

Making a Molester

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a critical examination of the possible explanations for paedophilia by expanding on previous undergraduate research. It begins with an explanation of moral panics and how this can cause common misconceptions regarding paedophilia and child sexual abuse. Following this, the focus shifts to the topic of paedophilia by exploring intra-familial abuse and how sexual attraction can be affected by cultural and religious differences, biological influences and via social learning. The dissertation then explores societal perceptions of the female paedophile, the Madonna-whore taxonomy and the juxtaposition of the female paedophile as a victim of a patriarchal society. It concludes with an overall summary and discussion of the main findings.

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Chapter one: Introduction

“Fear is implanted in us as a preservative from evil; but its duty like that of the other passions, is not to overbear reason, but to assist it. It should not be suffered to tyrannise in the imagination, to raise phantoms of horror, or to beset life with supernumerary distresses.”

(Samuel Johnson, 1816)

Paedo, nonce, perv, kiddy-fiddler, *sex offender* – a small selection of colloquialisms used frequently by the media to describe paedophiles and child sex-offenders (CSO) (Coleman, 2012). The sexual molestation of a child is considered as one of the most heinous and iniquitous acts of our time and as such; it could therefore be comprehensible how the terms: paedophile and child sex offender are still and frequently overlapped and interchanged, with no clear demarcation between the two (Howitt, 1995). The ramifications that can follow a lack of differentiation between social and legal definitions used on a large, public scale can include the omission of the epicentre of the phenomenon – neither definition used by the media considers the eroticism of the individual and whether or not they are indeed sexually attracted to children (Loue, Sajatovic & Risen, 2004).

Statistics are often used to alarm and attract attention without providing evidence in full, as the overwhelming majority of the public will never communicate or consult with a national statistical agency directly and as such, the media can act as ‘gatekeepers’ to the public (Smith, 2005; Ernest, 1986). Contemporary statistics describe an ever-increasing epidemic of child sexual abuse (CSA), with startling figures at the forefront of many newspaper articles (Cross, 2005). A suggested 60 *per cent* increase in reported child sexual abuse over the last four years (Travis, 2015)

and the re-prioritisation of child sexual abuse to a national threat has seen the police funding allocation shift, second only to terrorism on a national scale (Parliament, 2015). The rhetoric and semantics used by the media arguably perpetuate the hyperbole of the paedophile lurking in the shadows and in doing so, can consequently lead to problems quantifying the realistic danger to the public and children alike (Kitzinger, 2002; Critcher, 2002; Franklin, 1999). Furthermore, a more recent development concerning child safety comes via the internet and its supposed haven for paedophiles. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reported there are as many as 50,000 paedophiles prowling the internet at any one time in their *Innocence in Danger* report (2003) (Valcke, Schellens, Van Keer & Gerarts, 2007). Yet, as staggering as that figure is, the very same figure was quoted in the same context by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOPs) in their Threat Assessment of Child Exploitation and Abuse in 2013, despite the ten year span. This example is a clear demonstration of the social of construction of paedophilia in contemporary society and will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Paedophilia has been previously described as “a severe public health problem of staggering proportions.” (Bradford, 2000; Glaser, 1998) and considering the increased focus on paedophilia over the past decade, it would therefore be easy to assume the aetiology of the phenomenon had been clarified. It is considered a highly-emotive and complex issue which has become central to political discourse surrounding punitiveness, risk and public protection, yet there still lacks a clear, coherent government policy and multi-discipline definition (Cavanagh, 2009; Wilson & Silverman, 2002; Harrison, Manning & McCartan, 2010). Thus, we witness multiple discourses between societal groups, some with the intention of creating a clear

understanding and others, such as: demagogues, who rely on such ambiguous definitions to create laws and social policies for their own political gain (Holt, Blevins & Burkert, 2010; Critcher, 2000).

It is the purpose of this dissertation to offer a critical examination of the social construction of paedophilia via moral panics and how through this construction, the true nature of the issue presented to the status quo can be obscured. It is concerned with the possible cultural and biological explanations for paedophilic interests and how this can vary between genders.

This dissertation is not concerned with the legal definition of CSA, rather, the clinical and scientific definitions of paedophilia. Although, it is acknowledged that some paedophilic behaviour does lead to CSA, it is imperative to differentiate between the non-offending and offending paedophile.

The dissertation will commence with the methodology. It is here that the various research methods used to explore the area will be critically examined and analysed. Followed by the critical literature review; briefly exploring the media and its influence on the creation of a risk society and the paedophile as a central social actor. It will then consider cultural influences and scientific explanations for paedophilic desires and the difference between the understandings of male and female paedophilic tendencies. Finally, the female paedophile will be explored, considering the possibility of the juxtaposition of the possible offending behaviour, whilst simultaneously, the female paedophile as a victim of a patriarchal society. It is important to note, considering the depth and breadth of information surrounding the topic, an omission of some notions does not indicate lack of acknowledgement.

