

Three types of sex offenders criminology essay

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Different Types of Sexual Offenders

Of the three groups, incest child molesters were the least likely to sexually recidivate, at a rate of 8.4% (Hanson, 2001). This finding carries with it many important implications for treatment. Since the rate is relatively low, it has traditionally been believed that the best form of treatment for incest child molesters is a minimally intrusive form of therapy that reduces sexual recidivism. According to Hanson's study (2001); rapists were the second most likely group of sex offenders to sexually recidivate, at a rate of 17.1%. Most research done on rapists indicates that they are a distinct group of offenders who are distinguishable from child molesters. For instance, rapists tend to be younger than child molesters, each having average ages of 32.1 and 38, respectively (Hanson, 2001). More importantly, a meta-analysis of sex offender treatment programs found that rapists were more likely to recidivate non-sexually than were child molesters (Hanson & Bussiere, 1996). In fact, it has been noted that "rapists share more characteristics with the general criminal population than do child molesters." Characteristics that identify general criminals, such as prior criminal records and antisocial personality, are similar to characteristics that identify rapists. Furthermore, research has found that rapists are more likely than are child molesters to breach their conditional release. In one sample of 132 subjects who were conditionally released, 40.7% of rapists breached, while only 25% of child molesters did so (Barbaree, Seto & Maric, 1996). Of the three groups of sex offenders classified by Hanson (2001), the highest rate of sexual recidivism (19.5%) was recorded for non-incest child molesters. These offenders are at significant risk of reoffending throughout their lives (Hanson, Steffy & Gauthier, 1992). A

research study that illustrates this point examined the long term recidivism of child molesters. In the study, these offenders were classified into three groups: a treated group; control group one; and control group two. Both control groups were used to control for cohort effects. A total of 197 child molesters, a majority of them being non-incest child molesters, released from Canadian correctional facilities between 1958 and 1974 were tracked over an extensive period of time (31 years for control group one offenders). Results showed that 42% of the total sample was reconvicted for a sexual and/or violent offence. The long term risk of recidivism for non-incest child molesters is based on the fact that 10% of the total sample was reconvicted between 10 and 31 years after release.

Causes of Sexual Offenses

These theories suggest that there are factors at the individual level that contribute to the likelihood of a person committing sexually violent acts. The variables that have been explored in the research range from biological factors to personality characteristics to attitudes and beliefs.

1. Evolution

It is suggested within this theory; strategies that have successfully reproduced our ancestors have resulted in the differences between men and women in current human mating. This is an often debated theory which is not widely accepted amongst those in this field. An example why could be that evolutionary theories do not address the large number of assaults regarding oral/anal penetration or of those involving same sex or those who are prepubescent. Those who tend to favor the evolutionary explanations for modern behavior even tend to acknowledge that sexual assault cannot be blamed on evolution alone.

2. Physiology and Neurophysiology

The cause of sexual assault may be found in hormones and other chemicals in the body,

as well as head traumas or brain abnormalities. Researchers in this area have found a correlation between testosterone levels in humans and aggression. However, it is still not clear if it is whether the testosterone levels lead to aggressive behavior or rise as a result of aggressive behavior.

Trauma and violence have been proven to have effects on neurotransmitters, brain function, and hormones. Studies examining brain injuries and abnormalities suggest trauma and violence can lead to an increase in battering behavior, as well as other violent or impulsive acts. 3.

Alcohol Considerable evidence links alcohol and physical aggression. Alcohol use is involved in up to 75% of acquaintance rapes. Alcohol affects men's perception of women's sexual intent. Many men perceive alcohol as a sexual cue; thus, alcohol increases the likelihood that friendliness will be misperceived as sexual intent and that a man will feel comfortable forcing sex after misperceiving a woman's cues. In short, perpetrators are more aggressive and victims less effective at setting boundaries and defending themselves when drinking alcohol. While it is very commonly involved in sexual assaults, many people drink on a daily basis without committing a violent act or engaging in violent behavior, as well as quite the percentage of assaults committed without any presence of alcohol. Clearly, the use or abuse of alcohol does not entirely account for the incidence of sexual assault in our society. 4. Psychopathology and Personality Traits Men who rape have been diagnosed with a wide variety of disorders from personality to psychiatric, most often being antisocial personality disorder. Nonetheless, no significant differences between sexual offenders and nonsexual offenders incarcerated have been found within personality tests. The degree of

involvement in sexually coercive behavior appears to be related to personality measures of irresponsibility, a lack of social conscience, and a value orientation legitimizing aggression, particularly against women. Investigators have concluded that sexual aggression is determined by many factors. In fact, it has been said that the personality profile of convicted rapists more closely matches the personality profile of men in the general population than any other set of felons.

5. Attitudes and Gender Schemas Sexually aggressive men are more likely to believe myths about rape and that use of interpersonal violence is an effective strategy for resolving conflict than are non-aggressive men. These sorts of beliefs may serve as rationalizations for sexual offenders, allowing them to imagine their victims wanted or deserved the sexual acts forced upon them. Once men have developed attitudes that support violence against women, they are likely to misconstrue ambiguous evidence as a confirmation of what they already believed. Acceptance of rape myths is strongly related to adversarial sexual beliefs, tolerance of interpersonal violence, and gender role stereotyping.

6. Sex and Power Motives Research has confirmed that anger and power are the biggest motivating factors in a rapists' rationalizations for sexual aggression than sexual desires are. And sexually aggressive men openly admit that their sexual fantasies are aggressive and sadistic.

7. Relationship Context The stage of relationship between a man and a woman may affect the probability of violence. Some research suggests that men who rape on first or second dates may have similarities to stranger rapists, while men who rape early in what otherwise appears to be a developing relationship may simply misperceive their partners' intent. Variables that appear to be risk factors

are the man's initiating the date, paying all the expenses, and driving; miscommunication about sex; heavy alcohol or drug use; "parking"; and men's acceptance of traditional sex roles, interpersonal violence, adversarial attitudes about relationships, and rape myths. Societal Influences Another body of theories suggests that socio-cultural factors contribute to the occurrence of sexual violence. These theories suggest that our society tacitly accepts and encourages sexual violence through expectations and cultural morés, which are transmitted through our history, families, media and institutions.