

Personality Correlates of Pedophilia: Are They Reliable Indicators?

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This article critically reviews the literature related to personality correlates of pedophilia. It is noted that the "slippage" of legal and moral constructs into operational criteria and research methodology in this field have created impediments to sound professional consensus and the accumulation of a coherent data base. When the construct "pedophile" was separated from the construct "sex offender against a minor," there were no reliable findings regarding "pedophiles." "Sex offenders against minors" were noted fairly consistently to have experienced early disturbances in mother relationships and were found for the most part to be non-violent and not aroused by sexually aggressive stimuli involving children (although a smaller portion were violent and/or were aroused by such stimuli). A subgroup of these offenders displayed the passive, lonely and shy profile frequently thought to be associated with the pedophile, although such tendencies were not clinically significant and were similar to profiles found among other types of sex offenders. With the exception of the tautological diagnosis of "sexual deviate," little clinically significant pathology was found among either "pedophiles" or "sex offenders against minors." Recommendations are made for more productive approaches for future research.

KEY WORDS: pedophile, sex offender, sexual abuse

The past two decades have seen a remarkable surge of interest in the problem of adult sexual behavior with minors. In 1969, according to *Psychological Abstracts*, only seven professional journal articles were published that were directly concerned with this topic. Twenty years later, in 1989, at least 250 such articles were published—an approximate 34-fold (3400%) increase (Okami, 1992).¹

As a consequence of increased interest in the study of sexual contacts between adults and minors, there has been renewed interest in the study

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¹The overall increase of listings between the 1969 and 1989 editions of *Psychological Abstracts* was only approximately 2-fold (115%).

of pedophilia as a sexual preference. In particular, researchers have attempted to isolate personality correlates of pedophilia (Erickson, Luxemberg, Walbek, & Seely, 1987). The present paper critically reviews this literature. As will be noted, there are serious impediments that have precluded the emergence of a scientifically sound professional consensus and the establishment of a coherent data base in this field. In our view, however, these impediments go beyond problems of methodology such as those discussed by Beitchman and colleagues (Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta, & Akman, 1991; Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, DaCosta, Akman, & Cassavia, 1992) in their recent reviews (see also Parker & Parker, 1991). Whereas these critics have focused on deficiencies such as biased samples, absence of controls, confounding variables, and other pitfalls which plague many areas of social research, we will argue that advances in the fields of sexual abuse and pedophilia are particularly hindered by what O'Grady (1988) referred to as the "slippage" of legal and moral constructs into social science research (see also Ames & Houston, 1990; Kilpatrick, 1992; Okami, 1990, 1992). In our view, this slippage is not incidental but is structural, anchored in current theory, and is partially responsible for the conceptual and methodological problems noted by commentators such as Beitchman et al. We thus preface our review with a discussion of these impediments.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION

The Vocabulary of Sexual Abuse

Slippage is apparent in the literature on pedophilia at the most basic level of nomenclature and rhetorical tone. For example, a recent article published in the journal *Psychiatric Quarterly* titled *Pedophilia: An Update on Theory and Practice* (Travin, Bluestone, Coleman, Cullen, & Melella, 1985) began: "The number of sexual attacks on children is staggering." (p. 89). According to available data, however, the number of sexual attacks on children remains relatively small—if the term *attack* is used in the sense in which it is normally understood. The data suggest that sexual behaviors between adults and children are rarely characterized by forceful coercion or violence (Bradford, Bloomberg, & Bourget, 1988; Erickson, Walbek, & Seely, 1988; Gagnon, 1965; Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965; Groth, Hobson, & Gary, 1982; Henn, Herjanic, & Vanderpearl, 1976; Howells, 1979; Kilpatrick, 1992; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948, 1953; Landis, 1956; Langevin, 1983; Lanyon, 1986; Li, West, & Woodhouse, 1990; McCaghy, 1966; Mohr, Turner, & Jerry, 1964; Panton, 1978; Peters, 1976; Quinsey, 1977; Ravitch & Weiss, 1962; Russell, 1986; Sgroi, 1978; Storr, 1964; Toobert,

Bartelme, & Jones, 1959; Virkkunen, 1975; see particularly Finkelhor, Hotelling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990, the only investigation to use a national probability sample).

Presumably, Travin and colleagues chose the term "attack" because any sexual contact between an adult and a minor may be defined *legally* as rape or sexual assault—hence, an attack—and also because of the *moral* violation inherent in the crime. The article goes on to discuss child molestation (a criminal behavior) while ostensibly discussing pedophilia (an anomalous sexual preference). Indeed, virtually nothing at all is said about pedophilia in the article despite its promising title. This example is characteristic of the literature under review.

Similarly, in a provocative and otherwise informative test of the utility of MMPI profiles in distinguishing subtypes of persons accused of sexual offenses against minors, Hall, Maiuro, Vitaliano, & Proctor (1986) declared that the topic of their article was "men who have sexually assaulted children," and the authors used the term "sexual aggression" throughout to characterize the global nature of the topic being studied. However, the authors proceeded to report that 86% of their sample were classified as not having used force during the commission of their offenses. Moreover, victims in this study were considered "children" to the age of 18. Thus, an unspecified portion of the events studied by Hall and his colleagues consisted of illegal but non-violent sexual contacts between adults and sexually or reproductively mature individuals (see also Hall, 1989). If one labels such events "sexual assaults and aggressions against children," how then does one describe and differentiate actual instances of forceful or violent sexual behavior with pre- or peri-pubertal persons? Because law and morality provide the theoretical rationale for classifying all intergenerational sexual contacts involving minors as "sexual assaults and aggressions against children," resultant methodological and discursive practices—as Kilpatrick (1987; 1992) ably pointed out—may reflect a conflict of interest between scientific inquiry and the enforcement of social norms.

Slippage and Social Advocacy

Whereas the slippage referred to above appears unintentional, it is difficult not to attribute to some investigations in this field the intentional use of these practices as social advocacy devices. For example, Broussard, Wagner, and Kazelskis (1991) investigated undergraduate students' attributions of responsibility in cases of sexual abuse. The investigators' experimental design consisted of a vignette format in which an instance of sexual abuse was described to respondents, with

victim gender (but not age), perpetrator gender, and response of victim (passive, resisting, or encouraging) as the manipulated variables. A major question of interest to these authors was how realistic and representative respondents considered the "encouraging" vignette condition, how likely respondents were to label the incident "sexual abuse," and how harmful they considered the contact to be. However, in all vignette conditions, the victim was described to respondents as a "15-year-old child." Results of the study were then discussed in terms of respondents' attitudes toward "child" sexual abuse and sexual interactions involving an adult and a "child." Broussard and colleagues argued that their results supported their claims that many persons, including social scientists, attribute blame for instances of child sexual abuse to the child her- or himself. The authors proposed that such attitudes lead to the belief that sexual abuse is not harmful—thus potentially affecting reporting, prosecution, provision of clinical services, service by "enlightened jurors" (p. 269), and public financing of treatment for victims of child sexual abuse. Broussard and colleagues concluded their report with a call for increased public education about child sexual abuse.