The review will be followed with a conclusion where the main findings will be correlated in order to establish whether the review has been successful in its objective,

This dissertation will now continue into chapter two with the methodology.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Project influence

My reasons for choosing this area of study originate from my A level Psychology studies which sparked a passionate interest in the area of Neurocriminology. This passion was later re-enforced through my Foundation Degree in Criminal Justice and through avid, personal research. The possible bias that can arise, especially through positivistic research, I believe is counterbalanced with my keen interest in the discipline of Sociology. As a society, we are aware of the notions of paedophilia and child sexual abuse, however, due to the strong emotional reactions the topics evoke, we often overlook the fundamental scientific and cultural explanations that can be applied to the area. It is this appreciation to gain a deeper and holistic understanding via an amalgamation of disciplines that has prompted my enthusiasm to investigate the phenomenon further.

2.2 Research methods

In order to study the area effectively, the multi-strategic approach of triangulation was adopted. The method of triangulation refers to the use of a variety of research techniques to confirm and validate data gathered in different ways (Creswell & Clarke, 2007). The use of triangulation is an attempt to achieve the research outcome through making assessments from different perspectives, with the aim of reaching an outcome supported by each of the approaches – known as complimentary data. It is believed that such an approach adds rigour, depth and richness to the data

collected as it can be useful when attempting to explain the complexities of human nature from more than one perspective (Duffy, 1987; Berg, Lune & Lune, 2004; Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). Contemporary academics often use both interpretivistic and positivistic approaches in a complimentary manner, which can also provide greater depth to research techniques (Sandelowski, 2000; Bickman & Rog, 2008). Some critics have argued that the method of triangulation can pay too little attention to the respective theoretical backgrounds of the individual methods (Blaikie, 1991), prompting original theorist Denzin (1978) to address critics by reclassifying triangulation as a strategy leading to a deeper understanding of an issue under investigation, rather than a validation technique (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

It is advantageous to use both empirical and non-empirical evidence when researching a particular area as it can reduce the possibility data bias, whilst improving the validity, reliability and overall generalisation possibility of the information researched (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2015; Behr, 1983; Neuman, 2005).

Considering the time restraints associated with this project, secondary data was preferred over primary. The use of primary data is effective when a researcher has existing insight of the particular topic, usually via thorough examination of all existing relevant secondary data (Stead, 2001). However, this type of data and research is time-consuming and can be extremely costly, as it is pertinent and specific to a particular unanswered topic (Greenhalgh & Peacock, 2005; Zeller & Carmines, 1980). Primary data research tools include self-report questionnaires, surveys and interviews of a specific ethnographic sample (Kothari, 2004; Bryman, 2015; Douglas, 1976). It is important to note, considering the nature of the research topic of this dissertation, primary data would be difficult to obtain as it would require the voluntary self-identification of non-offending paedophiles. Thus, identifying participants in the first

instance could prove difficult and ethically challenging. Furthermore, if individuals chose to participate, the nature of the data could lead to cognitive biases in participant responses, or complete non-responses - also known as the Hawthorne effect (Parsons, 1974; Adair, 1984; McCambridge, Witton & Elbourne, 2014).

Secondary research analysis is the study of specific problems through existing data originally collected for another purpose (Vartanian, 2010; Glaser, 1963; Glass, 1976). The secondary data used for this analysis includes textbooks, journal articles, internet sources, government reports published by the Home Office, alongside reports from *quasi*-autonomous non-governmental agencies such as: Stop It Now (2016). The majority of the data was collected using the Boolean logic method, *keyword* searches on the university electronic library and the *snowball technique* – explained further in subsequent paragraphs. Collecting data in this manner, from an array of trusted sources and experienced researchers, helps to create greater depth and understanding of a topic area through the eradication of researcher bias and limitations that can be found in primary data (Chenail, 2011; Johnson, 1997; Onwuegbuzie, 2007).

The academic books used, both contemporary and historical, provide well-researched and established data compiled by reputable and highly-regarded authors (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1976). The use of historical and contemporary books is significant, as when combined, they can demonstrate the evolution of understanding and development in academic opinions of the topic concerned (Patton, 1990; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Babbie, 1998). However, academic books are subject to an extensive publication process and thus, their contents may not reflect the most current policy. In recognition of this, the dissertation has utilised journals and reports, thus

providing for ongoing reflections of contemporary issues (Singleton Jr, Straits & Straits, 1993).

Journals provide contemporaneity and reliability from recognised authors (Dooley, 2001). Their content is refereed by experts in that particular field before the article is published, assuring the researcher of its reliability and validity (Richardson, 1996; Lapan, 2003). Academic journals can be both printed and electronic, I was able to access the latter via the University of Chester online library database which is accessible from any location.

Government publications are usually large-scale, thorough research initiatives by the state, designed to collate qualitative and quantitative data surrounding a particular issue (Mugenda, 1999; Maxfield & Babbie, 2014). However, a main criticism of government reports is that the experts recommended by the state to conduct the research, compile the evidence and make recommendations, are usually detached from the general population; meaning some recommendations proposed may not be indicative of the required reformatory needs (Benyon, 2014; Player & Jenkins, 2002). In order to avoid possible bias stemming from government reports, this dissertation also uses non-governmental reports to increase the validity of the data and gain a greater understanding of the topic area (Betts, Farquharson & Seitz, 2005).

Internet sources have been explored with more caution as, according to Harris (1997), such data is not editorially reviewed before publication and the authors are not verified. However, internet sources can be advantageous given their ease of accessibility and instantaneous updates (Klein, 2001).

