live predominantly in their imaginary world (MacCulloch et al., 1983). However, since fantasy might be the only source of sexual arousal (see Abel et al., 1987; Laws & O'Donohue, 1997; Prentky, Burgess, et al., 1989), given their deficit of sexual experience and social contact with the preferred sex (MacCulloch et al., 1983), the need for engagement in fantasies might persist or even increase over time, increasing the likelihood of entertaining deviant sexual fantasies for prolonged periods of time. Nevertheless, it may be possible that such an overuse of fantasy might promote more serious and chronic social isolation and emotional loneliness (Looman, 1995), which, in turn, are likely to worsen the offender's intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning and ultimately result in greater social difficulties. Therefore, such an overuse of deviant sexual fantasies is rarely effective and adaptive in the long term, because it might lead these individuals to be loners and immature persons (Keppel & Walter, 1999), who feel inferior to others and are plagued by a chronic lack of intimacy, thus worsening their intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning and ultimately resulting in greater isolation and withdrawal. At the same time, it has been suggested that such a misuse of deviant sexual fantasies is likely to lead to a reduction in perceived control, with sexual offenders never learning to control their sexual impulses (Neidigh & Tomiko, 1991).

Although the general pathway proposed in the present article refers to all sexual offenders who deviantly fantasize, there might be a subimplication pertinent to those sexual offenders with sadistic fantasies. In fact, it has been proposed that the more time these individuals with deviant sexual fantasies dedicate to their fantasies, the more power and violence they acquire (MacCulloch, Gray, & Watt, 2000; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990). As a result, such fantasies might grow out of sadism (Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, & McCormack, 1986; MacCulloch et al., 1983; 2000). Specifically, it has been hypothesized that even small number of negative intimate experiences with the preferred sex might result in concurrent

high levels of aggressive feelings and sexual arousal during and in the immediate aftermath of such negative experiences (MacCulloch et al., 2000). In these cases, a representation of sexual arousal and a representation of aggressive feelings might be active concurrently and associations between these two representations might be formed through the process of sensory pre-conditioning (a learning mechanism that is more primitive than either classical and operant conditioning: see MacCulloch et al., 2000). Subsequent repeated pairings of these two intrinsically reinforcing emotional states (in fantasy) might lead to rapid and intense conditioned associations being formed and elaborated upon (Beauregard et al., 2008; Burgess et al., 1986; MacCulloch et al., 2000). Subsequently, if, at any stage, the individual feels aggressive, then representation of sexual arousal might be activated, and vice versa, providing a common pathway to sadistic sexual fantasy (MacCulloch et al., 2000).

Once fantasies have grown out of sadism, they might generate a state of tension which might lead these individuals to gain relief through action (Schlesinger, 2007), in effect creating a disposition to offend. Such a disposition to offend may be acted upon when combined with detachment from social rules of conduct, accessibility of a victim, and weakness of inhibitions due to alcohol, drugs, or stress (Burgess et al., 1986; Laws & Marshall, 1990; Marshall & Marshall, 2000; Prentky & Burgess, 1991). Consequently, these individuals might try to act out their fantasies as they are imagined in order to seek reassurance of their needs for intimacy, control, personal adequacy, and competence from the victim (Beauregard et al., 2008; Keppel & Walter, 1999). Given that reality can never precisely match their imagination, their deviant sexual fantasies need to be restaged with a new victim.

In conclusion, the present article has investigated three areas of the literature on sexual offending (i.e., parent-child relationships, attachment, and social difficulties in sex offenders), in order to better understand the origin, development, and functions of deviant sexual fantasy in sexual offenders. In addition, a possible path through which parent-child relationships might lead to deviant sexual fantasies has been suggested. It is hypothesized that insecure attachment styles and difficulties in social relationships, especially difficulties in initiating or maintaining consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others, might lead to use of deviant sexual fantasies as a means to achieve the intimacy, power, or control absent from reality. Such a combination of insecure attachment, difficulties in intimate relationships, and use of fantasy as an attempt to satisfy the needs for intimacy, emotional closeness, or power might lead to a disposition to offend.

