

CHAPTER 4

Exposure to Pornography as a Cause of Child Sexual Victimization

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Child pornography is the theory, molestation is the practice.

—(Jenkins, 2001, p. 4)

We live in a culture which sexualizes children and infantilizes grown women for the gratification of men.

—(Anderson, 1989, p. 7)

The increased demand for child pornography directly translates into an increased number of sexual[ly] [sic] abused children.

—(Crimmins, 1995, p. 2)

If it wasn't for the Internet I would have never known. I think as the Internet grows, more people will find out their sexual desires just as I did.

—message posted on a child pornography board by “Dad” (Jenkins, 2001, p. 23)

Researchers almost universally agree that photographing children for child pornography constitutes child sexual victimization. We will argue in this chapter that a causal relationship exists between adult and juvenile males' exposure to child pornography—including

computer-generated, written, and oral forms of pornography—and their perpetration of child sexual victimization. Because the theoretical work behind this model comes from the work of Diana Russell over decades, we describe this as “Russell’s theory.”

According to Russell's theory, there are three causal factors that explain how exposure to child pornography causes some males to commit child sexual abuse. There are many other factors that also contribute to the causation of child sexual victimization. We will not attempt in this chapter to evaluate the relative merits of the different causal factors (a task Russell undertook in *Sexual Exploitation* [1984]). We will merely present evidence that exposure to child pornography is a significant one.

Because child pornography does not negatively affect all viewers to the same degree, some researchers conclude that mere exposure to this material cannot play a causal role in child sexual victimization. This is analogous to the tobacco industry's faulty claim that, since many smokers do not die of lung cancer, smoking does not cause lung cancer. Such reasoning is faulty. When there are multiple causes for a phenomenon, any one of them "may be a sufficient but not necessary condition for the occurrence of the effect or a necessary but not sufficient condition" (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1979, p. 40). In this sense of the term, we argue that exposure to child pornography causes child sexual victimization.

Although women have been known to sexually abuse both male and female children, males form the overwhelming majority of child pornography consumers and perpetrators of child sexual victimization. Therefore, Russell's three-factor causal theory focuses on male perpetrators. (The terms "man," "men," "male," or "males" in this chapter should be understood to include juvenile and adult males.)

OVERVIEW OF PORNOGRAPHY AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Many still believe that exposure to pornography is cathartic or provides "a release of wishes, desires or drives such that they do not

have to be acted on in reality" (Kelly, Wingfield, & Regan, 1995, p. 23). It is important to critique the catharsis theory before launching into Russell's opposing theory. Similarly, it is important to review existing research on men's propensity to sexually victimize children. This section provides a brief analysis of both topics.

Catharsis vs. Intensified Desire

According to the catharsis theory, the repeated exposure of males to pornography "leads to a steadily decreasing interest" in the material (Bart & Jozsa, 1980, p. 210). This exposure is frequently described as a "safety valve." As applied to child pornography, this theory assumes that repeated viewing of child pornography decreases viewers' desire for sex with children. Hence, according to this theory, viewers of child pornography should be less likely to sexually victimize children.

The very influential but poorly designed experiment of Howard, Reifler, and Liptzin is widely cited as proof of the validity of catharsis theory (Diamond, 1980; Howard, Reifler, & Liptzin, 1991). Howard et al.'s experiment was based on a small sample of 23 white college males and 9 comparable controls. The researchers exposed the subjects and controls to a pornographic movie, then tested both groups for sexual arousal. The subjects were then exposed to adult pornography for 90 minutes a day for 15 days, whereas the controls viewed two non-pornographic movies over the same period. Twenty of the 23 subjects were then shown a third pornographic movie. Howard et al. (1991) found that "all subjects reported being initially stimulated" by the pornography, followed by "a marked decrease in interest in pornography as a result of the exposure" (p. 111).

It is important to note that the "subjects' choice of pornography was severely limited"

(Zillmann, 1989, p. 130). Hence, Howard et al.'s experiment only showed that a tiny sample of males became bored when exposed over time to a limited choice of material. Despite this, many pro-pornography advocates point to Howard et al.'s conclusion that all "legal restrictions to the availability of pornography" should be removed (p. 127). Indeed, this was one of the experiments on which the 1970 Commission on Obscenity and Pornography based its identical conclusion.

Zillmann and Bryant (1986) conducted an experiment based on 160 subjects that demonstrated the invalidity of Howard et al.'s conclusion. They recruited two samples: a student sample that included an equal number of males and females randomly drawn from undergraduate directories at two midwestern universities; and a nonstudent sample of males and females "drawn via random-digit dialing, with proportional sampling within all metropolitan exchanges" (p. 563). Zillmann and Bryant's sample consisted of 20 subjects in each experimental condition.

Zillmann and Bryant gave both their male and female subjects a greater range of pornography to view than the limited materials available to the subjects in Howard et al.'s experiment. These researchers found that the subjects' boredom after repeatedly viewing the same pornographic material motivated them to switch to viewing different and more extreme pornography, such as material involving the infliction of pain, violent pornography, and "uncommon or unusual sexual practices," including bondage, sadomasochism and bestiality (Zillmann & Bryant, 1986, p. 577). Howard et al. had failed to consider this possibility, resulting in their invalid conclusion.

Although masturbation is not addressed in the experiments of Howard et al. and Zillmann and Bryant, this is a major goal of pornography. The ejaculatory pleasure

obtained from masturbation intensifies the association between it and the pornography viewed, a theory confirmed by considerable experimental research (Cline, 1974; Osanka & Johann, 1989). Most males consider masturbation a very inferior alternative to sex with the type of individuals they desire. Thus, viewers may desire to act out the sexual acts depicted in pornography. For this reason and others, researchers have concluded that catharsis theory is clearly not substantiated (Sommers & Check, 1987).

Research aside, common sense and rationality unequivocally challenge the catharsis theory. Very few people would likely support a proposal to solve the problem of parents physically beating their children by having them watch movies that show parents battering and torturing their children. Why is it only in the case of misogynistic pornography that so many individuals—including a handful of researchers—believe that exposure dissipates the problem? The plain inconsistency and irrationality of the catharsis theory suffice to dismiss the notion that pornography serves as a "safety valve."

Males' Propensity to Sexually Victimize Children

In cultures where adult-child sexual contact is taboo, sexual interest in children is typically a critical prerequisite for sexually victimizing children. The studies described below focus on the extent of male desire for sex with children.

"Normal" Heterosexual Males as Potential Perpetrators of Child Sexual Victimization

While some clinicians (Wyre, 1990), law enforcement officers, and the public at large, consider all perpetrators of child sexual abuse to be pedophiles, we and most other researchers

do not subscribe to this view. Kurt Freund's classic but still relevant definition of pedophiles described them as individuals with a "sustained erotic preference for children (within the age range up to and including 11 or 12) . . . under the condition that there is a free choice of partner as to sex and other attributes which may co-determine erotic attractiveness" (Freund, 1981, p. 161).

In one experiment, Freund assessed the penile volume changes of "normal" heterosexual males on viewing "colour slides and movies of nude females and males of various ages" (Freund, 1981, p. 162). (The term "normal" as a descriptor of heterosexual males is placed in quotes because there are sound reasons to believe that the sexualities and personalities of heterosexual males are distorted by the patriarchal character of societies. Moreover, there are significant cultural differences regarding what sexual behavior is considered "normal" for heterosexual males.) Freund's results showed that although the "normal" heterosexual males showed a larger penile response to adult females than to children" (Howells, 1981, p. 79), "children have some arousal value even for normal males" (Freund, 1981). In addition, Freund found "that normal heterosexual males respond even to very young girls substantially more than to males of any age group" (Freund, 1981, pp. 161–162).