As referred to earlier in this chapter, literature search techniques for the purposes of the literature review included both the *snowball technique* and *keyword* searches. Singh (2013, p. 345) describes a literature search as: “a systematic and exhaustive searching process for published material on a specific subject.” To begin, I conducted searches using the Boolean logic method in order to narrow down search results; this is done by combining words with *AND*, and similarly with *OR* (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Once familiarised with the literature regarding my chosen topic area and a cross-section of pertinent data had been compiled, I began to use the *snowball technique* by following references from the bibliographies of academic books and journal articles I read (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Both techniques proved useful during the research process, as it saved time by directing search results to reliable and relevant material.

2.3 Terminology

As discussed in previous paragraphs, due to the lack of a coherent, cross-disciplinary definition of paedophilia, the vast majority of the literature reviewed for this dissertation uses the term: *paedophile* when describing a child sex offender.

For a variety of reasons, some of which will be discussed in later chapters, existing research suggests most paedophiles are male (Schmidt, 2002). However, for the purposes of this dissertation, the term will be used with the intention of being gender-neutral.

Finally, where possible and suitable, I will use the specific clinical definitions as per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) (APA, 2013), rather than the umbrella term: paedophile. This is for the purposes of creating distinctions between the characterisations of the paraphilia, as the general term fails

to distinguish between attractions to pre-pubescent, pubescent or post-pubescent minors (Coleman, Bluestone, Melella, *et al.*, 1986). The terms are defined as follows: *nepiophilia* refers to a sexual preference for infants and toddlers (or those under five), *paedophilia* is used for individuals with a primary or exclusive sexual interest in pre-pubescent children (thirteen or under), whilst *hebephilia* describes individuals with a primary sexual interest in pubescent children (eleven to fourteen) (Hall & Hall, 2007; McCartan, 2007). However, it is recognised that in some cases the categories may, and can overlap.

2.4 Ethics

Ordinarily, research of this area would introduce many ethical issues concerning personal privacy, confidentiality, personal safety and obligation to the Data Protection Act (1998), however, as this study utilises secondary data only, there were no concerns regarding ethical issues.

This dissertation will now continue into chapter three with the literature review.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Moral panics and risk societies

Prior to discussing the role of the media and its influence on the social construction of paedophilia, it is crucial to understand what the media actually is. The media is often discussed as a monolithic entity, however, considering its continuous adaptation via modernisation, technological developments and globalisation, it would be more accurate to describe the media as a complex, multifaceted industry with varying agendas (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995; Thompson, 2005; Ben-Yehuda, 1986). Consequentially, the differing formats of media representation focus on an array of issues, arguably each for their own purpose (Carvalho, 2010). Taking into

consideration our current age of modernity, the majority of individuals, not solely westernised societies, are able to access multiple media formats, agendas and perspectives within seconds via 24 hour news coverage, social media and the internet in general (Thorburn, 2014). It is therefore crucial to understand the intricacies of the modern media and its rhetorical impact, as this can inevitably influence the targeted audience (Kitzinger, 2004).

The United Kingdom has become a media-centred society and as such, the media plays an increasingly important role through social salience, with special regard to crime and criminal justice matters (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992; Surette, 2014). Media discourse surrounding crime and criminal justice is produced in a public sphere, where an issue approaching public opinion can be formed (Habermas, 1991) and where access is usually guaranteed to all citizens by social actors, ranging from government departments to pressure groups (Schlesinger, Tumber & Murdock, 1991). Some critics argue social actors within capitalist democracies manipulate the cultural capital in order to impose a particular orthodoxy upon public opinions; therefore enabling the shaping of the public agenda in matters of public dispute (Curran, 1991; Harvey, 2010; McChesney, Schiller & United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2003).

Central to sociological arguments concerning the media is whether the outputs are seen as a form of control of the working classes, or whether indeed they are essential tools representative of democratic freedom (Barak, 1995). As a result, there exist a range of potential explanations of what the role and function of the media should be, considering its power to influence the status quo and associated opinions (Burr, 2015). The duality of the media, through the ability to report and create news, arguably creates a symbolic relationship with the public, thus allowing the shaping of societal

attitudes via an amalgamation of sociological processes (Shrum, 2002; Best, 2008; Stevenson, 2002). A further hyponym in the debate is that of social constructionism; the notion of a social mechanism or phenomenon, created and developed by society, adapted over time depending on the cognition of the individuals involved (Grant & Giddings, 2002; Cooperrider, Barrett & Srivastva, 1995). Therefore, if society is shaped over time through the beliefs, attitudes and opinions of its own individuals, the role of media influence and the symbolic relationship with the public cannot be ignored. As discussed previously, the media have the ability to create relevant news from a variety of perspectives; thus, the information produced is deemed to be of public interest and as such, social attitudes can constantly evolve (Vasterman, 2005; Cuklanz, 1996).