Nowhere in the methodology or in the author's discussion, however, was it suggested that some people do not consider a 15-year-old a "child." Consensual sexual relations between a 15-year-old and an adult (or a 14-year-old and an adult, for that matter) are legal in a fair number of states within the United States and in a large number of countries throughout the world. Results from a study which claims to tap attitudes toward sexual abuse of children, and yet in all vignette conditions describes a person who perhaps may not be considered a child by some respondents, has obvious problems with internal validity. Broussard and colleagues' neglect of this problem is unfortunate since it appears to be implicitly chastising or re-educating any reader who might raise the question of whether or not a 15-year-old should be considered a child. Indeed, it is perhaps reasonable to conclude that social advocacy concerns influenced these authors' decisions to avoid manipulating victim age in their design and to avoid acknowledgment of the problems resulting from their methodology.

In another example, Briere & Runtz (1989) studied potential "indices of pedophilia" in a sample of male university students. The authors advanced the claim that 21% of their sample reported "sometimes" being sexually attracted to children, 9% reported having sexual fantasies involving children, 5% reported masturbating during fantasies about sex with a child (which, according to the authors, defined them as

pedophiles), and 7% admitted that they would have sex with a child if they were certain of remaining undiscovered. These are clearly disturbing statistics.

However, these predilections were measured using a Likert-type scale with the negative pole anchored by *never* or *completely false* (e.g., never found any small child at all attractive, never had a fantasy of a child, not at all likely to have sex with a child even if it would be undiscovered, etc.). By large margin, the modal "positive" response was in all cases the numerical point one degree away from *never* or *completely false*. It is therefore possible that many persons recalling virtually no attractions or fantasies involving children might nevertheless have chosen to endorse the equivalent of "virtually never" rather than "never" simply in acknowledgment of the chance that on some occasion they might have felt an (uncharacteristic) moment of passing attraction or entertained a fantasy. Such brief, ambiguous feelings may be normative and in any event can hardly be said to identify "pedophiles" (Freund, McKnight, Langevin, & Cibiri, 1972; Martinson, 1981; Righton, 1981).

Indeed, if these "one-point-away-from-never" responses are discounted, the percentage of "pedophiles" in Briere & Runtz' sample falls from 5% to 1%, the figure for subjects "sometimes" sexually attracted to children drops from 21% to 10% (5% if we count only the responses that lie closer to the positive pole than to the negative pole), the figure for subjects having had "fantasies about sex with a child" drops from 9% to 3% (1% if we count only the responses closer to the positive pole than to the negative pole), and the percentage of those claiming that they would have sex with a child if they could remain undetected drops from 7% to 3% (1% if we count only the responses closer to the positive pole than to the negative pole).

Moreover, Briere & Runtz did not report having provided subjects with an operational definition of "child." As we have seen, persons into late adolescence are included in most legal and in some social scientific definitions of "child." It is therefore possible that some portion of the fantasies or attractions reported involved sexually or reproductively mature individuals, potentially lessening even further the meaningfulness of Briere & Runtz' results. Thus, it seems likely that only approximately 1% at most of Briere and Runtz' sample warranted application of the label "pedophile" if we wish the term to retain discriminant validity as a category of sexual preference or desire. The authors nevertheless characterized their results as presenting "substantial" social implications (p. 71).

Definitional and Diagnostic Chaos

Between Krafft-Ebing (1912) and DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1988) lies a trail of diverse definitions of pedophilia and diagnostic criteria strongly rooted in the realms of law and morality. Definitions of pedophilia may include any person who has (apparently even once) masturbated to a fantasy of a child (cf. Finkelhor & Araj, 1986) or any adult who has had actual sexual contact with a person under age 18 or 16, regardless of the sexual preferences and motivations of the older participant and regardless of the level of sexual maturity of the younger participant (cf. Finkelhor & Araj, 1986; Langevin, Hucker, Handy, Purins, & Russon, 1985b; see Langevin & Lang, 1985, for discussion). Still other professionals define a pedophile as any person who would prefer to have sex with a person age 18 or younger, even if such activity never takes place in reality (cf. McCormack & Selvaggio, 1989). Additionally, the term *pedophile* typically is used interchangeably in the professional literature with *child molester*, *sex offender*, *perpetrator*, *abuser*, *rapist*, *victimizer*, etc. (cf. Ames & Houston, 1990; Bradford, Bloomberg, & Bourget 1988; Fuller, 1989; Hobson, Boland, & Jamieson, 1985; Kelly, 1982; McCormack & Selvaggio, 1989; Peters, 1976; Toobert, Bartelme, & Jones, 1959; Travin et al., 1985). This practice is linked to the moral and legal status of sexual acts between adults and minors and to the virtual exclusive use of forensic samples of sex offenders (sometimes including rapists of adult women) in studies of "pedophilia." Indiscriminate interchange of the term *pedophile* with terms such as *child molester*, etc., thus prevents the distinction between sexual behavior and sexual preference or orientation to be made.²

²Whereas it is true, as Finkelhor & Araj (1986) have pointed out, that the existence of a true sexual preference for prepubertal children has not been demonstrated conclusively, contrary evidence exists for the notion of virtually any sexual preference (cf. Kinsey, 1948). Thus, the present authors assume the existence of a sexual preference for children as a heuristic that, in our view, allows us to describe and evaluate data with greater precision than if one uses the "inclusive" type of definition of pedophilia proposed by commentators such as Finkelhor & Araj. Moreover, the rationale given by Finkelhor & Araj for adopting definitions of pedophilia that include "any sexual contact with a child, regardless of motive," or any "conscious sexual interest" in a child (p. 146) is that 1) some term is needed to describe the phenomenon of adult sexual behavior with children; and 2) definitions of pedophilia that refer to sexual preference describe a complex psychological condition which is less readily ascertainable than a category defined by behavioral criteria. Because adult sexual behavior with children is heterogeneous—that is, it is variable in characteristics, contexts, and effects—we do not see why a single term needs to be applied to these behaviors excepting for convenience, in which case "adult sexual behavior with children" seems more appropriate than "pedophilia." Additionally, whereas complex psychological conditions may be less readily ascertainable than behaviors, if there is evidence to support the existence of complex psychological conditions, it may be necessary to attempt to study them as such.

This is a particularly important point because most data suggest that only a relatively small portion of the population of incarcerated sexual offenders against minors consists of persons for whom minors (particularly children) represent the exclusive or even primary object of sexual interest or source of arousal (Freund, Watson, & Dickey, 1991; Gebhard et al., 1965; Howells, 1981; Lang et al., 1988; Langevin, 1983; McCormack & Selvaggio, 1989; Marshall, Barbaree, & Butt, 1988; Marshall & Eccles, 1991; Mohr et al., 1964; Quinsey, Chaplin, & Carrigan, 1979; Righton, 1981; Rowan, 1988; Schofield, 1965; Swanson, 1968). If we term all of these persons "pedophiles," what do we term persons with a stated or measurable sexual preference for children?