Although these assumptions may have implications for prevention and treatment of sexual offending, they are mainly theoretical and based on clinical and intuitive judgment, as the empirical evidence is scant. As highlighted above, the amount of scientific research in the origin and development of deviant fantasy in sexual offenders is modest. However, it has been suggested that a theoretical focus and a descriptive approach may be appropriate first steps for developing areas that are

difficult to study and where relatively little research has occurred, such as the etiology of sexual crimes (Schlesinger, 2004, 2007). Although indirect evidence for the assumptions postulated in the final part of the present article is provided by the results of some studies, the associations suggested by these studies (e.g., the association between feelings of loneliness and deviant fantasy use) are strictly correlational. Thus, cause cannot be assumed from the studies demonstrating such a link. For example, it was suggested that loneliness and social isolation might lead to the use of deviant fantasies; however, the opposing causal direction might also be likely (i.e., the use of deviant sexual fantasy causes loneliness and social isolation), although, as suggested above, some studies have found that sexual offenders reported more frequent deviant sexual fantasies after, rather than before, episodes in which they experienced interpersonal conflicts or inadequacy, feelings of being humiliated or rejected by another person, and loneliness. However, it is also possible that loneliness and the use of deviant fantasy might reinforce each other; perhaps, it is also possible that a hidden third variable (e.g., low self-esteem or lack of social support) might mediate the relationship between loneliness and deviant fantasy.

Speaking more broadly, the methodological limitations (e.g., poor sampling methods, inadequate control for confounders, and designs inappropriate to prove causality) of most of the empirical studies cited in the present article do not allow for causal inferences to be made. Thus, findings should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, many studies were based on small number of patients or incarcerated individuals living in England and North America. Therefore, the samples of these studies might be not representative of the population of sexual offenders in the place and at the time where data had been gathered; in addition, the results cannot be generalized to sexual offenders living in other countries. Many studies with these methodological limitations were also included in the meta-analytic reviews cited in the present article, which, therefore, do not allow for strong assertions about causal relationships. For all these reasons, interpretation and generalization of the assumptions postulated in the present article need caution.

The present article has some other limitations. First, it was suggested that the combination of insecure attachment and difficulties in intimate relationships might lead to the use of fantasy as an attempt to satisfy the needs for intimacy, emotional closeness, or power and that such a combination of insecure attachment, difficulties in intimate relationships, and use of fantasy might lead to a disposition to offend. However, deviant sexual fantasy in sexual offenders might not result from a process that necessarily requires insecurely attached children who grow into youths and men with difficulties in intimate relationships. It is possible that other biological, psychological, or social factors might play a role in the origin and development of deviant sexual fantasies in sexual offenders and predispose to offending. For example, some observational–descriptive studies have found that sexual murders with deviant sexual fantasies reported not only attachment issues and interpersonal problems but also experiences of child abuse, use of

pornography, homosexual or bisexual orientation, a history of violence and arrests, poor adjustment in school, psychotic symptoms, and unemployment (Beauregard et al., 2008; Myers & Blashfield, 1997; Myers, Burgess, & Nelson, 1998). Second, the assumptions postulated in the present article account for neither those sexual offenders who do not frequently use deviant fantasies, although they might have the supposed predisposing factors (i.e., insecure attachment and difficulties in intimate relationships) nor those individuals who have deviant fantasies, attachment issues, and intimacy problems but who do not offend sexually. Third, the concept of sadism as well as the development of sadistic fantasies proposed in the last part of the present article refer to sadistic sexual offenders; since not all sexual offenders with deviant fantasies are sadistic, the issue concerning the development of sadistic fantasies should be considered as a subimplication of the pathway and not a general implication pertinent to all offenders who deviantly fantasize.

In sum, it is clear that further research is needed. Since deviant sexual fantasies might play a role in the origin of sexual offending, it is important to better understand the mechanisms by which deviant sexual fantasies develop, take shape, and translate into offences in order to prevent sexual offences. Furthermore, given that fantasy assessment (Gordon & Grubin, 2004; Marshall & Eccles, 1991) and management (see, e.g., Beech, Fisher, & Beckett, 1999; Grossman, Martis, & Fichtner, 1999; Johnston, Ward, & Hudson, 1997; Laws & Marshall, 1991) are relevant issues in the treatment of sexual offenders, it is important to address in the assessment and treatment process those factors that have the potential to promote the development of deviant sexual fantasies in sexual offenders and their translation into reality. Most importantly, since some people who have deviant fantasies, attachment issues, and difficulties in intimate relationships do not sexual offend, future research should also discover the compensatory processes whereby people who have experience dysfunctional parenting practices and suffer from intimacy problems do not entertain sexual deviant fantasies and/or do not engage in sexual offending. In fact, it may be possible that some individuals might leave the proposed pathway toward deviant sexual fantasy and sexual offending at its various junctures. For example, those individuals with attachment issues and intimacy problems who do not use deviant sexual fantasies, although they have a history of dysfunctional parent–child relationships and difficulties in intimate relationships, might have individual differences (e.g., neural substrates and circuits, genetic influences, or personality traits) and/or a developmental history characterized by different social experiences or relationships outside the family (e.g., positive social experiences at school or relationships with peers) than those individuals who use deviant sexual fantasies and/or offend. Such differences might make one individual with insecure attachment and intimacy problems develop and utilize compensatory mechanisms that are more effective at achieving intimacy and emotional closeness than deviant sexual fantasies.