Arguably, the definition and labelling of paedophilia has become a social construction, attributed to extensive media coverage and representation (McCartan, 2010) and as a result, the media can be viewed as a moral entrepreneur of the modern phenomenon (Becker, 1995). Moral entrepreneurs are those who instigate the labelling of a particular behaviour and popularise the term throughout society. Becker (1963) argues moral entrepreneurs fall into two categories: *rule creators* and *rule enforcers*; for the purposes of this discussion, the focus is on the media as a *rule creator*. *Rule creators* express the conviction of a form of social evil existing within society that must be contested. Often viewed as moral crusaders, primarily concerned with the successful persuasion of others, yet are not concerned through which means this persuasion is achieved (Becker, 1974). Successful moral crusades are generally dominated by those in the upper social strata of society and given the political competition, are often created for the purpose of generating reform, based on their ideals of morals, therefore defining deviance (Dickson, 1968). Moral crusaders must

have power, public support and the ability to generate public awareness of the issue (Reinarman, 1979; Scheider, 1985). Perhaps the most pertinent and powerful example of moral entrepreneurialism in recent history is the moral panic surrounding football hooliganism in the 1980s and the role of the media in the Hillsborough disaster - with those involved receiving social justice 27 years on, following inaccurate media portrayals of the event.

When considering the creation of moral panics in contemporary society, the notion of deviancy amplification must not be overlooked. The process is often performed by the mass media, whereby the extent and seriousness of a particular deviant behaviour is exaggerated (Wilkins, 1964; Armstrong & Wilson, 1974). In doing so, a greater interest and awareness in the behaviour develops, leading to more cases being uncovered. Overall, this gives the impress that the initial exaggeration was in fact, a true and accurate representation (Young, 1973; Hamai & Ellis, 2006; Rohloff, Hughes, Petley & Critcher, 2013). According to Cohen (2002), deviancy amplification is a media hype phenomenon, consisting of acts which a large proportion of society consider to be morally repugnant, which ultimately leads to a moral panic. In turn, the media hype and public concern created as a result, typically puts pressure on the criminal justice system to deal harsher sentences and politicians to pass demagogic laws, giving the impression that the government is dealing with the perceived threat (Cohen, 2011). However, responses by those in authority tend to reinforce public fear of the perceived threat, as the media continues to report on governmental and police activity; therefore, the deviance spiral is continually amplified (Garland, 2008; Young, 2009; Hunt, 1997). In addition, it must be noted that the deviance amplification theory is not implicit in all moral panics.

Paedophilia has become one of the most prominent moral panics of contemporary society, especially in the United Kingdom. A moral panic is described as a perception of fear spread amongst a large number of individuals concerning a particular evil that threatens the moral fibre of society (Macek, 2006; Greer, 2010; Garland, 2008). According to Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2010), there are five crucial factors that contribute to a moral panic: an increased level of concern regarding a type of behaviour; an increased hostility towards the individual or group participating in the behaviour, or *folk devil*; a cross-board consensus that the behaviour poses a threat; the threat is disproportionate to the threat the behaviour actually poses and the panic is volatile as they tend to disappear as quickly as they appeared. However, as discussed previously, some moral panics are long-lasting in duration and can cause reforms in legislation. Therefore, the theory can come under scrutiny when taking the volatility principle into consideration (Marsh & Melville, 2014).

The deviancy amplification aspect of the moral panic concerning paedophilia and CSA can be accurately pinpointed to the 1980s through increased media coverage. The steady increase in *The Times* and the *Sunday Times* alone shows five articles produced in 1980, 66 articles in 1983 and approximately 413 articles by 1987 (Kitzinger, 1996). The concept of this particular moral panic is often understood by many feminist writers as a backlash against 'victim feminism' – amplifying fears concerning male sexuality (Angelides, 2004; Driver & Droisen, 1989). As a result of media representations focusing on offences that occur in the public domain, rather than the private sphere, the view of CSA and paedophilia has been shifted to encourage dangerous levels of fear and intolerance within the community, via the 'stranger danger' notion (Scott, 2003; Guo, 2008), despite recorded sexual offences being at their lowest in 40 years (BBC, 2009). However, it must be noted that some

contribution to the ratio of convictions to offences reported can be attributed to the recent focus on historical sexual abuse, meaning, a single offender may generate numerous historical offences (Thomas, 2015; Greer & McLaughlin, 2013). Despite this, many critics argue the emphasis on 'stranger danger' also impacts the ideal of hegemonic masculinity within society, as we are forced to view males as a *protector* or *offender* (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) – the paedophile being the individual from which the public must be protected. The *protector* is distanced from the *offender* through the process of 'othering', based on the societal perceptions of dangerousness and risk (Weis, 1995). The process of othering casts the individual as different from the *protector*, therefore depicting them as non-human (Spencer, 2009; Cowburn & Dominelli, 2001). This eventuality can often obscure the reality of paedophilia and CSA, as exaggerated perception of risk and dangerousness produces undue restrictions on individuals and their interactions with society as a whole (Ranger, 2015). Incurability can often impede our understanding of paedophilia, whilst instigating vigilantism and the stigmatisation of individuals, thus creating difficulties in rehabilitation efforts and creating barriers to employment (Simon, 1998). Perhaps most importantly, deviancy amplification and moral panics can often create the adverse result of their intentions and in this case, through the creation of 'stranger danger', the safety of children is not in the hands of the 'evil sexual predators' (La Fond, 1998; Hier, 2003), yet reality and statistics point to the family home as the greatest danger. The topic of intra-familial abuse is discussed in the next chapter.