Evidence further suggests that those persons whose primary sexual interest is genuinely pedophilic often exhibit a complex set of attitudes, beliefs, and perceived needs in regard to children of which sexual desire may be subordinate rather than superordinate (Groth, Hobson, & Gary, 1982; Howells, 1979, 1981; Lanyon, 1986; Ravitch & Weiss, 1962). Interactions between such persons and children sometimes have been characterized as "affectionate" and inclusive of many non-sexual components, some of which may be experienced by the child as rewarding (Groth et al., 1982; Howells, 1979; Ingram, 1981; Krivacska, 1990; Lanyon, 1986; Li et al., 1990; Money, in Geraci & Mader, 1991; Peters, 1976; Sandfort, 1984; Schultz, 1973). If this is true of some portion of cases, it is conceivable that offenses committed against children by actual pedophiles (or particular subtypes of pedophiles) may be less likely to be reported and/or to result in prosecution and incarceration, further distancing actual pedophiles from sample pools.

Definitions of pedophilia rooted in law and morality also need to be considered in light of 1) anthropological data which suggest that the average age of marriage cross-culturally is between 12-15 for females and 19-21 for males (Frayser, 1985); 2) anthropological, ethological, and sociological data which indicate that adult male sexual attraction to sexually mature female adolescents is normative in virtually all (if not all) societies including our own, and that males of all primate groups including humans prefer younger females (Ames & Houston, 1990; Palmer, 1988; Righton, 1981);³ 3) sociological and psychological data indicating that both males and females tend to prefer heterosexual pairings where the male is stronger, heavier, and older than the female (Langevin et al., 1985a), thus suggesting the potential for reciprocal

³Indeed, American males of all ages (including boys as young as seven) tend to rate late-adolescence as the peak time of facial attractiveness for females (Cross & Cross, 1971).

adolescent female sexual attraction to adult males; and 4) data derived from physiological and self-report measures of sexual arousal which indicate that some minimal sexual response to female children as young as six appears to be "normal" for "normal" (gynephilic) adult heterosexual males (Freund et al., 1972).⁴

Thus, currently, an adult male who considers even age 17 or 18 as sexually optimal for a female partner is defined as a "pedophile" or "hebephile" according to the diagnostic or operational criteria of significant numbers of social scientists and mental health professionals. However, given the scientific data referred to above, adult male sexual attraction to an adolescent female seems normative and may require less explanation than adult male attraction to a female in middle adulthood. These data also suggest that for some persons, a firmly established, normative preference for adult partners may not preclude fantasies about minors.

The confusion that arises as a result of these problems of definition is demonstrated dramatically in Baxter and colleagues' (Baxter, Marshall, Barbaree, Davidson, & Malcolm, 1984) attempt to differentiate sex offenders by psychometric tests, personal history, and sexual response measures. In this study, heterosexual "hebephiles" (supposedly persons with a primary or exclusive sexual preference for adolescents) showed the greatest sexual response to stimuli depicting *adult* females—and yet the authors continued to characterize this group as "hebephiles" simply because they had been charged with a sexual offense against a teenager. Because of this characteristic conflation of law-breaking (social deviance) and hebephilia (anomalous sexuality), the authors apparently were unwilling to acknowledge that a number of these "hebephiles" probably should have been characterized as normal "gynephiles" who had serendipitously chosen a sexually mature but underage female against whom to offend. Moreover, "pedophiles" in this sample showed an equal level of sexual response to adult females as to

⁴Because of the relatively small numbers of reported female sex offenders against children, age preference in female sexual response has not been tested. Moreover, because "true" pedophilia is almost universally considered a male paraphilia, and virtually none of the literature presents empirical data concerning female pedophiles, the present review assumes male gender for pedophiles. However, some data suggest that sexual interactions between women and children may be more widespread than currently assumed (Bradford et al., 1988; Groth & Birnbaum, 1978; Righton, 1981), and anecdotal data suggest that "true" female pedophilia probably exists. For example, the Winter, 1991/1992 issue of *Paidika: The Journal of Pedophilia* (an English-language journal published in the Netherlands) is devoted exclusively to articles about or by female pedophiles. Sexual interactions between adult females and pubertal or adolescent males definitely exist and appear to be fairly widespread (Condy, Templer, Brown, & Veaco, 1987).

children, thus calling into question the usefulness of the term "pedophile" in the context of this study. Problems of slippage of legal definitions and overreliance on forensic data extend even to investigations employing sophisticated methods and analyses. For example, Prentky and colleagues (Prentky, Knight, Rosenberg, & Lee, 1989), in recognition of the heterogeneity of offense and offender characteristics in child molestation, attempted to validate an ambitious taxonomic system for classifying these offenders using a path analytic approach. Apart from some possible problems in reliability resulting from the use of principal-components analysis with dichotomous measures and the reporting of significant results at alpha levels of .05 in stepwise procedures for logistic regression, the utility of these investigators' findings is limited because they defined a "child molester" as any offender against a minor under 16. Because no offender or victim census was reported, it cannot be determined how many of these offenses involved sexually mature victims. Moreover, the sample used for validation of the taxonomic system was likely to have been particularly nonrepresentative, being composed of "individuals who [had] committed repetitive and/or violent acts of rape or child molestation" (p.236).

For all of these reasons, and also because of more obvious problems resulting from the use of biased prison samples,⁵ questions apparently are being asked about certain populations ("pedophiles" and "hebephiles") and answered with data collected from quite different populations (incarcerated sex offenders and rapists).

Personality Correlates of Pedophilia

With these admittedly extensive caveats in mind, we now review empirical findings related to personality correlates of "pedophilia." Clearly, however, these findings should be considered more often than not to describe samples of incarcerated sex offenders—some of whom may be pedophiles.

A "Classical" Profile

Repeated mention is made in the literature to what has become a classical overall personality profile of the pedophile or child molester. Such persons have been characterized variously as passive, dependent,

⁵Clearly, variables other than nature of offense or motivation may determine who winds up incarcerated and who does not. Moreover, studies involving prisoners by definition contain elements of coercion, and prisoners hoping that "correct" responses might increase chances of early release may well provide dishonest responses to interview questions or fake responses to physiological measures (Langevin et al., 1985a, 1985b; see Hall, Proctor, & Nelson, 1988, for discussion of "faked" responses to arousal measures).

unassertive, isolated, and awkward in interpersonal relations; anxious and depressed; below average in intelligence; preoccupied with religious matters; ignorant and puritanical in regard to sex; narcissistic, high in feminine gender identity, and overidentified with their mothers; psychosexually immature and displaying aversion to adult females, the adult female body, and heterosexual intercourse; non-violent in behavior and low in aggression generally (Bell & Hall, 1976; Fisher, 1969; Groth et al., 1982; Hobson et al., 1985; Karpman, 1957; Kelly, 1982; Kurland, 1960; Langevin, 1983; Panton, 1978; Ravitch & Weiss, 1962; Storr, 1964; Swift, 1979; Toobert et al., 1959; Tingle, Bernard, Robbins, Newman, & Hutchinson, 1986; Virkkunen, 1976; Wilson & Cox, 1983).

However, as Langevin (1983) and Langevin et al. (1985a; 1985b) pointed out in their provocative series of reviews, this overall portrait appears to be based largely on clinical impression. Empirical support is equivocal and in certain cases absent. Because significant numbers of professionals in the field nevertheless continue to express belief in a "typical" psychological profile for pedophiles (Conte, Fogarty, & Collins, 1991), we have followed Langevin et al.'s general approach while attempting to update and expand their findings.

1) *Social inadequacy* ("Pedophiles are passive, dependent, unassertive, isolated, and awkward in interpersonal relations.")

