Public Character Perceptions of Sexually Deviant Groups

Prof. Todd Hogue, Jessica Mabbott & Bethany Browne

Introduction

- Attitudes towards Sex Offenders
- Sexual Crime and the Media
- Labelling and Stigma
- Psychopathy
Attitudes Towards Sexual Offenders

• Attitudes towards sex offenders more negative than non-sex offenders (Craig, 2005; Hogue, 1993).

• Differences between groups: Public samples are more negative that professional samples (Gakhal & Brown, 2011; Johson, Hughes & Ireland, 2007; Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008)

• Attitudes predict stereotype endorsement (Sanghara & Wilson, 2006) and punitive judgements (Hogue & Peebles, 1997; Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008).
Sexual Crime & The Media

• The media is the main source of information for public perceptions and attitudes towards sex offenders (Thakker, 2012)

• The media also influences sex offender legislation and notification policies (Critcher, 2002; Sample & Kadlec, 2008).

• The media reports on extreme, unrepresentative cases of child sexual abuse involving abduction and murder (Ducat, Thomas & Blood, 2009; Thakker & Durrant, 2006)
Labelling Theory & Stigma

- When individuals are labelled as deviants within society they begin to subscribe to the associated stereotypes (Link, 1982)

- Mandatory sex offender registration and community notification is the most apparent example of labelling and reproduces the deviant label leading to stereotypy and stigmatisation (Schultz, 2014).

- Sex offender is an inclusive label that disregards the heterogeneity of sex offenders (Quinn, Forsyth & Mullen-Quinn, 2004)

- The sex offender label has detrimental effects including isolation, job loss and harassment (Burchfield & Mingus, 2008; Robbers, 2009)
Psychopathy

• Psychopathy has been associated with sexual and non-sexual violence (Walsh, Swogger & Kosson, 2009).

• Individuals high in both psychopathy and sexual deviance represent a high-risk group of individuals (Harris et al., 2003).

• Sex offenders are heterogeneous in terms of psychopathy, where rapists are more psychopathic than child molesters (Porter et al., 2000; Stinson, Becker & Tromp, 2005; Woodworth et al., 2013).
Hypotheses

• Attitudes towards sex offenders will impact on the public’s psychopathic character perceptions of the sexual offending/deviant label
  – ATS and CAPP ratings correlated
  – Hi ATS scorers different than Low ATS scorers

• Character perceptions, as measured by the CAPP will differ depending on the offending/deviant label
Method

• All data was collected through an online survey
• Informed consent & debrief
• Withdrawal at anytime

• Sample: 177 community members
• 81% (143) females & 19% (33) males
• Ave age 24.5 years
• 65% students, 31% working, 3% not working
Measures

• ATS–21 (Hogue, 2013)
  – Measures pre-existing attitudes towards sex offenders
  – 5-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.
  *E.g. Trying to rehabilitate sex offenders is a waste of time and money*

• Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale PSO (Harper & Hogue, 2015)
  – Measures stereotypes of sex offenders, tapping into affective judgement based responses
  – 6-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.
  *E.g. Most sex offenders are unmarried men*

• Punitive Attitudes Questionnaire PAQ (Imhoff, 2015)
  – Taps into attitudes regarding punishment
  – 6-point Likert-type scale; 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree.
  *E.g. Paedophiles should be chemically castrated.*
The Comprehensive Assessment of Psychopathic Personality (CAPP) (Cooke, Hart, Logan & Michie, 2012)

• A measure which represents a concept map of psychopathic personality disorder
• Used in the current study as a personality measure.
• 42 items
  – 33 CAPP items
  – 6 domains of personality functioning
  – 9 foil items considered inconsequential to psychopathy
• Each item defined by 3 synonymous adjectival descriptors
• 7-point Likert-type scale
  – 1=not like that at all to 7=definitely like that

E.g. AGGRESSIVE (threatening, violent, bullying). How well does this personality characteristic define the person you rate?
Procedure

1. Brief → 2. ATS-21 → 3. PSO → 4. CAPP (SO)

5. PA (SO) → 6. CAPP (Assigned Label) → 8. PA (Assigned Label) → 9. Debrief

Labels: Sex Offender (SO), Psychopath, Paedophile, Sexually interested in Pre-pubescent Children, Rapist, Violent Offender
ATS-21 and PSO Scores