3.2 Monsters at home

The prevalence of CSA is difficult to determine as it is believed it is not often reported. However, despite the moral panic depictions of CSA and paedophilia, it is not a rare phenomenon, with statistics showing every one in five girls and one in twenty

boys is a victim of CSA (Finkelhor, 2010); approximately 30 *per cent* are relatives of the child and 60 *per cent* are family acquaintances. Research thus far suggests that most CSA is committed by males, yet studies on female offenders show that women commit 14 to 40 *per cent* of offences reported (Whealin & Barnett, 2007; Dube, Anda, Whitfield, *et al.*, 2005). However, once again, the combination of a highly-emotive topic, lack of classification of the type of offender and their ages, alongside the lack of classification of the type of abuse (contact or non-contact), can inevitably sensationalise the reality of the phenomenon (Soothill, Francis & Ackerley, 1998). Statistics vary wildly according to how questions are formed and what behaviour is recognised as abusive - this becomes somewhat more complex when we consider the lack of a globally-recognised definition of what constitutes a child (UNICEF, 2016). Focusing on the United Kingdom alone, legal fluidity under a number of statutes allows a child to be either under the age of eighteen, or under the age of sixteen; despite the legal age for consensual sexual intercourse standing at sixteen (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984; Children's Act 1989; Child Benefit Act, 2005; Sexual Offences Act, 2003).

Prior to examining possible physiological explanations for paedophilia, it is important to touch upon the effect of cultural and religious understandings and how these can contribute to our perceptions of CSA statistics and the prevalence of paedophilia. Sexual interactions between children and adults have occurred throughout history, with origins of pederasty dating back to Ancient Greece and Rome (Langlands, 2006). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, it is only recently that CSA and paedophilia has been recognised as a social problem. Therefore, the social construction of paedophilia and the definitions that derive therefrom, must depend on the cultural context of the behaviour and the values and traditions of

specific social groups (Wurtele & Miller-Perrin, 1993). As such, UNICEF (2006), states that child marriage “represents perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse”, using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) to reinforce the argument that consent to a marriage must be free and full, recommending the age of 18 as an age of reference. However, a further issue relating to the perception paedophilic behaviour and CSA is the tendency to favour western culture as a focal point for social morality and ideals (Cunningham, 2005).

Child marriage is a formal marriage, or informal union, entered into by an individual before the age of 18 and in certain countries where the legal marriageable age is 18, cultural traditions can take priority over legislative law (Rush, 1980). Child marriages were common throughout history for a variety of reasons including: poverty and for political or financial bargaining (Coontz, 2006) and is still fairly common in developing countries such as: Africa, India and South Asia (Loaiza & Wong, 2012; Dixon-Mueller, 2008). According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2012), contemporary factors that promote child marriage include: economic survival strategies, gender inequality, control over sexuality and to seal land or property deals.

In the same instance, religion has influenced societal views and norms concerning the marriageable age. Interestingly, Christianity and ecclesiastical law forbade the marriage of a female before the age of puberty (Hooker, 2003), whilst Hindu scriptures mandated the age to be adulthood, defined as three years after the onset of puberty (Thapar, 1989). Jewish rabbis strongly discouraged marriages before puberty, yet in some exceptional cases, girls from aged three to twelve (the legal age of consent according to halakha) can be given in marriage by her father (Lamdan, 1996; Fishman, 2004). Perhaps most pertinent to contemporary society and the understandings of our multi-faith surroundings is child marriage within Islam – this

point is made with increased emphasis given it is now the fastest-growing religion on a global scale (Kung, 2007). Some Islamic marriage practices permit the marriage of females below the age of ten, in accordance with Sharia law which is based on the life and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (Ali, 2015). According to the Qur'an, Muhammad married his third wife, Aisha, when she was six years old, later consummated at age nine (Spellberg & Spellberg, 1996). Some Islamic scholars have suggested that under Sharia law, it is for the guardians of the child to determine when she has reached sexual maturity, not chronological age. As such, in Sharia law, marrying a girl less than thirteen years old is an acceptable practice for Muslims (Rehman, 2007; Rashad, Osman & Roudi-Fahimi, 2005). Although it is not the purpose of this dissertation to discuss the political impact of Sharia law on the English legal system, it cannot be omitted where paedophilia and CSA is concerned. Currently in the United Kingdom, despite the perceived CSA epidemic, forced child marriage is not illegal. *Al-Nikah* ceremonies are seen as an act of worship, the marriage contract documents recorded with the local mosque and do not have to be registered with the local government, thus making the marriage unrecognisable under British law (Charsley, 2006; Estin, 2008).

As established in the beginning of this chapter, it is acknowledged that the majority of CSA occurs within the family home, by someone known to the child or young person. Society is led to believe through moral panics, the perpetrators are 'non-human' and extraordinarily different from the rest of the population and as explored in previous paragraphs, this is not a true, nor accurate depiction. Following on from cultural explanations for paedophilic behaviour, this dissertation will continue with the exploration of possible physiological explanations for paedophilia in intra-familial relations.