Kevin Howells (1981), who defined pedophiles as "persons with a dominant and sustained sexual interest in children" (p. 62) maintained that

There is one classificatory scheme that is pervasive, whether explicitly or implicitly, throughout research and theory in this area. *A distinction is made between offenders whose deviant behaviour is a product of a deviant sexual preference for children, and those whose deviant behaviour is situationally induced and occurs in the context of a normal sexual preference structure.* (p. 76) (emphasis added)

Howells's (1981) situational offender "prefers adult partners" and only becomes involved with a child when there is "some challenge to his sexual adequacy or threat to his sense of competency as a man" (p. 78). Elsewhere, Howells reveals a broader conception of situational offenders as those "whose behaviour is precipitated by unusual life circumstances" (p. 62), or is "situationally induced" (p. 67).

Howells (1981) gives examples of important situational factors that predispose some "normal" males to select a child to serve "as a substitute for an adult woman," such as "marital disruption, loss of sexual partner through the wife's illness or work requirements, the use of alcohol, and multiple life stresses" (p. 67). Situational factors or stressful precipitating events also include "physical, social, sexual, marital, financial and vocational crises to which the offender fails to adapt" (p. 78).

The notion of "normal" males situationally induced to perpetrate sex crimes against children markedly contrasts with the view that all such males are pedophiles. Indeed, Howells (1981) maintains that "*There is good reason to think that such persons [pedophiles] form a minority in the total population of people who become sexually involved with children*" (p. 76) (emphasis added). Other researchers have come to a similar conclusion (Bromberg & Johnson, 2001; Mohr, Turner, & Jerry, 1964; Swanson, 1968).

Psychologists John Briere and Martha Runtz (1989) conducted a study in an attempt to determine the percentage of "pedophiles" in a sample of 193 undergraduate males. These researchers recruited male students in class for a study on "sexual attitudes" (p. 66). The students were assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality. Briere and Runtz failed to describe the percentage of the class who refused to participate in their study, and the possible impact of the refusal

rate on their findings. Nor did they mention the grade level or demographic characteristics of the students, calling into question the generalizability of the study. Bearing these limitations in mind, Briere and Runtz reported the following findings in response to the four questions they asked the students about their sexual interest in children:

1. Just over one-fifth (21%) of the male undergraduates “admitted to at least some sexual attraction to some small children” (p. 71).
2. “9% reported fantasies about sex with a child” (p. 71).
3. Over half of the students who reported fantasizing about sex with a child (5% of the total sample) “stated that they had masturbated at least once to such fantasies” (p. 71).
4. Seven percent “indicated [that there was] at least some likelihood of having sex with a child were it possible to do so without detection or punishment” (p. 71).

Significantly, the last figure is substantially lower than the percentage Neil Malamuth obtained in a study using the same or a similar question (Malamuth, personal communication, July 1986). In his study, 10–15% of male students reported some likelihood of sexually abusing a child if they could be sure of getting away with it.

When Briere and Runtz (1989) applied David Finkelhor’s (1984) very broad definition of pedophilia requiring only that “the adult has had some sexual contact with a child” or “has masturbated to sexual fantasies involving children,” they estimated that at least 5% of the university males in their sample were pedophiles (p. 71). When they applied an even broader definition of pedophilia requiring only that the students have at least some sexual attraction to children, the figure for “pedophilia” in Briere and Runtz’s sample rose to 21%.

Briere and Runtz (1989) argue that “given the probable social undesirability of such admissions . . . the actual rates of pedophilic interest in this sample were even higher” (p. 71). They maintained that their findings support Vernon Quinsey’s conclusion, “based on a review of anthropological and historical data,” that adult sexual attraction to children is ubiquitous (Briere & Runtz, 1989, p. 71).

Despite their very broad use of the term pedophilia, Briere and Runtz’s (1989) study confirms Freund’s (1981) and Howells’s (1981) findings that a significant percentage of so-called “normal” heterosexual males have some sexual interest in children. These researchers conclude with good reason that

The current data offer strong support for the notion that male sexual interest in children is relatively common in our society, even among “normal” (non-incarcerated and nonclinical) males [i.e., non-pedophiles —by the terminology Freund, Howells, and we favor]. (Briere & Runtz, 1989, p. 7)

Also significant is the fact that Briere and Runtz asked about sexual attraction to “small children”—a phrase that suggests pre-pubescent rather than adolescent children. Had they asked their sample of male students about their sexual attraction to adolescent children at least 5 years younger than themselves, the percentage responding in the affirmative may have been significantly higher. Since we live in a culture that normalizes the eroticization of teenage girls (for example, film star Brooke Shields was described at age 12 as the most beautiful woman in the world), a good case can be made for the claim that only a small percentage of men experience *no* sexual attraction to children. Regarding postpubescent children (adolescents), Dietz and Sears (1987–1988) comment:

Whether such attraction ought to be regarded as abnormal is a debatable point, for attraction to sexually mature members of the opposite sex of the same species is biologically normal. It is not even clear that our culture, which proscribes sexual *activity* with those below the age of consent, condemns sexual *attraction* to these persons. (p. 28) (emphasis in original)

Philip Jenkins (2001) also emphasizes that “a sexual interest in children is not confined to a tiny segment of hard-core . . . ‘pedophiles’” (p. 25). He rejects the notion that there is “a fundamental gulf dividing ‘child-lovers’ [sic] from ‘normal’ people” (p. 27).

Referring to the sizable legal market in pseudo-child pornography in which adult women masquerade as young teens on adult sites titled “lolitas” or “child porn,” Jenkins (2001, p. 29) infers that “the popularity of such materials indicates a mass popular market for teen sexuality” in the United States (p. 28). Jenkins is struck by pornography merchants’ assumption “that a substantial audience would be interested in something that notionally lies so far beyond the pale” (p. 30). From these observations he infers “that those interested in child pornography might not be so far removed from the ‘normal’ population” (p. 30).

Some Causes of Males’ Proclivity to Sexually Victimize Children

Sociologist David Finkelhor (1984) developed a very useful four-factor causal theory to explain the occurrence of child sexual victimization *in cultures where such behavior is illegal or taboo*. According to his model, the following four preconditions must be met in order for child sexual victimization to occur:

1. A potential offender needed to have some motivation to abuse a child sexually.
2. The potential offender had to overcome internal inhibitions against acting on that motivation.

3. The potential offender had to overcome external impediments to committing sexual abuse.
4. The potential offender or some other factor had to undermine or overcome a child’s possible resistance to the sexual abuse. (Finkelhor, 1984, p. 54)

According to Finkelhor’s theory, all four preconditions must be met in order for child sexual victimization to occur. In addition, “the various preconditions come into play in a logical sequence” (Finkelhor, 1984, p.62). (The fourth precondition is problematic because, as Finkelhor himself acknowledges, how the child behaves is irrelevant in circumstances such as when the adult uses force or surprise “to involve the child in sexual activity” [p. 61].)