There is some empirical support for this hypothesis, but it is generally weak. Using the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), Fisher (1969) reported that in comparison to normal controls, offenders against minors were characterized as passive, dependent, insecure and unassertive. However, offenders against minors differed more in these respects from normal controls than from other types of offenders. In an unusual investigation of a nonforensic, nonclinical sample of professed pedophiles ($N = 77$), Wilson and Cox (1983) administered the Eysenck PQ and found that these men reported higher levels of shyness and sensitivity in social situations, and greater degrees of loneliness and isolation than did controls. However, Wilson and Cox emphasized that as a whole, their sample did not markedly lack social skills and confidence.

Howells (1979), in a frequently cited study, examined ten incarcerated heterosexual pedophiles using the Kelly Repertory Grid. In comparison to matched controls, these subjects emphasized issues of dominance, portraying adults in such terms as "demanding" and "overbearing." From these results, Howells inferred that pedophiles may indeed lack social skills. However, this was Howells's one significant finding, and it

resulted from multiple *t* test comparisons using an alpha level of .05. As Horley (1988) pointed out in his report of his failure to replicate Howells's findings, Howells's statistical analysis failed to correct for experiment-wise error rates which inflate alpha levels when multiple comparisons are made. Because one significant finding out of ten comparisons should be expected by chance alone at the .05 alpha level, Howells's results must be viewed with caution until they are replicated.

Personality profiles of pedophiles and sex offenders against minors frequently have been attempted based on administration of the MMPI. Table 1 below summarizes findings related to social inadequacy.

Table 1

Summary of MMPI Findings Related to Social Inadequacy of Pedophiles

Study	N	Ss	NSO or Normal Controls	Comments
Anderson et al. (1979)	92	MSO	no	No significant typical profile (OAM)
Armentrout & Hauer (1978)	51	MSO	no	No significant typical profile (OAM) (4-8 mean peak code)
Bradford et al. (1988)	52	P	no	No significant results
Erickson et al. (1987)	498	MSO	no	No significant typical profile (OAM) (4-2 mean peak code)
Hall et al. (1986)	406	OAM	no	No significant typical profile 4-8 mean peak code
Hall (1989)	81	OAM	no	No significant typical profile 4-2 mean peak code
Langevin et al. (1985b)	142	OAM	UN	No significant typical profile. Elevated social introversion scales in comparison with controls, but scores within normal limits
McCreary (1975)	33	OAM	no	No significant typical profile
Panton (1978)	78	MSO	no	Elevated Pd and L scales interpreted as indicating social inadequacy (OAC) (4-2 mean peak code)
Quinsey et al. (1980)	150	MO	NSO	OAM did not differ from other prisoners
Toobert et al. (1959)	120	OAC	NSO	Results interpreted as trend toward "inadequacy in interpersonal relations" (OAM)

MO = mixed offenders

UN = unspecified normal controls

MSO = mixed sex offenders

OAM = offenders against minors

NSO = non-sex offenders

(under age of consent)

OAC = offenders against children (under 12)

P = pedophiles (some effort made to differentiate sexual preference)

Several investigators have offered the noted frequency of various 2-point mean peak code MMPI profiles for offenders against minors as evidence that this group tends toward a socially isolated personality type. However, Erickson and colleagues (Erickson, Luxemberg, Walbek, & Seely, 1987) pointed out that mean profiles do not necessarily represent modal profiles, and the mean profiles frequently found for offenders against minors are routinely observed among other sex offenders and many other types of prisoners. Erickson and colleagues stressed the heterogeneity of individual MMPI profiles for offenders against minors and characterized attempts to identify such persons on the basis of these profiles as "reprehensible" (p. 569). Hall and colleagues (Hall, Maiuro, Vitaliano, & Proctor, 1986) offered virtually the same criticism, noting that the 4-8 mean profile found in his study only occurred among 7% of his total sample and was not significantly more frequent than several other 2-point codes. Hall noted that most statistically significant results of attempts to differentiate offenders on the basis of MMPI profiles are not substantive but are generally a function of large sample sizes or failures to correct for inflation of alpha levels in multiple comparison tests (cf. Pantou, 1978).

Using the 16PF, Langevin and colleagues (Langevin, Paitich, Freeman, Mann, & Handy, 1978) found that a mixed clinical and forensic sample of pedophiles tended to be shyer and more reserved than normal controls, but this profile did not differ greatly from that derived from a sample of other sexually anomalous groups. Moreover, levels of shyness did not reach clinically significant levels. In a later controlled study, pedophiles' 16PF for shyness were "unremarkable" (Langevin, Hucker, Handy, Purins, & Russon, 1985b).

Additionally, as Langevin and colleagues (Langevin, Hucker, Ben-Aron, Purins, & Hook, 1985a) pointed out, neither the MMPI nor the 16PF directly addresses the construct of "assertiveness." These investigators subsequently conducted a controlled study of a sample of heterosexual pedophiles using the Assertion Inventory (Alberti & Emons, 1970) and the Assertiveness Schedule (Rathus, 1973). They found no support for the notion that pedophiles are unassertive, particularly when compared with other sex offenders (Langevin et al., 1985a; see also Baxter, Marshall, Barbaree, Davidson, & Malcolm, 1984; Lang, Black, Frenzel, & Checkley, 1988; Segal & Marshall, 1985; Stermac & Quinsey, 1986).

Indeed, Langevin and colleagues (Langevin et al., 1985a) suggested that *introversion* may be more descriptive of nonviolent offenders against minors than *unassertiveness* (see also Bernard, 1985). As

Langevin and his associates observed, introversion is a personality dimension that may result from many causes including a "nonneurotic lack of interest in people" (p. 204). Langevin and colleagues (Langevin et al., 1985b) also advanced the intriguing notion that the view of pedophiles as passive, immature, unassertive, etc., may have arisen in part from the typical nature of their sexual offenses which consist of fondling and other "childlike" sexual behaviors such as exhibition of genitals.

Because so few of the studies cited above have employed normal or non-sex offender controls, one is left with evidence from those few that have attempted to do so which indicate that, if anything, unassertiveness and lack of social skills may be more characteristic of sex offenders in general than offenders against minors or pedophiles in particular. Indeed, Langevin (1983) referred to Quinsey's (1977) suggestion that the unassertive and moralistic profile clinically noted in pedophiles/offenders against minors may in part represent the efforts of convicted sex offenders to present a front of "normality" in order to secure earlier release or other favors.

2) *Intelligence* (*"Pedophiles are below average in intelligence."*)

Data are summarized in Table 2.

As can be seen, few if any differences in intelligence have been found for pedophiles or sex offenders against minors.

The impression of pedophiles lacking intelligence may have originated in clinical work among samples which included persons suffering from senility and mental retardation (Langevin et al., 1985a). Thus, as Wilson and Cox (1983) observed, pedophilia has been characterized in some quarters as a kind of "village idiot" syndrome. The co-occurrence in some instances of exhibitionism with pedophilia, or at least their conflation in some of the literature (cf. Mohr, Turner, & Jerry, 1964) may also have fueled this stereotype.