Perhaps the most recognised explanation for intra-familial relations is the *Oedipus* complex coined by Freud (1924), although this theory depicts the desire of the child to have sexual relations with the parent of the opposite sex, it was the first theory to discuss the sexual urges between parent and child (Britton, 1989; Klein, 1945). Some modern theorists suggest CSOs actively seek out sexual encounters with children on the primary basis that they are sexually attracted to children (Ward & Beech, 2006), however, the origins of paedophilic sexual arousal are still undetermined. A broad range of biological factors have been explored in recent academic studies, with some researchers examining our evolutionary development as early as the Stone Age to explain the male desire for younger, female sexual partners and hebephilic tendencies (Buunk, Dijkstra, Kenrick & Warntjes, 2001; Kenrick, Li & Butler, 2003; Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth & Trost, 1990). Whilst other researchers have suggested abnormal male hormones or neurotransmitters in male paedophiles could be an indication of the origins of paedophilic thoughts. Gaffney and Berlin (1984), identified a hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal dysfunction in their pilot study, yet as the study consisted of a small quantity of participants, the theory has not been generalised, or integrated as part of expansive research. Modern technological advances have seen research foci include the examination of the neuronal mechanisms of sexual functions and motivations, specifically the difference in brain functions between paedophiles and non-paedophiles, often using magnetic resonance imaging technologies (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET) scans (Gerwinn, Pohl, Granert, *et al.*, 2015; Naudts, Taylor, Gibbs, *et al.*, 2008; Becerra-García, 2011). These research techniques are often coupled with penile plethysmography to determine sexual arousal (Laws, 2003). This procedure entails placing a circular gauge around the base of the penis, the gauge registers increases in circumference

which is then registered by the plethysmograph whilst the individual views photographs or videos of a variety of subjects and ages (Letourneau, 2002). Some researchers have included the use of recorded descriptions of a range of sexual encounters as an added variable in their hypotheses (Odeshoo, 2004). The combination of research methods is arguably successful in demonstrating the psychosocial and biological factors implicated in paedophilic behaviour, such as: alterations in brain functions and structure (Langevin, 1990). Studies have shown the structural volume of frontal and temporal lobes demonstrate a reduced volume in paedophilic males, which may be associated with impaired impulse inhibition and sexual compulsive behaviours (Schiffer, Peschel, Paul, *et al.*, 2007; Sartorius, Ruf & Kief, *et al.*, 2008). It is suggested that the pre-frontal networks, specifically the dorsolateral pre-frontal cortex and the amygdala, with an increased focus on the latter, as amygdala activation is primarily linked to emotional valuation and arousal (Hucker, Langevin, Wortzman, *et al.*, 1986). Although neurological research thus far could be considered somewhat heterogeneous, smaller amygdala volume in self-reported paedophiles and CSOs has been consistently recorded (Cantor & Blanchard, 2012). As a result, the mechanism present for emotional arousal relative to adults is reversed in paedophilia, suggesting a dysfunction at the cognitive stages of sexual arousal (Blanchard, Lykins, Wherrett, *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, through investigations of neuroimaging, it has been suggested that paedophilia is linked to early neurodevelopment perturbations including: lower intelligence; diminished cognitive reasoning abilities; an increased rate of left-handedness and an elevated incidence of head injuries before the age of thirteen – demonstrating possible damages in neuronal development (Blanchard, Kuban, Klassen, *et al.*, 2003; Cantor, Blanchard, Christensen, *et al.*, 2004; Blanchard, Christensen, Strong, *et al.*, 2002). However,

considering the complexities of the human brain, the neurobiological basis of paedophilia is still unidentified thus far, therefore whether there is indeed a determinate biological explanation requires further exploration.

As with any criminological, psychological or sociological issue, the concept of 'nature *versus* nurture' is commonly contested, paedophilia and CSA is not overlooked. Following on from possible 'nature' explanations, learning theorists suggest childhood sexual victimisation can contribute to paedophilic desires and CSA (Money, 2003). It is supposed that those affected may have suffered abuse directly, or have observed, or been aware of the abuse of other close family members. Therefore, as a coping mechanism from the derivative anxiety, the abused can become the abusers (Burgess, Hartman & McCormack, 1987; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Garland & Dougher, 1990). A further explanation for paedophilic behaviour is the lack of a nurturing parental relationship, which can lead to the underdevelopment of feelings of empathy or sensitivity towards others. A theory which could increase in validity when combined with the lower volume structure of the amygdala, as discussed in previous paragraphs (Egan, McMurrin, Richardson & Blair, 2000; Langevin, Wright & Handy, 1988). Perhaps the most pertinent to the social learning theory is the possibility that those abused have learnt through the concept of modelling that it is acceptable for children to be used for the purposes of sexual gratification (Finkelhor & Araji, 1986; Greenberg, Bradford & Curry, 1993; Kelly & Lule, 2013). Finally, learning theorists propose paedophilic sexual arousal can develop through the reinforcement of fantasies of sexual activity with children and masturbating to those fantasies (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001; Marshall & Marshall, 2000). However, the learning theory of paedophilia and CSA has come under scrutiny as the associated theories lack cohesive evidence, put simply, correlation does not necessarily imply causation in

these cases, as there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a link between cognitive thought and physical action (Palmer, 2006). For example: if fantasising about a particular fetish such as: sadomasochism in turn leads to consensual bondage or masturbation, the notion of 'risk' or 'harm' is somewhat questionable (Wilson & Jones, 2008). The use of pornography sees some men masturbate over the degradation and violent humiliation of women, although some may find this material sexually arousing, this is not to say that the thoughts can, or will, transition into reality (MacKinnon, 1993; Dionne, 2007).

