Gendering the Other

The Use of Gender Attributes in the Visual and Verbal Representation of Individuals by Men Who Sexually Offended against Children

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Introduction

Sex and gender characteristics play a crucial role in intimate relationships. They constitute significant aspects of representations of self and of others and contribute to sexual attraction and arousal. These characteristics evolve across development due to biological processes such as puberty and social expectations.

Previous research suggests that Males who Sexually Offend against Children (MsSOC) may attribute specific meanings to sex and gender characteristics. For example:

- pedophilic MsSOC react with a genital response to children of different genders in a less differentiated way than teleophilic men, for whom the gender of the other person is of far greater importance (Freund & Kuban, 1993; Freund, Watson, Dickey, & Rienzo, 1991);
- among pedophilic MsSOC, the proportion of androphilic compared to gynephilic males is noticeably higher than among males who are sexually interested in adults (homosexual and heterosexual) (Blanchard, Watson & Choy, 1999; Blanchard et al., 2000; Freund & Watson, 1992; Murray, 2000). According to Hall and Hall (2007), the percentage of homosexual pedophiles ranges from 9% to 40% (4–20 times higher than the rate of adult men attracted to other adult men);
- males attracted to girls usually prefer children between the ages of 8–10 years, whereas those attracted to boys usually prefer slightly older children—between the ages of 10–13 years (Beier, 1998; Blanchard, Watson & Choy, 1999);
- minor-attracted males interested in boys more often commit sexual offenses than those interested in girls (Cohen, Ndukwe, Yaseen, & Galynker, 2017);
- pedophilic MsSOC interested in boys have, on average, more victims and commit more sexual acts than those interested in girls (Abel et al., 1987);
- self-defined child-attracted males (note: NOT necessarily MsSOC) interested in girls show less pedohebephilic exclusivity and tend to have more teleophilic interest, unlike males interested in boys (Mitchell, Bravo & Galupo, 2017).

Surprisingly, recent prevailing theories of child sexual offending have paid little attention to these results. The processing of sex and gender cues in mental representations of interpersonal relations in MsSOC has also been understudied. The present project examined this issue.

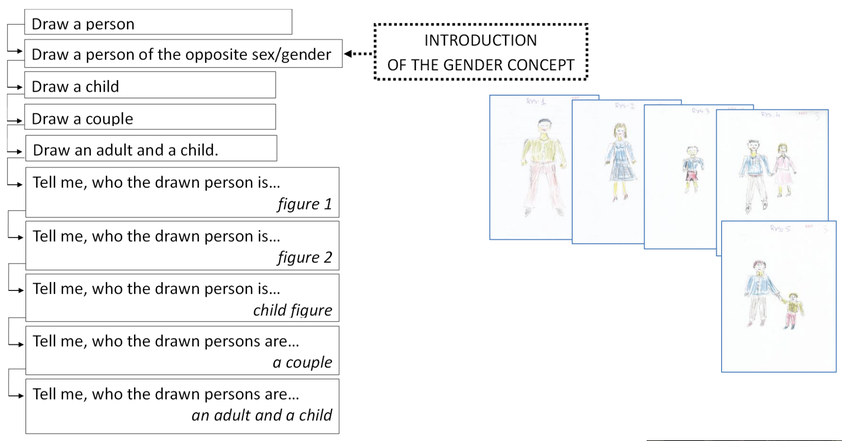
Participants

MsSOC and comparison groups (two consisted of imprisoned males and one never sentenced males; total n=171).

	Child sexual offenders n=45	Rapists n=36	Non-sexual offenders n=45	Controls n=45
Age	40.13 ± 11.07	39.94 ± 11.23	41.04 ± 11.33	40.51 ± 11.66
Education				
primary	15 (33.3%)	14 (38.9%)	19 (42.2%)	8 (17.7%)
occupational	19 (42.2%)	14 (38.9%)	14 (31.1%)	24 (53.3%)
secondary	9 (20.0%)	7 (19.4%)	12 (26.7%)	11 (24.4%)
high	2 (4.4%)	1 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (4.4%)
Marital status				
single	19 (42.2%)	16 (44.4%)	14 (31.1%)	19 (42.2%)
divorced	10 (22.2%)	9 (25%)	14 (31.1%)	8 (17.8%)
cohabitation	7 (15.6%)	3 (8.3%)	10 (22.2%)	6 (13.3%)
married	9 (20.0%)	8 (22.2%)	6 (13.3%)	11 (24.4%)
Number of children	1.44 ± 2.61	1.22 ± 1.44	1.36 ± 1.32	0.86 ± 0.89