Thus, it is important that future investigations use longitudinal designs, control for confounders, and employ samples

representative of the general population and matched comparison groups, in order to discover not only the mechanisms by which dysfunctional parent–child relationships, an insecure attachment, and difficulties in intimate relationships may result in deviant fantasy use and sexual offending, but also the compensatory processes whereby some individuals with similar predisposing factors (e.g., insecure attachment, intimacy problems, or deviant fantasy) achieve positive adaptation and manifest functional, adaptive, and socially accepted behaviors.

Critical Findings

- Deviant sexual fantasy might be a risk factor for sexual offending
- Sexual offenders are highly likely to have an insecure attachment style developed in response to dysfunctional parenting practices
- Many sexual offenders have feelings of inadequacy and inferiority to others and a lack of the self-confidence and social skills to initiate or maintain consensual intimate relationships with appropriate others
- Sexual offenders may use deviant sexual fantasies as a means to achieve the intimacy, power, or control absent from reality
- The use of fantasy as a means to achieve intimacy, power, or control might create a disposition to offend

Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research

- Methodological advances in research on the origin and development of deviant sexual fantasies must be implemented
- Further research should elucidate the causal mechanisms and processes that contribute to the development of sexual fantasies in sexual offenders
- Future research should discover the compensatory processes whereby people who have experienced dysfunctional parenting practices, suffer from interpersonal problems, and entertain sexual deviant fantasies should not engage in sexual offending
- For all persons, especially youths, with a history of dysfunctional parenting practices, interpersonal problems, and deviant sexual fantasies, early intervention as well as careful monitoring over time for potential acting out of fantasy must be a priority to decrease the risk that they may become sexual offenders
- Clinicians should assess the relevance of fantasy world to the real world and address deviant sexual fantasies therapeutically

Author's Note

The author had full access to all of the data in the study and takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Abel, G. G., Barlow, D. H., Blanchard, E. B., & Guild, D. (1977). The components of rapists' sexual arousal. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 34*, 895–903.
- Abel, G. G., Becker, J. V., Cunningham-Rathner, J., Mittelman, M. S., Murphy, W. D., & Rouleau, J. L. (1987). Self-reported sex crimes of nonincarcerated paraphiliacs. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 2*, 3–25.
- Abel, G. G., Blanchard, E. B., & Becker, J. V. (1978). An integrated treatment program for rapists. In R. T. Rada (Ed.), *Clinical aspects of the rapist* (pp. 161–224). New York, NY: Grune & Stratton.
- Abracen, J., Looman, J., Di Fazio, R., Kelly, T., & Stirpe, T. (2006). Patterns of attachment and alcohol abuse in sexual and violent non-sexual offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 12*, 19–30.
- Alexander, B. B., & Johnson, S. B. (1980). Reliability of heterosocial skills measurement with sex offenders. *Journal of Behavioral Assessment, 2*, 225–237.
- Awad, G. A., Saunders, E., & Levene, J. (1984). A clinical study of male adolescent sexual offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 28*, 105–155.
- Baker, E., & Beech, A. R. (2004). Dissociation and variability of adult attachment dimensions and early maladaptive schemas in sexual and violent offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19*, 1119–1136.
- Baker, E., Beech, A., & Tyson, M. (2006). Attachment disorganization and its relevance to sexual offending. *Journal of Family Violence, 21*, 221–231.
- Barbaree, H. E., Baxter, D. J., & Marshall, W. L. (1989). Brief research report: The reliability of the rape index in a sample of rapists and nonrapists. *Violence and Victims, 4*, 299–306.
- Barbaree, H. E., Hudson, S. M., & Seto, M. C. (1993). Sexual assault in society: The role of the juvenile offender. In H. E. Barbaree, W. L. Marshall, & S. M. Hudson (Eds.), *The juvenile sex offender* (pp. 1–24). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Barlow, D. H., Abel, G. G., Blanchard, E. B., Bristow, A. R., & Young, L. D. (1977). A heterosocial skills behavior checklist for males. *Behavior Therapy, 8*, 229–239.
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*, 226–244.
- Baumgartner, J. V., Scalora, M. J., & Huss, M. T. (2002). Assessment of the Wilson sex fantasy questionnaire among child molesters and nonsexual forensic offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 14*, 19–30.
- Beauregard, E., Stone, M. R., Proulx, J., & Michaud, P. (2008). Sexual murderers of children: Developmental, precrime, crime, and post-crime factors. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 52*, 253–269.