Whereas Finkelhor’s model relates to the causes of child sexual abuse in general, Russell’s three-factor theory seeks to demonstrate only that exposure to child pornography is a significant cause of child sexual victimization. Her theory draws heavily on Finkelhor’s model, as will become evident shortly.

PORNOGRAPHY AS A CAUSE OF CHILD SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION

The major objective of this chapter is to challenge the belief that exposure to child pornography is harmless and to demonstrate that exposure to child pornography can cause child sexual victimization in societies where this is proscribed. The diagram of Russell’s causal theory schematized in Figure 4.1 should help the reader to follow Russell’s theory. This model focuses primarily on female children as victims and on males as perpetrators. There are no equivalent data on females as perpetrators presumably because their proclivity to sexually abuse children is so much less prevalent than that of males.

The list on the top left of Figure 4.1 includes some of the more frequently cited causes of males’ proclivity to sexually victimize

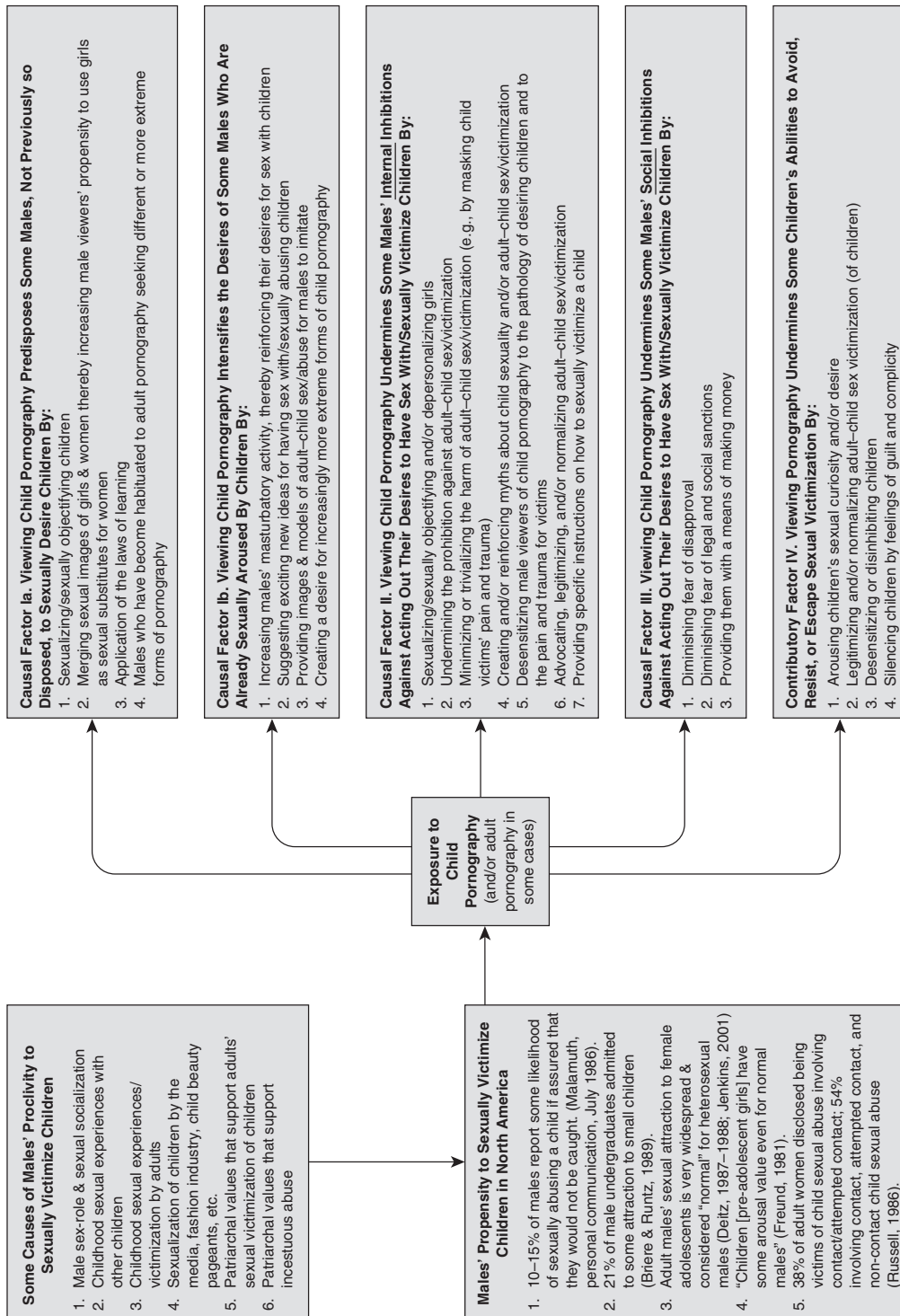


Figure 4.1 Russell's Causal Model: The Exposure of Males to Child Pornography as a Cause of Child Sexual Victimization

children. The following five quantitative findings of different researchers serve as summary indicators of males' proclivity to sexually victimize children in the United States as of this writing (see the box on the lower left of the figure).

1. 10–15% of males report some likelihood of sexually abusing a child if assured that they would not be caught (N. Malamuth, personal communication, July 1986).
2. 21% of male undergraduates admitted to some sexual attraction to small children (Briere & Runtz, 1989).
3. Adult males' sexual attraction to female adolescents is very prevalent and considered "normal" for heterosexual males (Dietz & Sears, 1987–1988; Jenkins, 2001).
4. "Children [preadolescent girls] have some arousal value even for normal males" (Freund, 1981, p. 137).
5. 38% of adult women disclosed being victims of child sexual abuse involving contact/ attempted contact; 54% involving non-contact (Russell, 1999).

According to Russell's theory, exposure to child pornography causes adult males to perpetrate child sexual victimization when it predisposes them to sexually desire children, or intensifies this desire or undermines internal and external inhibitions against acting out this desire. In addition, children's exposure to pornography can undermine their abilities to avoid, resist, or escape sexual victimization, thereby making them more vulnerable to sexual victimization. The three causal factors do not have to occur in any particular order.

Causal Factor Ia: Viewing Child Pornography Predisposes Some Males, Not Previously So Disposed, to Sexually Desire Children

It is commonly believed that exposure to child pornography cannot create a desire

for sexual contact with children in males for whom it did not previously exist. Most people prefer to believe that any man who becomes sexually interested in children must have been predisposed to this interest. The following four points present ways in which exposure to child pornography can cause sexual arousal in some males who were not previously sexually interested in children. These points demonstrate that "normal" heterosexual males can become sexually aroused by depictions of children.

1. By Sexualizing/Sexually Objectifying Children

Child pornography transforms children into sexual objects designed to appeal to pedophiles and non-pedophilic child molesters. One pornographer declared that "Girls, say between *the ages* of 8 and 13, are the very salable *objects* . . . young girls without overdevelopment and preferably with little or no pubic hair on their body" (Campagna & Poffenberger, 1988, p. 133) (emphasis added). Similarly, researchers Campagna and Poffenberger maintain that child pornography is "a medium by which the victim is reduced to an *object* or animal state" (p. 138) (emphasis added).

Child pornographers often direct the girls they photograph to get into sexual poses or to engage in masturbation or sexual intercourse like women in adult pornography. These sexualized pictures of girls (often acting as mini-adults) evoke a sexual response in some males who previously had no interest in sex with girls.