Whereas some investigators have hypothesized various sorts of organic mental syndromes (e.g., post-encephalitic Parkinsonism, hypothalamic lesions) in pedophilia, Fuller (1989), Langevin and colleagues (Langevin et al., 1985a), and others have pointed out that there is little evidence that such conditions adequately explain anything but a relatively small number of instances of pedophilia or its associated behaviors.

Table 2

Summary of Findings of Intelligence of Pedophiles

Study	N	Ss	NSO or Normal Control	Inst.	Comments
Baxter et al. (1984)	128	MSO	UN	U	OAC "tended to be" less intelligent and less educated than other sex offenders
Bernard (1985)	50	P	—	—	Did not test directly, but large portion of sample were educated professionals
Bradford et al. (1988)	52	P	no	WAIS	No significant findings
Groth et al. (1982)	500	OAM	no	U	No significant findings
Hall (1989)	406	OAM	no	WAIS	No significant findings (Average or above average)
Langevin et al. (1978)	479	MSO	UN	WAIS	No significant findings (OAM) (Low average range)
Panton (1978)	78	MSO	no	U	No significant findings, but OAC slightly higher IQ than other sex offenders
Peters (1976)	224	MSO	no	U	OAM in low average range, differed significantly only from exhibitionists (scored lower)
Wilson & Cox (1983)	77	p	—	—	Did not test directly, but large portion of sample were educated professionals

NSO = non-sex offenders

UN = unspecified normal controls

OAM = offenders against minors

MSO = mixed sex offenders

P = pedophiles (some effort made to differentiate sexual preference)

WAIS = Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales

U = Unspecified

3) Affective pathology ("Pedophiles are anxious and depressed.")

Table 3 summarizes findings. It should be noted that Bradford and colleagues (Bradford, Bloomberg, & Bourget, 1988) also referred to the presence of "anxiety neurosis" among their sample of pedophiles but did not specify how this was assessed.

Wilson and Cox (1983) claimed to find evidence for depression among their self-selected pedophile sample through analysis of two specific items on the Eysenck PQ. Forty-three percent of these pedophiles as compared with 18% of controls admitted to suicidal ideation, and twice as many pedophiles as controls endorsed the item "I often feel lonely." However, these items alone cannot be said to constitute a valid measure of depression as a clinical entity and should be viewed instead as measuring the face valid constructs of suicidal ideation and loneliness, respectively. Moreover, as Wilson and Cox themselves pointed out (see

Table 3

Summary of Findings of Affective Pathology in Pedophiles

Study	N	Ss	NSO or Normal Control	Inst.	Comments
Baxter et al. (1984)	128	MSO	UN	SSAI	Elevated "social-sexual anxiety" in all groups, but OAC did not differ from other sex offenders
Bernard (1985)	50	P	no	ABV	2/3 of sample showed no pathology. Elevated "neurotic instability" in 1/3 of sample
Bradford et al. (1988)	52	P	no	MMPI	Elevation in depression scales for middle-aged hetero-pedophiles only
Erickson et al. (1987)	498	MSO	no	MMPI	No findings specific to OAM
Henn et al. (1976)	239	MSO	no	UPA	No affective pathology reported (OAM)
Langevin et al. (1985b)	142	OAM	UN	MMPI	Elevated depression scales, but not significant in comparison with normal controls
Panton (1978)	78	MSO	no	MMPI	Profile for OAM interpreted as indicating anxiety, but only when compared with rapists' profiles
Peters (1976)	224	MSO	no	CMI	OAM showed lower levels of emotional disturbance than other sex offenders
Wilson & Cox (1983)	77	P	AMN	EPQ	Elevated suicidal ideation and loneliness compared to normals
NSO = non-sex offenders				UN = unspecified normal controls	
OAM = offenders against minors				AMN = age-matched normals	
MSO = mixed sex offenders					
P = pedophiles (some effort made to differentiate sexual preference)					
MMPI = Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory					
SSAI = Social-Sexual Anxiety Inventory					
EPQ = Eysenck Personality Questionnaire				ABV = Amsterdam Biographic Questionnaire	
CMI = Cornell Medical Index				UPA = unspecified psychiatric assessment	

also Bernard, 1985; Langevin, 1978), these findings may have resulted directly from social response to pedophilia, rather than representing a cause or even indirect global personality correlate of the condition.

Taken as a whole, then, it appears that little clinically significant affective pathology has been found among pedophiles and offenders against minors. With the exceptions of the tautological diagnosis of "sexual deviation" itself and occasional significant elevations of psychopathic deviate or psychotic scales on the MMPI (cf. Langevin et al., 1985b; McCreary, 1975), surprisingly little clinically significant pathology of any sort has been found among these groups. Moreover, variance

in pathology between offenders against minors and other sex offenders has been noted even less frequently. As Henn and colleagues (Henn et al., 1976) observed, the profile of the "child molester" generally suggests "no psychiatric diagnosis other than sexual deviation" (p. 696; see also Baxter et al., 1984; Howells, 1981; Juda, 1986).

4) Religious and sexual conservatism (*"Pedophiles are preoccupied with religious matters; ignorant and puritanical in regard to sex."*)

Few empirical findings bear upon the question of religious preoccupation among pedophiles, and as before, this characterization apparently resulted from generalizations based on the meagre early clinical literature and also from some findings regarding incestuous fathers, a population which has been demonstrated to include relatively few pedophiles (Freund, Watson, & Dickey, 1991; Lang, Black, Frenzel, & Checkley, 1988). However, Toobert and colleagues (Toobert, Bartelme, & Jones, 1959) reported that the two MMPI items that most powerfully differentiated "pedophiles" (offenders against children) from other prisoners in their San Quentin sample were "I read the Bible several times a week" and "I go to church every week." This study has been cited frequently to advance the view that pedophiles are preoccupied with religion. In the present authors' opinion, however, these findings must be viewed in the context of subjects' imprisonment in a maximum security facility for a severely despised crime for which rehabilitation is prerequisite for parole (see Quinsey, 1977).

Baxter and colleagues (Baxter et al., 1984) reported that all groups of sex offenders studied tended to exhibit "negative and puritanical attitudes toward women and sex," with pedophiles (offenders against minors) showing the most "repressive attitudes toward sex." Baxter and colleagues did not specify how such attitudes were measured. Peters (1976) reported that Rorschach administration showed that pedophiles "repressed their sensuous impulses," but it is unclear whether this finding resulted from the extreme social sanctions against the nature of the pedophile's sensuous impulses or if the impulses are in some more intrinsic manner related to sensuous repression.

Swift (1979), citing Goldstein (1973), cautioned that sexual abusers typically have been reared in sexually restrictive homes where nudity or discussions of sexuality are not tolerated and conservative attitudes toward sexuality prevail. In Goldstein's investigation, pedophiles displayed the most discomfort discussing sex and the most conservative attitudes toward premarital sexuality of all other sexually anomalous groups studied. Swift also cited the dramatic drop in sex crimes against

children in Denmark that had been attributed convincingly (in a detailed analysis by Kutchinsky, 1971) to the concurrent legalization of (adult) pornography in that country. Swift advanced the notion that sexual ignorance is part of the etiology of child sexual abuse and that pornography might play an "educative" as well as cathartic role. This notion remains speculative.

Apart from the material reviewed above, we could find no empirical data bearing on the notion that pedophiles are sexually conservative or ignorant and preoccupied with religious matters. Thus, evidence in support of this proposition appears scant.