- Becker, J. V. (1998). What we know about the characteristics and treatment of adolescents who have committed sexual offenses. *Child Maltreatment, 3*, 317–329.
- Beech, A., Fisher, D., & Beckett, R. (1999). *An evaluation of the prison sex offender treatment programme*. London, England: Home Office.
- Beech, A. R., & Mitchell, I. J. (2005). A neurobiological perspective on attachment problems in sexual offenders and the role of selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors in treatment of such problems. *Clinical Psychology Review, 25*, 153–182.
- Beech, A. R., & Ward, T. (2004). The integration of etiology and risk in sex offenders: A theoretical model. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 10*, 31–63.
- Blaske, D. M., Borduin, C. M., Henggeler, S. W., & Mann, B. J. (1989). Individual, family and peer characteristics of adolescent sex offenders and assaultive offenders. *Developmental Psychology, 25*, 846–855.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss. Vol. 2. Separation: Anxiety and anger*. London, England: Hogarth.
- Bumby, K. M., & Hansen, D. J. (1997). Intimacy deficits, fear of intimacy, and loneliness among sexual offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 24*, 315–331.
- Burgess, A. W., Hartman, C. R., Ressler, R. K., Douglas, J. E., & McCormack, A. (1986). Sexual homicide: A motivational model. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1*, 251–272.
- Burk, L. R., & Burkhart, B. R. (2003). Disorganized attachment as a diathesis for sexual deviance. Developmental experience and the motivation for sexual offending. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 8*, 487–511.
- Carabellese, F., Maniglio, R., Greco, O., & Catanesi, R. (2011). The role of fantasy in a serial sexual offender: A brief review of the literature and a case report. *Journal of Forensic Sciences, 56*, 256–260.
- Chan, H. C., & Heide, K. M. (2009). Sexual homicide: A synthesis of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 10*, 31–54.
- Clark, L., & Lewis, D. J. (1977). *Rape: The price of coercive sexuality*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Women's Educational Press.
- Cortoni, F. A., & Marshall, W. L. (2001). Sex as a coping strategy and its relationship to juvenile sexual history and intimacy in sexual offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 8*, 27–43.
- Craissati, J., McClurg, G., & Browne, K. D. (2002). Characteristics of perpetrators of child sexual abuse who have been sexually victimized as children. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 14*, 225–240.
- Curnoe, S., & Langevin, R. (2002). Personality and deviant sexual fantasies: An examination of the MMPIs of sex offenders. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 58*, 803–815.
- Davis, D. (2006). Attachment-related pathways to sexual coercion. In M. Mikulincer & G. S. Goodman (Eds.), *Dynamics of romantic love: Attachment, caregiving, and sex* (pp. 293–336). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Davis, G. E., & Leitenberg, H. (1987). Adolescent sex offenders. *Psychological Bulletin, 101*, 417–427.
- Dent, R. J., & Jowitt, S. (2003). Homicide and serious sexual offences committed by children and young people: Findings from the literature and a serious case review. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 9*, 85–96.
- DiGiorgio-Miller, J. (2007). Emotional variables and deviant sexual fantasies in adolescent sex offenders. *Journal of Psychiatry & Law, 35*, 109–124.
- Dreznick, M. T. (2003). Heterosocial competence of rapists and child molesters: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Sex Research, 40*, 170–178.
- Drieschner, K., & Lange, A. (1999). A review of cognitive factors in the etiology of rape: Theories, empirical studies, and implications. *Clinical Psychology Review, 19*, 57–77.
- Earls, C. M. (1988). Aberrant sexual arousal in sexual offenders. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 528*, 41–48.
- Fagan, J., & Wexler, S. (1988). Explanations of sexual assault among violent delinquents. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 3*, 363–385.
- Fehrenbach, P. A., Smith, W., Monastersky, C., & Deisher, R. W. (1986). Adolescent sexual offenders: Offender and offense characteristics. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 56*, 225–233.
- Ford, M. E., & Linney, J. A. (1995). Comparative analysis of juvenile sexual offenders, violent nonsexual offenders, and status offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 10*, 56–70.
- Garlick, Y., Marshall, W. L., & Thornton, D. (1996). Intimacy deficits and attribution of blame among sexual offenders. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 1*, 251–258.
- Gee, D., Ward, T., & Eccleston, L. (2003). The function of sexual fantasies for sexual offenders: A preliminary model. *Behaviour Change, 20*, 44–60.
- Geer, J. H., Estupinan, L. A., & Manguno-Mire, G. M. (2000). Empathy, social skills, and other relevant cognitive processes in rapists and child molesters. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 5*, 99–126.
- Gellerman, D. M., & Suddath, R. (2005). Violent fantasy, dangerousness, and the duty to warn and protect. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 33*, 484–495.
- Gordon, H., & Grubin, D. (2004). Psychiatric aspects of the assessment and treatment of sex offenders. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 10*, 73–80.
- Grossman, L. S., Martis, B., & Fichtner, C. G. (1999). Are sex offenders treatable? A research overview. *Psychiatric Services, 50*, 349–361.
- Groth, A. N., Burgess, W., & Holmstrom, L. L. (1977). Rape: Power, anger, and sexuality. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 134*, 1239–1243.
- Grubin, D. (1994). Sexual murder. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 165*, 624–629.
- Hazelwood, R. R., & Warren, J. (1989). The serial rapist: His characteristics and victims (conclusion). *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 58*, 18–25.
- Heide, K. M., Beauregard, E., & Myers, W. C. (2009). Sexually motivated child abduction murders: Synthesis of the literature and case illustration. *Victims and Offenders, 4*, 58–75.
- Howitt, D. (2004). What is the role of fantasy in sex offending? *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health, 14*, 182–188.
- Hudson, S. M., & Ward, T. (1997). Intimacy, loneliness, and attachment style in sexual offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 12*, 323–339.
- Hudson, S. M., & Ward, T. (2000). Interpersonal competency in sex offenders. *Behavior Modification, 24*, 494–527.
- Jamieson, S., & Marshall, W. L. (2000). Attachment styles and violence in child molesters. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 5*, 88–98.