O'Connell (2001) notes that "the easy accessibility and transnational distribution of child pornography" sexualizes children for a rapidly growing audience (p. 65). Hence, increasing numbers of males all over the world are developing a sexual interest in children for the first time.

2. By Merging Sexual Images of Girls and Women Thereby Increasing Male Viewers' Propensity to Use Girls as Sexual Substitutes for Women

Pseudo-child pornography portrays adult women as if they were young girls—not in the sexual acts they perform, but in the props used and the captions or text accompanying the pictures. The “childification” of women in pseudo-child pornography is accomplished by dressing them in childish clothes, giving them childish hairstyles, having them stand in childlike poses with childlike expressions on their faces, or surrounding them with children’s toys. A prevalent form of pornography, childification is also becoming increasingly mainstream (e.g., pop star Britney Spears dressing like a young school girl and dancing seductively in the popular video, “Hit Me Baby One More Time,” and the sale of school girl uniforms as lingerie by companies like Emporio Lingerie, Linay Lingerie, and Lollipop Lingerie). Masturbation to pseudo-child pornography can serve as a bridge between adult pornography and child pornography. The transition of a male’s arousal to child pornography can be achieved through a step-by-step process of exposure to gradually younger sexualized teenagers and eventually prepubescent girls.

Adultification also merges sexual images of girls and women. This process entails depicting girls as mini-adults with the use of makeup, seductive clothes, sexy adult-like poses, and/or accompanying text (e.g., pictures of 12-year-old Brooke Shields who was named the most beautiful *woman* in the world). Such adultified images are prevalent in advertisements published in the non-pornographic media and in pornography. Like pseudo-child pornography, adultified child images can sexualize girls for some male viewers who never before felt sexual interest in young girls.

Earlier we discussed Freund’s (1981) experiment in which he found that a significant percentage of male subjects became sexually aroused by non-sexualized pictures of nude preadolescent girls. For this reason, it seems virtually certain that exposure to child pornography would stimulate even more sexual arousal in “normal” males.

3. By Application of the Laws of Learning

While some may believe that only males who are sexually aroused by child pornography would search for it, O’Connell (2001) maintains that “All the evidence is that many people [males] at least browse in this area [of child pornography], if not actively downloading” Web site pictures (p. 7).

A classic experiment by Rachman and Hodgson (1968) demonstrates that male subjects can learn to become sexually aroused by seeing a picture of a woman’s boot after repeatedly seeing women’s boots in association with sexually arousing slides of nude females. The laws of learning that created the boot fetish can also presumably teach males who previously were not sexually aroused by depictions of adult-child sex, to become aroused after exposure to child pornography.

Masturbation to child pornography during or following exposure to it, reinforces the association between these images and sexual gratification. This constitutes what McGuire, Carlisle, and Young (1965) refer to as “masturbatory conditioning” (p. 185). These researchers hypothesized that “an individual’s arousal pattern can be altered by directly changing his masturbatory fantasies” (Abel, Blanchard, & Becker, 1978, p. 192). Abel et al. (1978) have treated violent sexual perpetrators by conditioning them to masturbate and ejaculate to nonviolent consensual portrayals of sex.

Presumably, it is equally possible to change males’ non-deviant sexual fantasies

and behavior to deviant ones. Hence, when male Internet users with no previous sexual interest in children inadvertently find themselves looking at child pornography, or when curiosity prompts such males to deliberately search out child pornography, they may be surprised to find themselves aroused by sexualized pictures of children. If these male viewers masturbate while viewing sexual pictures of children, this presumably can be the beginning of a growing interest in sex with children. For example, Jenkins (2001) notes that some posts on the Web “*suggest that individuals were ‘converted’ after discovering the material [child pornography]*” (p. 106) (emphasis added).

Furthermore, *repeated* masturbation to these portrayals may result in increased arousal. The pleasurable experience of orgasm is an exceptionally potent reinforcer. Adult and child pornography are widely used by males as ejaculation material and thus are effective at constructing or reconstructing viewers’ patterns of sexual arousal and expression.

4. By Males Who Have Become Habituated to Adult Pornography Seeking Different or More Extreme Forms of Pornography

It is important to recognize that males who frequently view adult pornography, persons Russell describes as *pornophiles*, can also become interested and sexually aroused by child pornography. (This is the only component of Causal Factor Ia that refers directly to adult pornography.) After invalidating the habituation theory, Zillmann and Bryant (1986) concluded that their findings

strongly support the view that continued exposure to generally available, nonviolent pornography that exclusively features heterosexual behavior among consenting adults arouses an interest in and creates a taste for pornography that portrays less commonly

practiced sexual activities, including those involving the infliction of pain. (p. 574)

It seems reasonable to suppose that some of the males who become bored with ordinary adult pornography would opt to view child pornography since it qualifies as a “less commonly practiced sexual activity.” Margaret Healy (2002) supports our conjecture:

With the emergence of the use of computers to traffic in child pornography, a new and growing segment of producers and consumers is being identified. They are individuals who may not have a sexual preference for children, but who have seen the gamut of adult pornography and who are searching for more bizarre material. (p. 4)

Causal Factor Ib: Viewing Child Pornography Intensifies the Desire of Some Males Who Are Already Sexually Aroused by Children

1. By Increasing Males’ Masturbatory Activity Thereby Reinforcing Their Desires for Sex With Children

When pedophiles and other males who desire sex with children are exposed to child pornography that corresponds to their specific preferences (e.g., the gender and age of the child), their sexual arousal intensifies. For example, John Ferguson, an 18-year-old pedophile, describes his reaction to seeing hardcore child pornography for the first time:

One of the guys brought in three or four hardcore porno magazines that aroused me so intensely that I could barely control myself. Never in my life had I ever seen or heard of anything like this. Sex . . . oral sex . . . everything . . . close up and in color. I fed on these magazines like a man possessed. Never in my life had I ever been aroused like this. (Ferguson, 1985, p. 285) (ellipses in original)

Although this quote does not mention masturbation, it seems implied. Many males with a sexual interest in children *deliberately* use child pornography to intensify their sexual desire as a prelude to masturbation or the sexual abuse of children. Silbert and Pines (1993) report that a father in their study used to show “his friends pornographic movies to get them sexually aroused before they would rape” his 9-year-old daughter (p. 117–118).

As noted above, the repeated pleasure of sexual arousal and ejaculation typically experienced by males who masturbate to child pornography results in “masturbatory conditioning.” Masturbation reinforces the fantasies accompanying the activity, which intensifies the desire for sex with children. For example, Abel, Blanchard, and Becker (1978) described a patient who was a sadistic serial rapist. When he was 9 years old, this man “began having fantasies of injuring women, and by age 12 [he] was masturbating to sadistic or rape fantasies 20 times per month” (p. 195). His rape and sadistic fantasies continued, and he admitted that he raped his first wife (although he did not use this word) and other women when he was 22. Masturbatory conditioning reinforced his sadistic urges and Abel et al. (1978) used masturbatory reconditioning to treat him.

In sum, the more pedophiles and child molesters masturbate to child pornography, the stronger their arousal to this material, and the more it reinforces the association between their fantasies and their desire to have sex with or sexually abuse children.