As discussed in previous paragraphs, the studying of brain functions in sexual arousal has become of increased interest in recent years, arguably in an attempt to understand paedophilic behaviour, rather than instantly condemn it, along with the individuals concerned. As human beings, we do not voluntarily decide what arouses us sexually, this can depend on a wide-array of factors and is not solely based on physical attraction. Therefore, human sexual arousal is multi-dimensional, consisting of an accumulation of psychological and physiological processes (Ferretti, Caulo, Del Gratta, *et al.*, 2005; Fisher, 1986). It is deeply-rooted within human nature to seek a partner with whom affection, tenderness and physical intimacy can be shared, the physical sexual arousal process is not intellectually thought-out, or something that can be taught (Wilson & Cox, 1983). Where children are concerned, our natural, primitive instincts usually respond with feelings of affection – it is not thought to be a common reaction to respond in a sexual or lustful manner (Goode, 2011). It is perhaps for this reason why most paedophilic acts, although morally reprehensible, are invariably non-aggressive (Lang, Black, Frenzel & Checkley, 1988). For this reason, it could be argued that society, alongside academics, regularly bypass the possibility of the female paedophile, through the misinterpretation of affection and the associated

protective maternal nature. This dissertation will now continue into the next chapter to explore the juxtaposition of the female paedophile through the Madonna-whore duality.

3.3 Madonna or whore?

For the purposes of this dissertation, intersectionality is explored with reference to female sexuality and how through cultural norms created via a patriarchal society, female sexuality, paedophilia and CSA is often overlooked. Henceforth, the argument of the juxtapositional female paedophile, an abuser, yet victim, will be explored in detail.

The study of intersectionality is concerned with the examination of intersecting, or overlapping social identities and how these relate in systems of oppression or discrimination (Krenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005). The theory suggests that multiple social identities such as: gender, race, sexual orientation, age and religion often intersect on simultaneous levels to create a holistic, individual identity (Phoenix & Pattemana, 2006). The framework described can be used to understand how social inequality can occur on a multidimensional basis, as the forms of oppression often interrelate, as do the forms of identity (Nash, 2008). For example: the recent London mayoral election media coverage and the victory of Sadiq Khan. Of only three mayors thus far, the media chose to identify Sadiq as the first Muslim mayor of London (Guardian, 2016), rather than emphasise his British, working-class, council estate background. Although this example is not pertinent to the theme of this dissertation, it serves as a prime example of intersectionality. The theory is an important paradigm in exploring social justice, as it can be applied to a plethora of social constructs and how

through the process of differentiation, social hierarchies are created as a result (Knudsen, 2006).

The juxtaposition of the female paedophile can be seen to arise from the Madonna-whore duality (Hartmann, 2009). In terms of sexual politics, the description offers two mutually-exclusive forms to construct female sexual identity: the loving, caring and nurturing Madonna; or the sexually-perverse, morally-corrupt whore. The term was first coined by Freud (1958), where he argued the complex was caused by a split between the affectionate and the sexual in male desire (Freud, 1940). However, the dichotomy has existed for centuries prior to the term coined by Freud, it can be found in medieval poetry and literature, with the imagery of sexual woman portrayed as the downfall of men – perhaps the most obvious depiction derives from the book of Genesis, where Eve seduces Adam into sin (O'Brien, 1983). Women are often viewed as the guardians of morality, as men are merciless at the hands of their own sexuality – which can leave some men resenting the authority and power women represent. Therefore, through the categorisation of female categories into two forms, this arguably provides the illusion of control (Vance, 1984; Sherfey, 1966).

This categorisation of female sexuality has ultimately created cultural norms, therefore, where paedophilia is concerned, females become doubly deviant – aberrant and deviating from the social norms (Denov, 2003). As most academic research is conducted by men, on men, for the purposes of explaining male behaviour, some researchers have suggested that paedophilia in women is so rare that it has little or no significance, with others going as far to suggest it does not exist in women at all (Freund, Watson & Dickey, 1990). As research has found that most females offend against their own children (Bunting, 2007), the doubly deviant label helps shift the responsibility to explain the behaviour from society, to the offending female (Smith &

Wincup, 2000). According to stereotypical 'normal' gender roles, women are construed as nurturing, caring, affectionate and above all, maternal – as such, early theories described female paedophiles and female sexual offences as subjects of male coercion such as: Rosemary West and Myra Hindley; or suffering from severe mental health problems (Matthews, Matthews & Speltz, 1991; Grayston & De Luca, 1999). Therefore, to suggest and accept that some women actively choose to purposefully sexually offend against children would suggest that gender roles require challenging, it would also require the additional challenge of the idea that female CSA is somehow worse than male CSA, as it is deemed unnatural (Cortoni, 2015).