- Johnston, L., Ward, T., & Hudson, S. M. (1997). Deviant sexual thoughts: Mental control and the treatment of sexual offenders. *Journal of Sex Research, 34*, 121–130.
- Kahn, T. J., & Chambers, H. J. (1991). Assessing re-offence risk with juvenile sexual offenders. *Child Welfare, 70*, 333–345.
- Katz, R. C. (1990). Psychosocial adjustment in adolescent child molesters. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 14*, 567–575.
- Keenan, T., & Ward, T. (2000). A theory of mind perspective on cognitive, affective, and intimacy deficits in child sex offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 12*, 49–60.
- Keppel, R. D., & Walter, R. (1999). Profiling killers: A revised classification model for understanding sexual murder. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 43*, 417–437.
- Knight, R. A., & Prentky, R. A. (1993). Exploring characteristics for classifying juvenile sex offenders. In H. E. Barbaree, W. L. Marshall, & S. M. Hudson (Eds.), *The juvenile sex offender* (pp. 45–83). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kobayashi, J., Sales, B. D., Becker, J. V., Figueredo, A. J., & Kaplan, M. S. (1995). Perceived parental deviance, parent-child bonding, child abuse, and child sexual aggression. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 7*, 25–44.
- Langevin, R. (1985). *Erotic preference, gender identity, and aggression in men: New research studies*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Langevin, R., Paitich, D., Handy, L., & Langevin, A. (1990). *The clarke sex history questionnaire manual*. Etobicoke, ON: Juniper.
- Laws, D. R., & Marshall, W. L. (1990). A conditioning theory of the etiology and maintenance of deviant sexual preference and behavior. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories and treatment of the offender* (pp. 209–229). New York, NY: Plenum.
- Laws, D. R., & Marshall, W. L. (1991). Masturbatory reconditioning with sexual deviates: An evaluative review. *Advances in Behavior Research and Therapy, 13*, 13–25.
- Laws, D. R., & O'Donohue, W. T. (1997). *Sexual deviance: Theory, assessment and treatment*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Leitenberg, H., & Henning, K. (1995). Sexual fantasy. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 469–496.
- Levant, M. D., & Bass, B. A. (1991). Parental identification of rapists and pedophiles. *Psychological Reports, 69*, 463–466.
- Lipton, D. N., McDonel, E. C., & McFall, R. M. (1987). Heterosocial perception in rapists. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 55*, 17–21.
- Lisak, D. (1994). Subjective assessment of relationships with parents by sexually aggressive and nonaggressive men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 9*, 399–411.
- Lisak, D., & Ivan, C. (1995). Deficits in intimacy and empathy in sexually aggressive men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 10*, 296–308.
- Lisak, D., & Roth, S. (1990). Motives and psychodynamics of self-reported, unincarcerated rapists. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 60*, 268–280.
- Looman, J. (1995). Sexual fantasies of child molesters. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 27*, 321–332.
- Looman, J. (1999). Mood, conflict, and deviant sexual fantasies. In B. K. Schwartz (Ed.), *The sex offender: Theoretical advances, treating special populations and legal developments* (pp. 3–11). Kingston, NJ: Civic Research Institute.