2. By Suggesting Exciting New Ideas for Having Sex With/Sexually Abusing Children

Jenkins (2001) notes that most pedophiles consider the old child pornography pictures still circulating on the Internet (which he refers to as “oldies”) to be boring (p. 84). Consequently, “[a] common theme on the

pedo boards is requests for material that is not readily available,”—that is, *novel* kinds of child pornography (p. 84). “The range of requests is bewilderingly perverse,” according to Jenkins. “A few themes recur often and arouse real enthusiasm. By far the most common include calls for ‘Black loli,’ African or African American subjects. . . . Also in demand are incest pictures” (p. 85).

With regard to incestuous abuse, every conceivable relationship is portrayed in pictorial and written forms on the Internet—especially fathers having sex with their daughters. Rare forms of incestuous abuse are greatly overrepresented, including mother–son incest and female-on-female incestuous abuse. Many of the acts demonstrated or described in Internet pornography are portrayed as exciting and unconventional, providing viewers with new ideas for having sex with children. For example, Jenkins (2001) quotes a pedophile who was seeking “hardcore lolita pictures” and requesting pictures in a “Mom & Son Series” (p. 85). A colleague responded, “Yeah! He’s right! That would be the best post of the last 2 months! Come on! Everyone with mom&son Pics! PLZ Post!” (p. 85).

3. By Providing Images and Models of Adult–Child Sex/ Abuse for Males to Imitate

Child pornography provides models for males who already have a sexual interest in children. By seeing the different acts perpetrated on children (many of which elicit no negative responses and some of which appear to elicit positive responses or enjoyment), these “newbies” (a term used by many pedophiles) are provided with models that can shape and intensify their desires. Portrayals of child pornography showing only positive consequences for the perpetrators *and* the victims are particularly conducive to imitation. (However, for males who are sadistic, child pornography showing

negative consequences for the victim is more likely to intensify sexual arousal and serve as a model to imitate.)

Several examples illustrate the use of pornography as a model for imitation. Catherine Itzin (1996) cites the case of a young girl who was sexually violated between the ages of 4 and 11 by her teenage uncle:

He'd show me photographs of adults, men and women with whips and leather and children and animals. It would be photographs of oral sex, penetrative sex, both vaginally and anally. Then he would make me act out some of them. (p. 177)

Consider also the young girl who testified in the 1985 Government Commission on Pornography:

My father had an easel that he put by the bed. He'd pin a picture on the easel and like a teacher he would tell me this is what you're going to learn today. He would then act out the pictures on me. (*Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Final Report, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 782*)

Tim Tate (1990) provides another example, quoting Len, a pedophile who had molested several hundred young boys during his lifetime:

Child pornography became important to me because I enjoyed it, fantasized and masturbated to it. It wasn't a safety valve, though. At the time I was looking at the magazine it was OK, I was fine . . . but you're not going to look at a magazine all day. So when I went out in the open I would see another pretty boy and find myself chatting him up. In the end I would put into practice what I had seen in the magazines. (p. 110)

Imitated rape also occurs. The gang rape of a young girl was committed by six adolescent boys "who used a pornographic magazine's pictorial and editorial outlay to recreate a rape in the woods outside of their

housing development" (*Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Final Report, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 777*).

Extrapolating from research on adult pornography, Linz and Imrich (2001) suggest "a profile of what may constitute the most 'risky' set" of pornographic portrayals in films and magazines for motivating "an imitation effect among potential child molesters" (p. 91). Their risky depictions include

- i. "Portrayals that show child victims becoming involuntarily sexually aroused or otherwise responding positively to sexual aggression" (p. 91). The potential molesters who are exposed to such portrayals "may come to think that the victim does not suffer and may believe that a larger percentage of children would find forced sex pleasurable" (p. 91).
- ii. Portrayals that convey a message "that adult-child sex interaction is 'educational'" (p. 91).
- iii. Portrayals that convey the message "that the child was being sexually provocative" (p. 91).

4. *By Creating a Desire for Increasingly More Extreme Forms of Child Pornography*

Jenkins (2001) maintains that some viewers of child pornography become addicted, with an increasing "hunger for ever more illegal material" (p. 109). Newcomers to child pornography on the Internet may be "amazed and stimulated by the first few soft-core pornographic images" they see (p. 109). However, these images "are all too likely to become routine," motivating the more frequent downloaders to turn "avidly to the harder-core sites" (p. 109).

Tim Tate (1990) interviewed a pedophile who described how child pornography created his desire for increasingly more extreme forms of child pornography:

I know that my own response to erotica [sic], and that of a number of paedophile acquaintances, is indeed subject to the “law of diminishing kicks.” Whereas at one time, when they first became available to me, pictures of [merely] nude boys were a powerful stimulus to masturbation, the response gradually wore off; after this only stronger pictures, showing boys engaged in masturbation or fellatio with other boys, were capable of reproducing a comparably powerful masturbation stimulus to that which I had felt on my first exposure to nudes. . . . Even the response to these stronger pictures diminished slightly with familiarity, but another new stimulus . . . pictures showing anal intercourse with boys . . . revived the response. (p. 177)

Habituation is clearly an intrinsic feature in the escalation described by viewers of child pornography. Some child pornography users acknowledge that “involvement thus becomes a cumulative process” (Jenkins, 2001, p. 109). For example, one pedophile explained, “With this hobby we get bored after a while with the usual and we risk a bit to get new stuff *or get actual experience*. It’s a natural progression” (p. 109) (emphasis added). Wyre reports that his “Clients—abusers—have told me of their experience of child pornography which started out as pictures of mutual masturbation and ended with them watching videos of rape, torture and [the] death of a child” (Wyre, as quoted in Tate, 1990, p. 167).

In addition, researchers Max Taylor and Ethel Quayle (2003) interviewed 13 men in Ireland who were convicted of downloading child pornography from the Internet. Quayle and Taylor reported that, “The majority of respondents moved through a variety of pornographies, each time accessing more extreme material. The extremity might manifest in the age of the children in the photographs or to the sexual activities being portrayed” (p. 84). For example, one of these men said,

it [sic] would go having a look at the teenage sites and then these teenage sites would point you to younger things and it would say like illegal site . . . you’d have a look at the site and the girls are obviously getting younger and it was a steady . . . downward trend. (p. 84)

Rather than child pornography showing child victims with smiling faces, some of these seasoned viewers gravitate to more callous and sadistic images showing children being upset, traumatized, or even killed. For example, a Web site called *russianrape.com* tries to entice sadistic viewers to “see the poor young girls swallow what they don’t want, but have to do . . . see the horror in the eyes of the young girls and see them wild scream [sic] in brutally [sic] rape and pain!” Another Web site called *rapedasians.com* promises “the very best collection of very young Asian girls brutally raped.”

In conclusion, it seems clear that exposure to child pornography often becomes an escalating problem; what may have begun as observation of seemingly nonviolent images of adult-child sexual abuse can lead to sexual interest in increasingly more hardcore and violent images of child sexual victimization.

Summary

Sexual interest in children is the primary motivator for the sexual victimization of children. Factor Ia lists four different ways in which some males who had no prior sexual interest in children can develop this interest as a result of exposure to child pornography. Factor Ib cites four ways in which sexual arousal to children intensifies as a result of exposure to child pornography in some males who already *had* a prior sexual interest in children.

All or most individuals probably *have* had or *will* have desires that are antisocial or illegal at some time in their lives (e.g., the desire to hit someone with whom one is angry).