Research has suggested that female CSA differs from male CSA in that it is deemed more opportunistic and committed under the guise of parenting (Elliott, 1994). The abuse of infants is thought to occur in this way via an array of acts such as: extensive nursing; bathing the child beyond a reasonable age; excessive and invasive cleaning of sexual organs and exposing the child to behaviour of a sexual nature. Older children are thought to be abused via an inappropriate relationship created by the female, for example: substituting the child for an absent partner, sleeping with the child beyond a reasonable age, sexualised hugging or kissing and seductive touching (Kasl, 1990; Deering, 2005; Saradijan & Hanks, 1996). These acts are outside of the generic contact sexual abuses such as: sexual intercourse, oral sex and masturbation – singular and mutual. Finally, where pubescent children (mainly teenage males) are concerned, modern society has seen the emergence of the labelling of older women as '*cougars*', a colloquial term used to describe an older woman seeking sexual activity with younger males (Montemurro & Siefken, 2014; Weitz, 2010). Whereas, older men seeking sexual activity with younger, teenage females is considered abhorrent and paedophilic, '*cougar*' activity seems somewhat justified through the male bravado

attached. Although perceived contradictorily, the essence of the acts is the exact same, the sexual gratification of an adult, through the exploitation of a child.

Finally, perhaps the most explicit form of patriarchy where female CSOs are concerned, is the reactions of the criminal justice system (CJS). The sex differences in criminal sentences have been described by some authors as chivalrous and patriarchal (Crew, 1991). Arguably, the Madonna-whore dichotomy extends to the CJS, as it is also an institution dominated by men therefore, according to traditional gender roles, women are viewed as weaker and their actions are seen as less valid than male counterparts – thus, should not be held completely accountable for their actions (Van Wormer & Bartollas, 2014; Chesney-Lind, 2006; Worrall, 2002). One obvious disparity derives from the Sexual Offences Act (2003), whereby the very definition of rape is as follows: “he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis.” Therefore, to compare hypothetical rape scenarios, a woman may have sexual intercourse with another person without their consent and based purely on the lack of a physiological penis, can never be convicted of rape, yet can be convicted of sexual assault (Gannon & Cortoni, 2010). It is often believed English law does not mirror contemporary issues and in the case of the Offences Against the Person Act (1861), this may be somewhat relevant. However, the Sexual Offences Act was revisited and reformed a mere thirteen years ago and still fails to acknowledge women as perpetrators of rape (Temkin & Ashworth, 2004; Khan, 2003). It is perhaps for this reason, amongst others, why women receive lesser sentences for similar acts. However, considering the current status of female paedophilia and CSA as a relatively hidden phenomenon, due to issues reporting abuse and societal views of a female offender, it could be argued that the prevalence is in danger of remaining unknown, unless cultural and legal views are adapted. It is for this reason the

juxtaposition of the female paedophile is controversial, yet relevant, she may be a perpetrator, yet she is still a victim of the patriarchal society which does not acknowledge her behaviour, neither clinically or legally.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed the delicate and emotive topic of paedophilia, which by its lack of cross-disciplinary definition, intrinsic nature and hidden occurrence, can produce limited statistics. This in turn is further complicated by the inter and cross-disciplinary arguments concerning the subject matter.

The time spent during the research period for this literature review allowed an introduction to a wealth of research materials including academic text books and journal articles, written by well-established authors in field of study. This allowed for the method highlighted in the methodology section of this dissertation to prove accurate and successful, allowing for a critical examination of the chosen theories and concepts in the area of paedophilia and CSA.

The main findings of the review suggest that moral panics are at the epicentre of the current misunderstandings of paedophilia as a contemporary issue. The evidence provided proves through media sensationalist techniques, the true explanations for paedophilic behaviour are overlooked, favouring the perpetuation of uninformed opinions on a matter of public and child safety. The lack of an accepted, cross-disciplinary definition compliments media sensationalism through the ability to play on public fears, which inevitably allows the government to pass laws which can silently remove civil liberties in the name of public protection. The moral panic concocted in the 1980s has been explored through contemporary research and has been recognised as wholly inaccurate in its depictions of danger – favouring the notion

of 'stranger danger', rather than highlighting the true reality of paedophilia and CSA that lies in the family home. As such, the literature review has not focused solely on the impact on society, rather, it has explored possible explanations for paedophilic tendencies with an array of cultural, religious, biological and social learning theories. Concurrent empirical data gathered through MRI and PET scans, effectively demonstrates that paedophilia can have a neurobiological basis, however, such research must be utilised cautiously for ethical reasons, as cultural and sociological explanations cannot and must not be ignored. Finally, this dissertation has acknowledged that in order to establish a holistic understanding, the role of the female paedophile must be reviewed and modernised. The issue of female sexuality is highly contested in historic and contemporary literature, yet still remains a victim of patriarchy and hegemonic femininity. In conclusion, from the information gathered it is clear that until paedophilia is encouraged to be accepted in its existence, with clear definitions between a non-offending paedophile and a CSO, whilst being treated as a sexual orientation (that does not advocate the sexual activity with children, merely acknowledges the possibility), it will remain to be understood as a serious public danger.

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