5) Narcissism ("Pedophiles are narcissistic.")

Early psychoanalytic theorists suggested that narcissism resulting from Oedipal fixation was a factor in the development of pedophilia (cf. Fenichel, 1945), or more usually, homosexual pedophilia (see Mohr et al., 1964; Juda, 1986, for reviews). According to this view, an immature object of the same sex is chosen while the pedophile identifies with his mother and sees himself in the child. More recently, Groth and colleagues (Groth et al., 1982), who have popularized the dichotomous designations "fixed" and "regressed" for pedophiles, hypothesized that homosexual pedophiles are generally fixated at an early developmental stage and are narcissistic, whereas heterosexual pedophiles are typically regressed and seeking surrogate objects.⁶ Prentky et al. (1989) attempted to validate empirically a "narcissistic" subtype of sex offender against minors. However, this subtype was defined simply as a person who seeks extensive contact with children but whose motive is exclusively sexual, as compared with certain other offenders who may seek out children for relational as well as sexual purposes. Because no specific rationale was given for terming such a subtype "narcissistic," it is unclear why those investigators have chosen to do so.

Other theorists have pointed to the common occurrence of exhibitionistic activities among pedophiles to support the hypothesis that narcissism is a factor in pedophilia, reasoning that exhibitionism is motivated by the desire for admiration (cf. Langevin et al., 1985b). However, when Langevin and associates (Langevin et al., 1985a) attempted to test the notion of pedophilic narcissism empirically, they found that pedophiles did not find narcissistically mediated sexual stimuli more arousing than

⁶Lawrence Stanley raised the interesting question of whether "regressed" persons who use children as surrogates should be said to have an actual sexual preference for the surrogate or for the object the surrogate represents (March, 1990, personal communication).

other stimuli. The present authors could find no additional empirical evidence bearing on this hypothesis.

6) *Psychosocial development and gender pathology* (*"Pedophiles are overidentified with their mothers and high in feminine gender identity."*)

Karpman (1957), who viewed pedophilia as closely related to homosexuality, contended that pedophiles tend toward feminine identification. Using various projective and objective measures, Stricker (1967), Fisher and Howell (1970), Freund and associates (Freund, Langevin, Laws, & Serber, 1974) and Toobert and colleagues (Toobert et al., 1959) have reported some degree of "feminine" (i.e., passive) identification or response patterns among pedophiles or offenders against minors. However, controlled research has failed to replicate these findings (cf. Langevin, 1983, p. 277; Langevin et al., 1978).

Indeed, Freund and his associates (Freund et al., 1982) consequently repudiated their 1974 study, claiming that serious methodological failings had resulted in inaccurate characterization of heterosexual pedophiles as feminine gender identified. Using their own Feminine Gender Identity Scale for Males, Freund and colleagues did not find significant differences in feminine gender identity between either hetero- or homosexual pedophiles and normal heterosexuals. This study did, however, report higher feminine gender identity among homosexuals preferring mature partners (normal androphiles). Freund and associates concluded:

[The study] showed that there exists *no general* difference between pedophiles and males who prefer physically mature partners in respect to feminine gender identity. The differences in this respect would appear to pertain only when homosexuality is present and should be further studied in the context of homosexuality, rather than in that of pedophilia (p. 112).

Thus, the clinical impression of increased feminine gender identity among pedophiles may have resulted from sample bias (e.g., generally normal androphilic men imprisoned for sexual activity with a minor serving as a sample of "pedophiles") and unfounded theoretical constructs conflating homosexuality and pedophilia. As Langevin (1983) observed, "If anything, pedophiles are strongly masculine identified" (p. 277). This statement was supported by a later controlled study by Langevin and his associates, which reported that heterosexual pedophiles scored significantly lower on femininity according to MMPI and 16PF than did homosexual or bisexual pedophiles or normal controls (Langevin et al., 1985b).

Some of the least ambiguous findings regarding personality correlates of sexual offenders against minors have emerged regarding mother identification. However, these results have been in the opposite direction from that hypothesized by earlier theorists. That is, pedophiles and sex offenders against minors tend to have decreased, not increased, mother identification. Wilson and Cox (1983) found that their nonforensic sample of pedophiles expressed greater degrees of difficulty relating to their mothers than did normal controls and were less likely to have characterized their mother as "a good woman." Offenders against minors in Paitich and Langevin's (1976) forensic sample of offenders against minors perceived their mothers to be stricter and less affectionate than did controls, and they identified less with their mothers. These results were replicated by Langevin and colleagues (Langevin et al., 1985b), (see also Christie, Marshall, & Lanthier, 1979). These findings may also indirectly support Langevin's (1983) assertion quoted above that heterosexual pedophiles are masculine identified.

Tingle and associates (Tingle, Bernard, Robbins, Newman, & Hutchinson, 1986), on the other hand, noted that their sample of offenders against minors reported high levels of attachment to their mothers, but these subjects also reported that they felt they "couldn't turn to their mother" to discuss problems. This later finding questions the nature of the self-reported high level of attachment.

With regard to relations and identification with fathers, the literature reports few unusual findings (cf. Langevin et al., 1985b).

7) *Psychosexual immaturity and phobic responses to females*
(*"Pedophiles are sexually immature and display aversion to adult females, the adult female body, and heterosexual intercourse."*)

The view of pedophiles as displaying aversion to adult females and adult sexuality has emerged as a motivational tautology. That is, it has been assumed that the only reason an adult male would prefer to interact sexually with a child is because of phobic or other aversive responses to adult women and heterosexuality. Theories attempting to explain this aversion have varied, for example, from psychoanalytic theories citing castration anxiety and Oedipal fixation (cf. Fenichel, 1945; Karpman, 1957) to learning theories citing traumatic early sexual experience (Kinsey et al., 1948, cited in Finkelhor & Araji, 1986), etc. However, as Langevin (1983) noted, the assumption that pedophiles are phobic of adult women may be misplaced and a result of "heterocentric" bias. That is, the pedophile may not find adult women aversive, but may simply lack interest in them as sexual partners—just as a normal gynephile

might not find children aversive but might simply fail to experience sexual interest in them. Langevin and associates (Langevin et al., 1985a) similarly cautioned that behavior characterized in terms such as "failed attempts to relate sexually in a mature way" may simply indicate disinterest rather than "aversion," "phobia," etc.

Indeed, empirical research has begun to cast some doubt on whether heterosexual pedophiles can even be said to "lack interest" in adult females and to what degree a genuine preference for children exists. For example, Baxter and colleagues (Baxter et al., 1984) found that "pedophiles" in their sample of sex offenders seemed to display less a preference for children than a failure to show the clear preference for adults and lessened arousal to children exhibited by controls. (Langevin et al., 1985a referred to such responses as "pangynephilia" or "panandrophilia" rather than "pedophilia.") Freund (1967) and Langevin et al. (1985a) found that whereas heterosexual male pedophiles showed greatest response to slides of girl children, significant sexual response was measured to slides of adult women. Quinsey and colleagues (Quinsey, Steinman, Bergersen, & Holmes, 1975) also reported response among pedophiles to stimuli of normal heterosexual intercourse. These reports are consistent with the idea that heterosexual pedophiles are not necessarily averse to adult females' bodies.