- Lyn, T. S., & Burton, D. L. (2004). Adult attachment and sexual offender status. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 74*, 150–159.
- Lyn, T. S., & Burton, D. L. (2005). Attachment, anger and anxiety of male sexual offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11*, 127–137.
- MacCulloch, M. J., Snowden, P. R., Wood, P. J. W., & Mills, H. E. (1983). Sadistic fantasy, sadistic behavior, and offending. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 143*, 20–29.
- MacCulloch, M., Gray, N., & Watt, A. (2000). Britain's sadistic murderer syndrome reconsidered: An associative account of the aetiology of sadistic sexual fantasy. *Journal of Forensic Psychiatry, 11*, 401–418.
- Maniglio, R. (2010). The role of deviant sexual fantasy in the etio-pathogenesis of sexual homicide: A systematic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 15*, 294–302.
- Marsa, F., O'Reilly, G., Carr, A., Murphy, P., O'Sullivan, M., Cotter, A., & Hevey, D. (2004). Attachment styles and psychological profiles of child sex offenders in Ireland. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19*, 228–251.
- Marshall, W. L. (1989). Intimacy, loneliness and sexual offenders. *Behavioral Research and Therapy, 27*, 491–503.
- Marshall, W. L. (1993). The role of attachments, intimacy, and loneliness in the etiology and maintenance of sexual offending. *Sexual and Marital Therapy, 8*, 109–121.
- Marshall, W. L. (1996). Assessment, treatment and theorizing about sex offenders: Developments during the past twenty years and future directions. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 23*, 162–199.
- Marshall, W. L., & Barbaree, H. E. (1990). An integrated theory of the etiology of sexual offending. In W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, & H. E. Barbaree (Eds.), *Handbook of sexual assault: Issues, theories and treatment of the offender* (pp. 257–275). New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Marshall, W. L., & Eccles, A. (1991). Issues in clinical practice with sex offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 6*, 68–93.
- Marshall, W. L., & Marshall, L. E. (2000). The origins of sexual offending. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse, 1*, 250–263.
- Marshall, W. L., & Mazzucco, A. (1995). Self-esteem and parental attachments in child molesters. *Sexual Abuse: Journal of Research and Treatment, 7*, 279–285.
- Marshall, W. L., Barbaree, H. E., & Fernandez, Y. M. (1995). Some aspects of social competence in sexual offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 7*, 113–127.
- Marshall, W. L., Bryce, P., Hudson, S. M., Ward, T., & Moth, B. (1996). The enhancement of intimacy and the reduction of loneliness among child molesters. *Journal of Family Violence, 11*, 219–235.
- Marshall, W. L., Hudson, S. M., & Hodgkinson, S. (1993). The importance of attachment bonds in the development of juvenile sex offending. In H. E. Barbaree, W. L. Marshall, & S. M. Hudson (Eds.), *The juvenile sex offender* (pp. 164–181). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Marshall, W. L., Serran G. A., & Cortoni, F. A. (2000). Childhood attachments, sexual abuse, and their relationship to adult coping in child molesters. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 12*, 17–26.