Clearly, there are many reasons, including internal and external inhibitions, why these desires may not be acted out. The next section focuses on the many ways in which exposure to child pornography undermines some males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desires.

***Causal Factor II:
Viewing Child Pornography
Undermines Some Males' Internal
Inhibitions Against Acting Out Their
Desires to Have Sex With/
Sexually Victimize Children***

Each component of Causal Factor II contributes to the undermining of moral beliefs that inhibit some males with a sexual interest in children from acting out their sexual desires.

***1. By Sexualizing/Sexually Objectifying
and/or Depersonalizing Girls***

It may be remembered that "sexualizing and sexually objectifying children" also constitutes a component of Causal Factor Ia. Exposure to child pornography plays a vital role in both creating a sexual interest in children in some males not previously so disposed and undermining some males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desire to have sex with children. Child pornography portraying girls in sexually provocative poses or happily engaged in sexual acts with other children or with adult men or women can convince those exposed to it that some children want and enjoy sex with adult males. For example, a sexual offender who enjoyed viewing child pornography showing "girls actually having sex," said that the girls "had to look happy . . . I mean I wasn't looking for rape or anything" (Taylor & Quayle, 2003, p. 82).

Just as depersonalizing members of enemy nations in times of war undermines soldiers'

internal inhibitions against acting in a violent fashion, so the depersonalization or sexual objectification of girls undermines some males' internal inhibitions against acting out their desire to sexually abuse children. Quayle and Taylor quote two men who were convicted of downloading child pornography from the Internet as saying,

It wasn't a person at all[;] it was . . . it was just a flat image . . . it was a nothing" (p. 85). "[M]y dad thought exactly the same as me . . . he says, 'well it's only a bloody picture.'" (Taylor & Quayle, 2003, p. 93)

***2. By Undermining the
Prohibition Against
Adult-Child Sex/Victimization***

Although legal ages of consent vary in different countries, adult-child sex is proscribed in most countries today.

Despite the prohibition in the United States, there are massive numbers of child pornography Web sites that promote adult-child sexual victimization through photographs, videos, or written stories. For example, an incest Web site titled "Golden Incest Sites!" lists 50 titles (www.incest-gold.com/indes.php, June 6, 2002). The pictures, stories, videos, and other material it makes accessible to interested Internet surfers can serve as highly suggestive models for viewers who may never before have thought of their daughters, sons, nieces, nephews, and other younger relatives in a sexual way. The ubiquity of incest pornography also conveys the popularity of such images, suggesting that large numbers of men must experience such desires.

The prevalence of child pornography sites, their content, and their positive portrayals of adult-child sexual abuse all serve to diminish the deviant nature of incestuous and extra-familial child sexual abuse. This in turn enhances the likelihood that some men's

internal inhibitions against acting out incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual victimization will be undermined.

It is also important to note two other ways in which the prohibition against adult-child sex is undermined by child pornography. First, the inclusion of many child pornography cartoons in mainstream men's magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse* communicates its social acceptability. Second, the boards on various sites allow visitors to form their own subcultural communities in which such behaviors or desires are not considered deviant and where pedophiles and others interested in child pornography can feel more normal. (Both of these points will be discussed later in greater detail.)

3. By Minimizing or Trivializing the Harm of Adult-Child Sex/Victimization (e.g., By Masking Child Victims' Pain and Trauma)

Masking child victims' pain and trauma is a major way in which the prohibition against child sexual abuse is undermined. A pedophile called Stewart describes how he masked victims' pain when he photographed young girls:

They couldn't show fear or doubt in the pictures. They had to show happiness or love. . . . To get that look, I'd give them something, from tricycles to stereos. It depended on what they wanted. You have to be able to express [evoke] excitement in the pictures. (Campagna & Poffenberger, 1988, p. 126)

British journalist Davies (1994) describes "a video of a 'girl with her wrists and ankles chained to an iron bar in the ceiling and a grotesque dildo hanging out of her'" (cited by Itzin, 1996, p. 185). "The pornographer who was showing the video pointed to the girl's smile as evidence of her consent" (Itzin,

1996, p. 185). The smile also suggests that she enjoys being tortured in this fashion.

Linz and Imrich (2001) note that:

Potential molesters who watch child sex depictions that supposedly had positive consequences for the victim may come to think that the victim does not suffer and may believe that a larger percentage of children would find forced sex pleasurable. (p. 91)

The evidence cited above confirms that masking the pain and trauma of child pornography victims undermines the internal inhibitions of some males who desire to sexually abuse children.

4. By Creating and/or Reinforcing Myths About Child Sexuality and/or Adult-Child Sex/Victimization

Joseph LoPiccolo (1994) emphasizes that "most sex offenders have a variety of distorted cognitive beliefs that are intimately related to their deviant behavior" (LoPiccolo, personal communication, September 16, 2005. See LoPiccolo, 1994, for examples of these distorted cognitive beliefs). These "false belief-systems" (Itzin, 1996, p. 170) or myths can be created and reinforced when males view child pornography. For example, child pornography can convince males who sexually desire children "that the feelings and desires they have towards children are not wrong" (Tate, 1990, p. 110).

Following are nine other examples of distorted cognitions or myths commonly held by pedophiles:

1. There's nothing wrong with adult-child sex as long as children consent to it.
2. If children behave seductively toward adults, it means "they're asking for it."

3. Men who love children have sex with them to teach them about sex in a positive, caring, emotional context.
4. Having sex with kids is good sex education for them, to prevent them from having sexual problems as adults.
5. Since children are sexual beings with the capacity to enjoy sexual stimulation, it's fine for an adult to provide them with this enjoyment.
6. Children who don't tell anyone about being molested, can't be upset or bothered about it.
7. If children didn't want to have sex with adults, they would react by crying, fighting, screaming, and resisting.
8. When children initiate sex with adults or allow themselves to be repeatedly molested by adults, it shows that they enjoy having sex with them.
9. Sex between adult males and children is harmless unless force is involved.

Belief in these myths undermines internal inhibitions against acting out the desire to sexually abuse children. For example, Jenkins (2001) notes that many pedophiles justify their sexual behavior with children by claiming that children "consented to the actions," or directly sought sexual contact with their perpetrators (p. 117). These pedophiles consider such experiences to be "consensual. Even if the child is three or five, she was still asking for it" (Jenkins, 2001, p. 117). Jenkins also maintains that "[l]inked to this is the denial of injury, since the sexual activity is seen as rewarding and even educational for the child, rather than selfish or exploitative" (p.117). As Kelly, Wingfield, and Regan (1995) observe, child pornography "enables them [perpetrators] to construct a different version of reality" (p. 34) in which it is possible for them to

believe "that both their sexual and non-sexual needs are being met without hurting the child" (Wyre, 1990, pp. 284–285).

The fantasy pedophilic stories on the Internet, the testimonies of pedophiles, the descriptions of child pornography in mainstream men's magazines, and the descriptions of child pornography on the Internet reinforce the myths common believed by pedophiles. Belief in such myths undermines some men's internal inhibitions against victimizing children.

5. By Desensitizing Male Viewers to the Pathology of Desiring Children and to the Pain and Trauma for Victims

Linz and Imrich (2001) maintain that "child pornography can desensitize viewers to the pathology of sexual abuse or exploitation of children, so that it can become acceptable to . . . the viewer" (p. 87). Congress made the same point when they passed the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996 banning computer-generated child pornography (Taylor, 2001, p. 51).