Langevin et al. (1985a) concluded of their sample: The pedophiles in this study liked adult females sexually and generally in similar ways to offender controls and community volunteers. They did not show an aversion to adult females or to intercourse and in fact they appeared to enjoy it (p. 204).

Additionally, Langevin and Lang (1985), Baxter and colleagues (Baxter et al., 1984), Mohr and colleagues (Mohr et al., 1964), and Paitich and associates (Paitich et al., 1977) reported marital and sexual behavior history data that challenge the view of pedophiles or offenders against children as averse to adult sexuality or women's bodies. However, sexual desire and sexual behavior are not necessarily correlated (Beck, Bozman, & Qualtrough, 1991), and it is possible that persons may be able to "function satisfactorily" in heterosexual relationships while experiencing aversive responses to their partners. Thus, demographic and sexual history behavior data, while suggestive of an unexpected range of heterosexual skills and desires among heterosexual pedophiles, should be viewed with caution.

Whereas aversion to adult females has been assumed on the basis of the pedophile's preferred sexual object choice, psychosexual immaturity has been assumed on the basis of reported sexual behaviors in pedophilic encounters. The bulk of the data suggest that sexual encounters between

adults and prepubertal children are generally characterized by exhibitionism, fondling, masturbatory activities and other "immature" sexual expressions (cf. Mohr et al., 1964; Kinsey et al., 1948, 1953; Gebhard et al., 1965).

Unfortunately, as a result of the slippage discussed earlier, unwarranted generalizations have been made from these reports to encounters between adults and pubescent children and adolescents, and to the sexual desires and behaviors of pedophiles and offenders against minors in general. That is, contacts between adults and pubescent children and adolescents frequently include penetrative or oral sex (cf. Finkelhor et al., 1990; Langevin et al., 1985b; Okami, 1991), and some data suggest that "pedophiles" (offenders against minors) may tailor their sexual behaviors to the developmental level of their partner or victim (Cupoli & Sewell, 1988; Erickson et al., 1988; Finkelhor & Hotaling, 1984; Langevin et al., 1985b; Marshall et al., 1986). When one considers sexual history and behavioral data cited earlier demonstrating that many, if not most, such "pedophiles" also engage in full intercourse and other penetrative sexual behaviors with adult women (and frequently appear to enjoy them), it is conceivable that "pedophiles" may engage in non-penetrative modes of sexual behavior in order that they may interact sexually with children or a given child, rather than interacting sexually with children or a given child in order that they may engage in non-penetrative modes of sexual behavior.

8) Aggression (*"Pedophiles are non-violent in behavior and low in aggression generally."*)

Whereas the image of the child molester or pedophile as a violent child rapist/lust murderer has been a part of American sexual folklore over the years, this prototype has been debunked so often in the popular and professional literature that it may be said to have been replaced more recently by another prototype: the nonviolent, passive pedophile, who uses bribes, trickery, and subtle methods of coercion to secure the cooperation of his victim. (cf. Groth et al., 1982)⁷

There is evidence to support the appropriateness of this non-violent prototype. First, there are truly extensive data cited in the introduction

⁷The one exception to this trend may be found in the emergence of popular belief in the putative practice of conspiratorial "satanic" or "ritual" abuse, where a new prototype of violent sexual abuser is hypothesized (cf. Cozolino, 1989). However, as Kenneth Lanning, an FBI expert on forensic aspects of sexual abuse, pointed out, no evidence has ever been uncovered supporting the existence of such conspiratorial "ritual abuse" despite intensive searches and investigations (Lanning, 1991; see also Putnam, 1991).

of this report regarding the actual behaviors of pedophiles and offenders against minors. Force and violence have been reported rarely, including self-reports of former victims or participants, and significant differences have been found between prisoners who have used force in sexual activities with minors and the majority who have not (cf. Henn et al., 1976; Panton, 1978; Tingle et al., 1986). Indeed, several investigators have suggested that violent offenders against children should be classified separately as "child rapists" (Lanyon, 1986).

Nevertheless, nonviolence in offense characteristic and lack of aggression as a personality dimension are not necessarily correlated. Data supporting lack of aggressiveness in pedophiles are somewhat weaker. Using life history or psychometric instruments such as the MMPI, a number of investigators have reported low aggression in their samples of offenders against minors (cf. Fisher, 1969; Toobert et al., 1959; Panton, 1978; Tingle et al., 1986; Erickson et al., 1987). Whereas Lang et al. (1988) found that incarcerated, admitted pedophiles scored higher than normal controls on the Forensic Assessment of Violence (a measure of feelings of anger and propensity for acts of violence), they measured much lower on aggression than nonsexual violent offenders. Lang and colleagues did not use a control group of child rapists or adult rapists.

Some investigators have attempted to infer levels of aggression in pedophiles and other sex offenders and examine the question of association of sexual crime characteristic with related deviant arousal patterns by measuring the degree of arousal among sex offenders to differential sexual stimuli (e.g., rape cues, consensual cues, violence cues). Two studies, Avery-Clarke and Laws (1984) and Abel, Becker, Murphy and Flanagan (1981) reported that arousal patterns were significantly correlated with offense characteristics. Aggressive or violent offenders in their sample responded more to aggressive sexual cues than consenting cues, whereas nonviolent offenders responded more to consensual cues than to aggressive cues. Abel and associates noted higher rates of measured arousal among offenders against minors overall to aggressive than to consensual cues. Hall, Proctor, and Nelson (1988), however, severely criticized both Avery-Clarke and Laws, and Abel and associates' studies for a variety of methodological failings and interpretive errors, including the use of small samples consisting of only the most extremely violent offenders. Using a much larger sample than either Avery-Clarke or Abel and colleagues under better controlled conditions, Hall found no association between arousal stimuli and crime characteristic. Moreover, all groups had the highest level of arousal to consensual stimuli, with pedophiles responding more to consensual

stimuli involving adults than to aggressive stimuli involving children. Baxter (1984) reported essentially the same results. Indeed, the presence of force in the sexual stimuli appeared to reduce significantly arousal level in this sample. Lang et al. (1988) were also unable to differentiate aggressive from nonaggressive sex offenders against minors by arousal to associated cues and stimuli. The majority of pedophiles in their sample demonstrated highest levels of response to consensual cues, although approximately 1/3 ($N = 7$) responded more to aggressive cues. Thus, the meaning of force in the committing of sexual crimes is unclear. Violence may result in some instances less from a desire to inflict injury for its own sake than from misapprehension on the part of the offender regarding the amount of force necessary to commit the offense. Thus, Prentky et al. (1989) have attempted to distinguish sadism in motivation from physical injury as an offense characteristic.

Recently, several authors have questioned assumptions that pedophilic acts are indeed generally nonviolent and that pedophiles are nonaggressive. For example, Christie et al. (1979) reported that 58% of their sample of offenders against minors used physical force (operationally defined). Lang et al. (1988) claimed that "mounting evidence" suggests that pedophilic acts are more violent than previously supposed. The authors reported that 1/3 of their sample of sex offenders against minors used force (operationally defined), and 1/4 used "unnecessary degrees" of force. Baxter et al. (1984) reported that at least half of their sample of heteropedophiles used "some degree of threat or force" (undefined) to subdue their victims "although they were less likely than other offenders to do so" (p. 485). Groth and Birnbaum (1978) reported that 1/5 of their sample used "force." Langevin et al. (1985b) reported that 22% (7) of their sample of 32 heterosexual "pedophiles" were involved in "serious violence" during the commission of their offense. They claimed that this finding was "contrary to the existing clinical beliefs and warrants closer and careful scrutiny" (p. 155). Travin et al. (1985), objecting to the use of the term "pedophilia" because it translates as "love of the child," claimed that this translation is "in marked contrast to the usual behavior of the aggressive child molester towards his victims" (p. 89).