Method

An experimental method involving drawing human figures and describing them (Zielona-Jenek, 2009). Conducted individually with a researcher as part of a larger study. Instructions:



Analytic approach - mix methods

Step 1. Content analysis (indicators of gender in the drawn and verbal material)

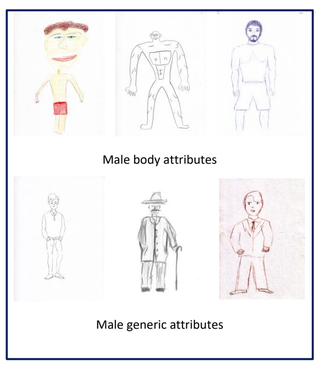
Step 2. Comparison of frequencies of gender indicators in materials (from comparison groups)

Results (content analysis)

Indicators of gender in drawings:

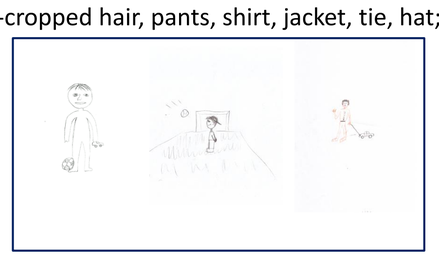
Males (adults):

- body attributes: facial stubble, Adam's apple, broad shoulders, arm or abdominal musculature, arm or leg hair, male genitalia;
- gender-typed clothing and features of appearance: short-cropped hair, pants, shirt, jacket, tie, hat;
- accessory items: cigarette, fishing rod, car.



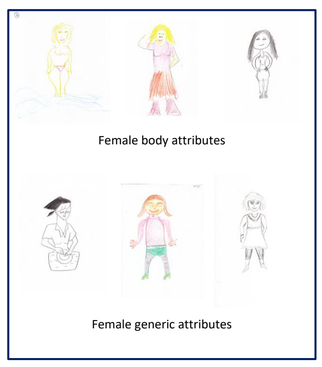
Boys:

- gender-typed clothing: short shorts, suspenders, hoodie, baseball cap;
- additional items (toys): ball, car, locomotive, blocks.



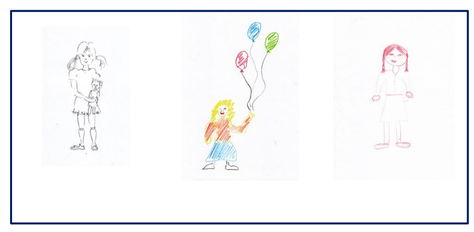
Females (adults):

- body attributes: breasts, waistline, widened hips; a significant number of drawings depicted women with visible body contours, either naked or clothed in a way that emphasized these features (e.g. cleavage or the shape of a blouse/dress);
- gender-typed clothing attributes and features of appearance: long or styled hair, makeup, jewelry (earrings, necklaces, rings), cleavage, skirt or dress, tights, high-heeled shoes;
- additional items: handbag, dishes to wash.



Girls:

gender-typed clothing and features of appearance: long hair, skirt or dress, frills, ponytails or braids, bows; toys: doll carriage, cuddly toys.



Indicators of gender in descriptions:

- naming drawn persons using generic terms, e.g. a man, a guy, Rumcajs (a male character from a well-known Polish cartoon), a woman, my wife, "matula" (an old-fashioned term for mother), a girl, a daughter, etc.;
- using gendered grammatical forms in verbs or adjectives (the Polish language is highly generic);
- using gender stereotypes in the form of:
  - comments, e.g. "...like males", "like a normal guy", "women always do it this way", "as mothers do";
  - adjectives associated with male and female stereotypes (terms were treated as stereotypical if they referred to empirically reconstructed patterns based on the Polish adaptation of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory – Kuczyńska, 1992).

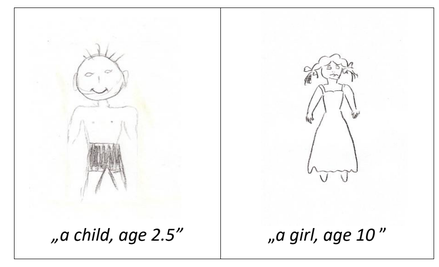
Results (comparisons between groups)

MsSOC similar to other participants:

- draw male and female figures in a similar order (male figure usually first),
- draw a child as less clearly gendered than adults (if gendered, then typically as boys);
- draw a pair of adults as a heterosexual couple;
- draw males with fewer gender attributes than females; more likely use clothing attributes and gender-typed objects than body features;
- in descriptions, usually define a persons' gender directly - almost always for adults, and slightly less often for children;
- describe females consistently in terms of the female stereotype

MsSOC differently than other participants:

- when drawing children with adults - more often gendrise them by adding gender-typed attributes: $F(3, 155)= 2.773$; $p=.043$; $\eta2=.051$ (for frequencies, see: table below)
- when drawing children's sex body features – show instances of depicting them in adult-like forms (broadened male shoulders, female waistline; see examples alongside)
- when describing children with adults – slightly more often refer to the male stereotype
- when drawing the adult male alone and with a child - use significantly more gender-typed clothing and items than male body attributes: $F(3, 156)= 2.957$; $p=.034$; $\eta2=.054$; $F(3, 105)= 3.813$; $p=.012$; $\eta2=.098$ (respectively)
- when describing an adult male with a woman – slightly more often refer to the female stereotype $F(3, 150)= 2.233$; $p=.087$; $\eta2=.043$



„a child, age 2.5" *„a girl, age 10 "*

	Child Sexual Offenders n=45	Rapists n=36	Non - sexual offenders n=45	Controls n=45
	n (%)			
(single) male adult	26 (57.8)	15 (50.0)	19 (46.3)	33 (75.6)
(single) female adult	44 (97.8)	27 (93.1)	38 (95.0)	43 (95.6)
(single) child	21 (46.7)	15 (42.9)	11 (24.4)	18 (40.0)
(a couple) male figure	29 (64.4)	13 (44.8)	14 (35.9)	30 (66.7)
female figure	43 (95.6)	23 (82.1)	35 (92.1)	41 (93.2)
(an adult with a child) adult	42 (93.3)	20 (69.0)	30 (75.0)	42 (93.3)
child	29 (64.4)	9 (31.0)	21 (52.5)	25 (55.6)

	Child Sexual Offenders n=45	Rapists n=36	Non - sexual offenders n=45	Controls n=45
	M (SD)			
(single) child male stereotype content	0.60 (0.96)	0.81 (1.23)	0.79 (0.87)	0.37 (0.66)
female stereotype content	0.44 (0.87)	0.66 (0.83)	0.52 (0.92)	0.23 (0.48)
child with an adult male stereotype content	0.27 (0.76)	0.11 (0.31)	0.20 (0.46)	0.07 (0.34)
female stereotype content	0.02 (0.15)	0.10 (0.31)	0.17 (0.50)	0.24 (0.85)

	Child Sexual Offenders n=45	Rapists n=36	Non - sexual offenders n=45	Controls n=45
	n (%)			
(single) male adult body attributes	9 (20.0)	7 (23.3)	9 (22.0)	22 (50.0)
gender-typed clothing and appearance	38 (84.4)	17 (56.7)	23 (56.1)	38 (86.4)
male adult in a couple body attributes	15 (33.3)	9 (31.0)	9 (23.1)	13 (28.9)
gender-typed clothing and appearance attributes	39 (86.7)	20 (69.0)	25 (64.1)	39 (86.7)
male adult with a child body attributes	4 (14.3)	8 (29.6)	6 (25.0)	13 (40.6)
gender-typed clothing and appearance	25 (89.3)	16 (59.3)	14 (58.3)	29 (90.6)

	Child Sexual Offenders n=45	Rapists n=36	Non - sexual offenders n=45	Controls n=45
	M (SD)			
(single) male adult male stereotype content	2.31 (2.90)	1.59 (1.72)	2.11 (2.31)	2.33 (1.86)
female stereotype content	1.40 (1.70)	1.53 (2.03)	1.82 (1.93)	0.93 (1.37)
male adult in a couple male stereotype content	0.13 (0.46)	0.03 (0.18)	0.35 (0.79)	0.07 (0.26)
female stereotype content	0.38 (0.91)	0.16 (0.45)	0.16 (0.37)	0.22 (0.57)
male adult with a child male stereotype content	0.36 (0.91)	0.15 (0.37)	0.36 (0.76)	0.13 (0.43)
female stereotype content	0.32 (0.63)	0.50 (0.86)	0.20 (0.50)	0.20 (0.48)

Conclusions

Although MsSOC use the categories of sex and gender in a conventional way (similar to other participants), they also present some unique characteristics in using these categories—particularly when referring to males and children. They **tend to gender children (especially in the presence of adults)** in both drawings and descriptions. The features of **adult males are more often defined by gender-typed attributes of appearance and items than by features of the mature male body**; this is more evident when males are depicted alone or in the presence of children. When males are described in relation to women, they more often display female stereotypical features.

The study presented here is a preliminary analysis of how MsSOC use the category of gender when processing information about interpersonal relations. The results require further investigation, including replication of the study and inclusion of data on MsSOS sexual interests (pedohebephilic, teleophilic). Theoretical conceptualization is lacking as well.

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