Linz and Imrich (2001) suggest that, "One likely source of desensitization to the degrading and abusive aspects of child pornography may be repeated exposure to 'adult' pornography wherein the models, although over the age of 18, are described and depicted as underage" (pseudo-child pornography) (p. 94). Exposure to such material may desensitize viewers to true child pornography.

Many consumers of child pornography become desensitized to the pain and damage that the child victims experience. Desensitization can also result in a preference for increasingly deviant and severely abusive forms of child pornography. Thus, desensitization can undermine internal inhibitions against acting out the desire to sexually victimize children.

6. By Advocating, Legitimizing, and/or Normalizing Adult–Child Sex/Victimization

The legitimatizing and normalizing of adults' sexual victimization of children in child pornography are two of the most frequently cited ways in which this material undermines some viewers' internal inhibitions. As Tate (1990) points out,

All paedophiles need to reassure themselves that what they are doing or want to do is OK. It [child pornography] validates their feelings, lowers their inhibitions and makes them feel that their behaviour is pretty normal in the context of this pornography—they see other people doing it in the videos or the magazines and it reassures them. (p. 24)

For example, one man testified before Congress, “See, it’s okay to do because it’s published in magazines” (*Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography: Final Report, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 786*). Clearly, child pornography has the power “to reinforce both the paedophile’s attraction to children and his self-justification process” (Tate, 1990, p. 110). Pedophiles also “use porn to convince themselves that their behavior is not abnormal, but is shared by others” (Calceas-Santos, 2001, p. 59). *Playboy, Hustler* magazines all “covertly” normalize adult–child sex and promote sex with children (Mayne, 2000, p. 25). There are many examples—particularly of cartoons in *Hustler*—that quite blatantly legitimize incestuous and extrafamilial child sexual abuse. Many of them trivialize child sexual victimization by repeatedly making jokes about this crime.

7. By Providing Specific Instructions on How to Sexually Victimize a Child

Some males who have never acted on their desire to have sex with a child may be ignorant or anxious about how to proceed

with this. Such concerns can inhibit them from perpetrating such an act. Child pornography removes this impediment by providing instructions for the sexual abuse of children. Tyler, a detective sergeant in the San Bernardino, California, Sheriff’s Department, testified in hearings on child pornography and pedophilia conducted by Senator Arlen Specter about a child pornography magazine that described “how to have sex with prepubescent children” (*Child Pornography and Pedophilia, 1984, p. 33*). During these hearings, Senator Specter also discussed a book titled *How to Have Sex With Kids* that described “how to meet children, how to entice them, how to develop a relationship with them, and how to have sex with them” (p. 30). Sexually explicit illegal material presumably demonstrates at what ages it is possible for adult males to penetrate young children anally and vaginally. Similarly, Gail Dines, Robert Jensen, and Ann Russo (1998) analyzed a scene in the best-selling pseudo-child pornography video titled *Cherry Poppers Vol. 10* that included “realistic detailed instructions on how to initiate a child into sex” (p. 88). Dines, Jensen, and Russo considered it to be “a manual for how to perpetrate a sexual assault on a child” (p. 88).

In addition, according to law enforcement officials, the *Bulletin* of the North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), distributed to all NAMBLA members, “has step-by-step ‘how to’ instructions for locating, seducing, sexually assaulting, and preventing the disclosure of their crime by their child victims” (Linz & Imrich, 2001, p. 92).

According to Tate (1990),

During the boom days of commercial production a disturbingly large number of magazines showing children undergoing abuse combined with torture came on to the market. Common features were illustrated instructions showing “fathers” clipping padlocks on to the labias of their

pre-pubescent “daughters,” with an encouragement to “keep them all for you.” Others, like the American-produced *Child Discipline*, instructed its readers on the best way of deriving sexual pleasure from beating very young boys and girls. (p. 173)

Even more ominously, British professor Harold Thimbleby (1995) reports that he has “found text, film and sound material . . . involving instructions for killing minors.”

Presumably, pedophiles and child molesters in general find such instructions useful. Even when explicit instructions on how to sexually victimize a child are not provided in child pornography, this material always provides models that viewers may learn from and attempt to emulate.

Summary

Russell’s theory specifies seven components for Causal Factor II. Each explains how child pornography can undermine internal inhibitions against acting out sexual desires toward children. The more components that apply, the greater the undermining effect is likely to be. As the next section explains, *social* inhibitions also have to be surmounted before potential molesters are likely to become actual molesters.

Causal Factor III: Viewing Child Pornography Undermines Some Males’ Social Inhibitions Against Acting Out Their Desires to Have Sex With/Sexually Victimize Children

Child pornography undermines viewers’ social inhibitions against sexually victimizing children. It does so in three distinct ways.

1. By Diminishing Fear of Disapproval

Potential or actual child molesters who look at or download child pornography on

the Internet will quickly become cognizant of the enormous number of child pornography Web sites, videos, and chat rooms. This material makes it abundantly clear that there are many other viewers and collectors of child pornography, as well as many others who act out their sexual attraction to children. As Jenkins (2001) states it, “He [the pedophile viewer] finds that he is not alone in his deviant interests” (p. 106). This revelation “helps support the notion that the boards [where individuals post messages] are safe space that one can visit at will, [and] where like-minded friends can reliably be found,” thereby diminishing viewers’ fear of universal disapproval for their sexual interest in children (p. 108).

Crimmins (1995) testified at the Senate Judiciary Committee Hearings on Child Pornography on the Internet that, “People who may have never acted on such impulses before, are emboldened when they see that there are so many other individuals who have similar interests” (p. 2). Furthermore, Jenkins (2001) argues that, “The more pedophiles and pornographers are attacked by law enforcement agencies, mass media, and anti-pedos, the greater the sense of community against common enemies” (p. 114). The knowledge that they have a support group of like-minded colleagues contributes to undermining the fear of disapproval for sexually victimizing children.

2. By Diminishing Fear of Legal and Social Sanctions

Fear of legal sanctions is the most important factor in restraining potential molesters from abusing children. The more effective potential molesters perceive the social sanctions to be, the less likely they are to become perpetrators. Fear of legal sanctions also serves to restrain active child molesters. For example, a pedophile called Duncan said the fear of getting caught “was what stopped me progressing to buggery with the boys” (Tate, 1990, p. 120).

However, child pornography consistently communicates the false message that those who violate children are in no danger of being apprehended or facing other negative consequences. We have not seen any pictorial child pornography that shows a sexual predator being apprehended by the police or ending up in prison. The same applies to written child pornography stories, fantasies, lists of Web sites and videos, as well as child pornography in men's magazines. The outcomes of child sexual abuse are always positive for the perpetrators. Hence, exposure to child pornography gives would-be child molesters a false sense of immunity from legal sanctions, thereby undermining their social inhibitions against acting out their desires.

Users of child pornography who are apprehended are likely to be shamed by the media coverage of their arrest and the charges against them. Such publicity reaches their family members, neighbors, employers, children's school teachers and schoolmates, doctors and dentists, and many others—all of whose disapproval is almost certainly mortifying and devastating for perpetrators. There have been several prominent cases in California in 2004 where pedophiles have been hounded by groups of angry and frightened citizens refusing to have such individuals placed in their neighborhoods. For example, Cary Verse, a four-time convicted child molester, has been "driven by community protests from transient hotels to shelters and from town to town" for 2 years in search of a home in California after his last release from prison (Carey, 2005, p. B5). Even in prison, these perpetrators often have to be isolated to protect them from being attacked by other prisoners who rank them as the most despised of all inmates.