Whereas assertions that violence and aggression among pedophiles have been ignored are cause for concern, there are serious problems with some of the data used to bolster these warnings. For example, the incidents of serious violence among 22% (7) of a sample of "pedophiles" reported by Langevin et al. (1985b) in support of their claim that these

findings were "contrary to existing clinical belief and warrant careful scrutiny," included the wounding of a 15-year old girl and sexual assaults wherein 14-, 15-, and 16-year old girls were forced to perform fellatio at knife point. Given the high probability of secondary sex characteristics if not full sexual maturity among these victims, it is arguable that the offenders more properly belonged among a sample of rapists of adult women than a sample of pedophiles. Their inclusion in Langevin et al.'s group of "pedophiles" presumably resulted from slippage of legal definitions of "child" to investigations where biological or otherwise phenomenologically valid definitions of "child" were warranted (see Ames & Houston, 1990). Thus, incidents such as those reported by Langevin et al. cannot be said to challenge the view that pedophiles tend to be nonviolent in the commission of their offenses. Whereas Langevin and associates indirectly acknowledged the possible confounding effects of mixing heterogeneous sex offenders within a broad single category of "pedophile," they did not take steps necessary to reanalyze their data based on age or sexual maturity of victim.

Moreover, the number of empirical studies which implicate violence in the commission of sexual offenses against minors, particularly children, is quite small. Authors such as Travin et al. (1985) (who cited only one such investigation [Christie et al., 1979] and a few selected case studies to bolster their claim that aggressive behavior is "typical" of the child molester) ignore the large bulk of the literature which demonstrates convincingly that violence and overt coercion are not generally characteristic of child sexual abuse.

Moreover, reports in some of these writings of the presence of "threat or force," "aggression," and "rape" in pedophilic crimes are sometimes difficult to interpret. As Langevin et al. (1985b) have pointed out, terms such as *rape*, *assault*, and *attack*, and *aggression* have acquired new meanings in some of the sexual abuse literature and now may include any sexual contact with a minor "even those in which the child may willingly participate for money, favors, or other reasons" (p. 158).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: IS A SYNTHESIS POSSIBLE?

The clearest finding of the present review is that relatively little may be stated about the personality or phenomenology of pedophiles and sex offenders against minors—particularly if these populations are recognized as distinct, if sometimes overlapping, groups. In this sense, our findings are consistent with those of Langevin (1985) and Langevin et al. (1985a, 1985b), who declared at the conclusion of their series of reviews and investigations that "pedophiles remain an enigma," while

noting that "None of the commonly held hypotheses were supported" (p. 205, see also p. 278); or, in Guttmacher & Weihofen's words, "There is doubtless no subject on which we can obtain more definite opinions and less definite knowledge" (cited in Henn et al., 1976, p. 694).

Wide variance in sample characteristics, operational definitions, and methodology was the rule in the studies reviewed for the present article. Frequent use of moral and legal criteria to supplant empirical criteria in defining important constructs such as *aggression*, *force*, *rape*, *child*, or *pedophilia* fed a characteristically hyperbolic discursive tone which added to difficulties in interpreting reports. Regarding such practices, Kilpatrick (1992), warned that "It is imperative that researchers not base their interpretations of data upon erroneous assumptions or moralistic beliefs" (p. 116). The present authors are in agreement.

Looking at the very scanty data pertaining to pedophilia per se, then, we are unable to report any reliable findings. However, it is unclear whether this failure results from an intrinsic heterogeneity of pedophilia or from the absence of even a single investigation to use adequate, potentially representative nonclinical, nonforensic samples of pedophiles for study. Moreover, neither the few studies of forensic samples which define *pedophile* on the basis of measured or admitted sexual preference for children nor the two existing investigations to use entirely nonforensic samples of pedophiles yield consistent findings.

Narrowing the focus to "sex offenders against minors (some of whom are probably pedophiles)," however, several findings emerge that appear fairly reliable, although their validity is uncertain due to problems of methodology:

- 1) As children, a sizable portion of these offenders experience disturbances in mother relationships and/or mother identification.

- 2) Such persons do not tend to use overt force in the commission of their offenses and do not appear in general to be aroused by aggressive sexual stimuli involving children, although a portion do find aggressive stimuli arousing and a portion do use force.

- 3) Certain sex offenders against minors tend somewhat toward shyness, loneliness, sensitivity to the evaluations of others, low self-esteem and isolation (but not necessarily lack of assertiveness). However, these characteristics are unusual only when viewed in comparison to non-offender samples and generally are not clinically significant.

- 4) There is an overall lack of consistent diagnosable pathology among this group apart from sexual deviation.

Regarding item number 3), these findings should be viewed with particular caution because, as Wilson and Cox (1983) and several others

have pointed out, the types of affective and social pathologies associated with samples of pedophiles or sex offenders against minors seriously beg the question of causal direction. Guilt feelings, feelings of ostracism, loneliness, low self-esteem, etc., clearly are exacerbated by, if not sequelae of, the social condition of pedophiles and sex offenders and should not be interpreted as representing etiological variables or intrinsic correlates of sexual preference for children.

What is to be done? Can pedophiles and sex offenders against minors be studied? The social stigma attached to pedophilia combined with current professional reporting laws make it unlikely that the problem of obtaining representative samples of pedophiles will be solved in the near future. However, regarding research on "sex offenders against minors," the outlook is somewhat less bleak. Although some of the same sampling problems remain, at least partial solutions may be found once the issue of slippage is recognized and corrected.

For example, because an unknown percentage of true pedophiles may never act on their impulses or may never be arrested, forensic samples of sex offenders against minors clearly do not represent the population of "pedophiles," and many such persons apparently do not even *belong* to the population of "pedophiles." However, convicted sex offenders against minors at least may be said by definition to belong within the population of "sex offenders against minors." Thus, although the degree of representativeness is still at issue, tentative conclusions about "sex offenders against minors" may still be drawn from careful study of forensic and clinical samples under the following conditions: 1) offenders against same-sex victims should be differentiated from heterosexual offenders; 2) age and level of sexual maturity of victim and offender should be considered critical variables; 3) phenomenological characteristics of the crime should be considered separately from legal or moral characteristics (e.g., forcible rape should be differentiated from statutory rape, violence from moral violation, normative attraction to adolescents from socially deviant sexual preference, etc.); 4) crimes involving close relatives should be differentiated from extrafamilial contacts; 5) taxonomic systems and psychometric instruments should not be validated on samples likely to be particularly nonrepresentative (e.g., those compared disproportionately of persons whose offenses were violent or otherwise pernicious); and 6) results of offender studies should be compared to victim or participant self-reports collected from non-clinical, representative samples.

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