ATS-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATS-21 Total</th>
<th>ATS21 Factor 1 - 'Trust'</th>
<th>ATS-21 Factor 2 - 'Intent'</th>
<th>ATS-21 Factor 3 - 'Social Distance'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PSO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentencing</th>
<th>Stereotype</th>
<th>Risk Perception</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No differences for gender and similar scores to other studies

ATS-21 and PSO Scores
### Sex Offender CAPP items related to ATS-21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOMINEERING</td>
<td>-.265**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTAGONISTIC</td>
<td>-.209**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACKS EMOTIONAL DEPTH</td>
<td>-.259**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFLEXIBLE</td>
<td>-.201**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISRUPTIVE</td>
<td>-.276**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-JUSTIFYING</td>
<td>-.199**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETACHED</td>
<td>-.304**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSPICIOUS</td>
<td>-.249**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSINCERE</td>
<td>-.247**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LACKS EMOTIONAL STABILITY</td>
<td>-.174*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRELIABLE</td>
<td>-.351**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSIDERATE</td>
<td>.251**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRANGE</td>
<td>-.284**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-AGGRANDIZING</td>
<td>-.236**</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTOLERANT</td>
<td>-.245**</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEMPATHIC</td>
<td>-.353**</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACKS PERSEVERANCE</td>
<td>-.251**</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACKS ANXIETY</td>
<td>-.325**</td>
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<tr>
<td>LACKS REMORSE</td>
<td>-.337**</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANIPULATIVE</td>
<td>-.206**</td>
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<td>UNCOMMITTED</td>
<td>-.365**</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCARING</td>
<td>-.321**</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECEITFUL</td>
<td>-.297**</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGGRESSIVE</td>
<td>-.286**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-CENTRED</td>
<td>-.295**</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Sex Offender CAPP items related to ATS-21**

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<td>Domineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Considerate</td>
<td>.251**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strange</td>
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<td>Self-aggrandizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacks Emotional Stability</td>
<td>-.174*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>-.351**</td>
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More Negative Attitudes to Sexual Offenders (lower ATS-21 scores)

Rated as sexual offenders having more psychopathy personality characteristics (greater endorsement of CAPP Traits)
CAPP Ratings across labelled groups
CAPP: Psychopath vs Sex Offender
CAPP Paedophile vs Sex Offender
CAPP: Paedophile vs SIPC
CAPP: Paedophile vs Violent Offender

- Detached
- Unempathic
- Uncommitted
- Uncaring
- Lacks Perseverance
- Unreliable
- Reckless
- Restless
- Aggressive
- Disruptive
- Suspicious
- Lacks Concentration
- Intolerant
- Inflexible
- Inflexible
- Lacks Plantfulness
- Agnosticism
- Domineering
- Decisive
- Manipulative
- Insecure
- Garrulous
- Lacks Anxiety
- Lacks Pleasure
- Lacks Remorse
- Self-Aggrandizing
- Self-Centred
- Self-Justifying
- Selfish
- Sensory
- Emotional
- Introspection
- Unstable
- Self Concept
- Sense Of Entitlement
- Sense Of Invulnerability
- Sense Of Involvement
- Sense Of Involvement
- Self-Conscious
- Shy
- Considerate
- Strange
- Perfectionist
- Restrained
- Conscientious
- Cautious
- Dependent

- Attachment
- Behavioural
- Cognitive
- Dominance
- Emotional
- Self
- Foil

- Paedophile
- Violent Offender
CAPP: Psychopath vs Sex Offender

Average CAPP Domain Item Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Psychopath</th>
<th>Sex Offender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CAPP: Paedophile vs Sex Offender

Average CAPP Domain Item Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Paedophile</th>
<th>Sex Offender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Dominance</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Emotional</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CAPP Domain Scores depending on Lo vs HI ATS

Average CAPP Domain Item Score

- Attachment
- Behaviour
- Cognitive
- Dominance
- Emotional
- Self

Lo ATS vs Hi ATS
Summary

• Profile analysis provides a way of understanding in more depth perceptions and stigma

• Attitudes and Labels both impact on character perceptions

• For sexual offenders, more negative attitudes (ATS-21) the greater the perceived CAPP characteristics

• Paedophiles and those Sexually Interested in Prepupescent Children (SIPC) seen the same way

• Prototypicality analysis for use to better understand stereotypes and judgements
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