- McCormack, J., Hudson, S. M., & Ward, T. (2002). Sexual offenders' perceptions of their early interpersonal relationships: An attachment perspective. *Journal of Sex Research, 39*, 85–93.
- McKibben, A., Proulx, J., & Lusignan, R. (1994). Relationships between conflict, affect and deviant sexual behaviors in rapists and pedophiles: The assessment and treatment of sex offenders. *Behaviour Research and Therapy, 32*, 571–575.
- Meloy, J. R. (2000). The nature and dynamics of sexual homicide: An integrative review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 5*, 1–32.
- Moody, E. E., Brissie, J., & Kim, J. (1994). Personality and background characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders. *Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling, 14*, 38–48.
- Mulloy, R., & Marshall, W. L. (1999). Social functioning. In W. L. Marshall, D. Anderson, & Y. Fernandez (Eds.), *Cognitive behavioral treatment of sexual offenders* (pp. 93–109). Chichester, England: Wiley.
- Myers, W. C., & Blashfield, R. (1997). Psychopathology and personality in juvenile sexual homicide offenders. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 25*, 497–508.
- Myers, W. C., Burgess, A. W., & Nelson, J. A. (1998). Criminal and behavioral aspects of juvenile sexual homicide. *Journal of Forensic Sciences, 43*, 340–347.
- Myers, W. C., Reccoppa, L., Burton, K., & McElroy, R. (1993). Malignant sex and aggression: An overview of serial sexual homicide. *Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law, 21*, 435–451.
- Neidigh, L., & Tomiko, R. (1991). The coping strategies of child sexual abusers. *Journal of Sex Education & Therapy, 17*, 103–110.
- Overholser, J. C., & Beck, S. (1986). Multimethod assessment of rapists, child molesters, and three control groups on behavioral and psychological measures. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 54*, 682–687.
- Prentky, R. A., & Burgess, A. W. (1991). Hypothetical biological substrates of a fantasy-based drive mechanism for repetitive sexual aggression. In A. W. Burgess (Ed.), *Rape and sexual assault* (Vol. 3., pp. 235–256). New York, NY: Garland.
- Prentky, R. A., Burgess, A. W., Rokous, F., Lee, A., Hartman, C., Ressler, R., & Douglas, J. (1989). The presumptive role of fantasy in serial sexual homicide. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 146*, 887–891.
- Prentky, R. A., Knight, R. A., Sims-Knight, J. E., Straus, H., Rokous, F., & Cerce, D. (1989). Developmental antecedents of sexual aggression. *Development and Psychopathology, 1*, 153–169.
- Proulx, J., McKibben, A., & Lusignan, R. (1996). Relationships between affective components and sexual behaviours in sexual aggressors. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 8*, 279–290.
- Ressler, R. K., Burgess, A. W., Hartman, C. R., Douglas, J. E., & McCormack, A. (1986). Murderers who rape and mutilate. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1*, 273–287.
- Ryan, K. M. (2004). Further evidence for a cognitive component of rape. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 9*, 579–604.
- Saunders, E., Awad, G. A., & White, G. (1986). Male adolescent sexual offenders: The offender and the offence. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 31*, 542–549.
- Sawle, G. A., & Kear-Colwell, J. (2001). Adult attachment style and pedophilia: A developmental perspective. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 45*, 32–50.
- Schlesinger, L. B. (2004). *Sexual murder: Catathymic and compulsive homicides*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Schlesinger, L. B. (2007). Sexual homicide: Differentiating catathymic and compulsive murders. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 12*, 242–256.
- Scully, D., & Marolla, J. (1993). Riding the bull at Gilley's: Convicted rapists describe the rewards of rape. In P. B. Bart, & E. G. Moran (Eds.), *Violence against women: The bloody footprints* (pp. 26–46). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.
- Segal, Z. V., & Marshall, W. L. (1985a). Heterosexual social skills in a population of rapists and child molesters. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 53*, 55–63.
- Segal, Z. V., & Marshall, W. L. (1985b). Self-report and behavioral assertion in two groups of sex offenders. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry, 16*, 223–229.
- Segal, Z. V., & Marshall, W. L. (1986). Discrepancies between self-efficacy predictions and actual performance in a population of rapists and child molesters. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 10*, 363–376.
- Seidman, B. T., Marshall, W. L., Hudson, S. M., & Robertson, P. J. (1994). An examination of intimacy and loneliness in sex offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 9*, 518–534.
- Seto, M. C., & Lalumière, M. L. (2010). What is so special about male adolescent sexual offending? A review and test of explanations through meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*, 526–575.
- Shaw, J. A. (1999). Practice parameters for the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents who are sexually abusive of others. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 38*, 55S–76S.
- Simons, D. A., Wurtele, S. K., & Durham, R. L. (2008). Developmental experiences of child sexual abusers and rapists. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32*, 549–560.
- Smallbone, S. W., & Dadds, M. R. (1998). Childhood attachment and adult attachment in incarcerated adult male sex offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 13*, 555–573.
- Smallbone, S. W., & Dadds, M. R. (2000). Attachment and coercive sexual behavior. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 12*, 3–15.
- Smallbone, S. W., & Dadds, M. R. (2001). Further evidence for a relationship between attachment insecurity and coercive sexual behavior in nonoffenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16*, 22–35.
- Smallbone, S. W., & McCabe, B. A. (2003). Childhood attachment, childhood sexual abuse, and onset of masturbation among adult sexual offenders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 15*, 1–10.
- Smith, S., Wampler, R., Jones, J., & Reifman, A. (2005). Differences in self-report measures by adolescent sex offender risk group. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 49*, 82–106.
- Stahl, S. S., & Sacco, W. P. (1995). Heterosocial perception in child molesters and rapists. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 19*, 695–706.