Exposure to large amounts of child pornography undermines viewers' fear of legal sanctions, public shame, and ostracism.

3. By Providing Them With a Means of Making Money

Exposure to child pornography on the Internet makes it clear to viewers that numerous individuals are making money—sometimes a great deal of it—by providing the material for these Web sites. According to a child pornographer, "the most money is made in child pornography because it's hard to get and willing children are hard to come by" (Campagna & Poffenberger, 1988, p. 133). Hence, child molesters might infer that they could profit from marketing the photos and videos of children they victimize.

Frequent exposure to child pornography on the Internet promotes the perception that many child pornography producers are "getting away with it" and profiting from it. The desire to benefit financially from the immense economic opportunities available to child pornographers on the Internet could undermine the social inhibitions of some male viewers with a sexual desire for children. The stronger their need or motivation to make money, the more this motivation is likely to overwhelm their social inhibitions.

Summary

According to Russell's theory, these three causal factors induce some men, who otherwise would not we have sexually abused children, to become child molesters. Contributing Factor IV—the subject of the next section—is not necessary to this causal theory. However, it can be a significant facilitator of child sexual victimization.

Contributory Factor IV: Viewing Pornography Undermines Some Children's Abilities to Avoid, Resist, or Escape Sexual Victimization

Some perpetrators use force to accomplish their acts of child sexual victimization. In these cases, children's abilities to

avoid, resist, or escape sexual victimization are irrelevant. There are, however, cases where children's exposure to pornography undermines these abilities and permits sexual abuse to occur where it otherwise would not.

1. By Arousing Children's Sexual Curiosity and/or Desire

Showing pornography to boys and girls is a common seduction strategy of pedophiles who hope thereby to arouse children's sexual curiosity or sexual desire. For example, Katherine Brady (1979) testified as follows before the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice about her father showing her pornography for the first time:

As I sat down on the bed, he spread out the pictures of men and naked women in all sorts of sexual positions with each other. Looking at them, I felt a rush spread through my body. . . . I felt intense sexual desire, total revulsion, increasing excitement, abandonment of reason, a sense of sin and guilt, the shame of it all, and a resolve to forget it until next time. (p. 78)

Pedophiles posing as young teenagers in Internet teen chat groups often send pornographic pictures or e-mail messages containing pornographic language to children. These predators use pornographic pictures to arouse the children's curiosity or sexual interest and manipulate them into meeting. These meetings typically culminate in the sexual victimization of the child or children.

Research on adults reveals that many female subjects, in contrast to male subjects, become upset or disturbed when exposed to pornographic pictures (Check, 1995; Check & Maxwell, 1992a, 1992b; Senn, 1993; Stock, 1995). Boys are far more likely than girls to be sexually aroused by pornographic pictures. Consequently, showing pornography

tends to be a far more successful "seduction" strategy with boys than with girls. Ann Burgess and Carol Hartman (1987) found in their research on sex rings that "physical sensation and excitement was the dominant pleasure element that kept the boys in the ring" (Burgess & Hartman, 1987, p. 251; Burgess, Hartman, McCausland, & Powers, 1984). It seems reasonable to infer from this finding that the boys' sexual arousal undermines their abilities to escape sex rings.

Thus we conclude that exposure to child or adult pornography can arouse children's sexual curiosity or desire and thereby undermine their abilities to avoid, resist, or escape being sexually abused.

2. By Legitimizing and/or Normalizing Child Sexual Victimization for Children

Many pedophiles and child molesters show pornography to children "in order to persuade them that they would enjoy certain sexual acts" (Kelly, 1992, p. 119). Another motive is "to convince them that what they are being asked to do is alright." Showing them a picture "legitimizes the abuser's requests" (p. 119).

In the following example, an incestuous father's attempts to use pornography to normalize and legitimize having sex with his daughter were unusually persistent.

The incest started at the age of eight. I did not understand any of it and did not feel that it was right. My dad would try to convince me that it was ok. He would find magazines articles or pictures that would show fathers and daughters or mothers, brothers and sisters having sexual intercourse. (Mostly fathers and daughters.) He would say that if it was published in magazines that it had to be all right because magazines could not publish lies. He would show me these magazines and tell me to look at them or read them and I would turn

my head and say no. He would leave them with me and tell me to look later. I was afraid not to look or read them because I did not know what he would do. He would ask me later if I had read them and what they said or if I looked real close at the pictures. He would say, "See it's okay to do because it's published in magazines." (*Attorney General's Commission on Pornography: Final Report, Vol. 1, 1986, p. 786*)

Child molesters also send pornography to the children they have targeted for sexual victimization to convince them "that other children are sexually active" (Hughes, 1999, p. 28). Showing children child pornography thus normalizes and legitimizes adult-child sexual encounters in the minds of some children.

3. *By Desensitizing or Disinhibiting Children*

A child molester's step-by-step "grooming" of a child serves to gradually desensitize her or him to the culminating act of sexual abuse, which is his goal. He moves from befriending a child, to touching her or him, to introducing her or him to an X-rated video, slowly showing more of it "until the child is able to sit and watch the videos without becoming too uncomfortable" (Whetsell-Mitchell, 1995, p. 201). Juliann Whetsell-Mitchell concludes, "Variations on the grooming ['seduction'] process are many but the end result is desensitizing the child to engaging in sexual acts with the perpetrator, other children, or other adults" (p. 201).

In addition, Calcetas-Santos (2001) notes that "Child pornography can be used by exploiters to lower children's inhibitions in order to seduce or encourage them to freely participate either in prostitution or pornography" (p. 59). Showing adult pornography

to children can be "used in the same way [as child pornography] to lower the inhibitions of children" (Tate, 1992, p. 213).

4. *By Creating Feelings of Guilt and Complicity, Thereby Silencing Children*

When child molesters expose targeted children to pornography, the children often feel guilty and complicit, particularly if they found the material sexually exciting or masturbated to it. According to Scotland Yard, one of the five major ways that pedophiles use pornography is to "ensure the secrecy of any sexual activity with a child who has already been seduced" (Tate, 1990, p. 24). Child molesters can often silence their victims by telling them that their parents would be very upset to learn that they had watched pornography. Even without such warnings, children often fear that their parents will blame and punish them for having looked at this material. Children who are sexually abused following the exposure may feel complicit in the abuse and thus become even more motivated to remain silent. Ultimately, this reduces the likelihood that abused children will disclose the sexual abuse to their parents or others.

CONCLUSION

More research is urgently needed on child pornography, and especially the causal relationship between exposure to pornography and child sexual victimization. Some research in this area is impossible to conduct for ethical reasons and because of requirements for the protection of human subjects. However, ingenious researchers should be able to design some illuminating experiments that meet ethical standards.

Despite the relative dearth of research, we believe we have provided sufficient evidence to substantiate Russell's theory. This theory

explains how exposure to child pornography can create a sexual interest in children in some males who previously had no such interest. When sexual interest in children exists, exposure to child pornography can intensify

sexual desires and undermine internal and social inhibitions against acting them out. Thus, exposure to pornography induces some men, who otherwise would not sexually abuse children, to become child molesters.

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