- Starzyk, K. B., & Marshall, W. L. (2003). Childhood family and personal risk factors for sexual offending. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 8*, 93–105.
- Stermac, L. E., & Quinsey, V. L. (1986). Social competence among rapists. *Behavioral Assessment, 8*, 171–185.
- Stirpe, T., Abracen, J., Stermac, L., & Wilson, R. (2006). Sexual 'offenders' state-of-mind regarding childhood attachment: A controlled investigation. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 12*, 289–302.
- Tingle, D., Barnard, G. W., Robbin, L., Newman, G., & Hutchinson, D. (1986). Childhood and adolescent characteristics of pedophiles and rapists. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry, 9*, 103–116.
- Van Ijzendoorn, M. H., Feldbrugge, J. T. T. M., Derks, F. C. H., de Rooter, C., Verhagen, M. F. M., Philipse, M. A., & van der Staak, C. P. F. (1997). Attachment representations of personality disordered criminal offenders. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 67*, 449–459.
- van Wijk, A., Vermeiren, R., Loeber, R., 't Hart-Kerkhoffs, L., Doreleijers, T., & Bullens, R. (2006). Juvenile sex offenders compared to non-sex offenders: A review of the literature 1995-2005. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 7*, 227–243.
- Ward, T., & Beech, A. (2006). An integrated theory of sexual offending. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 11*, 44–63.
- Ward, T., Hudson, S. M., & Marshall, W. L. (1996). Attachment style in sex offenders: A preliminary study. *Journal of Sex Research, 33*, 17–26.
- Ward, T., Hudson, S. M., Marshall, W. L., & Siegert, R. (1995). Attachment style and intimacy deficits in sexual offenders: A theoretical framework. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 7*, 317–335.
- Ward, T., Hudson, S. M., & McCormack, J. (1997). Attachment style, intimacy deficits, and sexual offending. In B. K. Schwartz & H. R. Cellini (Eds.), *The sex offender: New insights, treatment innovations, and legal developments* (Vol. 2, pp. 2.1–2.11). Kingston, NJ: Civic Research Institute.
- Ward, T., Keenan, T., & Hudson, S. M. (2000). Understanding cognitive, affective, and intimacy deficits in sexual offenders: A developmental perspective. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 5*, 41–62.
- Ward, T., McCormack, J., & Hudson, S. M. (1997). Sexual offenders' perceptions of their intimate relationships. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 9*, 57–74.
- Ward, T., & Siegert, R. J. (2002). Toward a comprehensive theory of child sexual abuse: A theory knitting perspective. *Psychology, Crime, and Law, 8*, 319–351.
- Whitaker, D. J., Le, B., Hanson, R. K., Baker, C. K., McMahon, P. M., Ryan, G., & Klein, A. (2008). Risk factors for the perpetration of child sexual abuse: A review and meta-analysis. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 32*, 529–548.
- Wilson, G. (1978). *The secrets of sexual fantasy*. London, England: J. M. Dent.

Bio

Roberto Maniglio, PsyD, PhD, is a psychotherapist, a criminologist, and a court-appointed expert. He teaches at the University of Salento, Lecce, Italy. His research interests include sexual crimes, child abuse, family dysfunction, and etiology of psychopathology.