

DOING GENDER AS AN OFFENDER

A CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF OFFENDER NARRATIVES,
AND THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MASCULINITIES
AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

by

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No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.

~ John Donne, *Meditation XVII*

ABSTRACT

Masculinity is a powerful construct that transcends other aspects of male existence and dictates codes of conduct accordingly. Masculinity describes a plurality of roles, norms and expectations that regulate the behaviour of men. Within criminology, many theorists have established an association between threatened masculinity and sexual violence perpetrated against adults. Comparatively little attention has been paid to the relationship between masculinity and sexual violence perpetrated against children. What research there is, suggests that men who sexually abuse children may offend as a way of overcompensating for perceived masculine inadequacies that have arisen as a result of chronic experiences of powerlessness.

This thesis is based on semi-structured, in-depth interviews with men who have sexually offended against children. Twenty men were recruited from community-based rehabilitation programmes around New Zealand. Transcripts of these interviews — as well as client records and results of a Q-sort task — were analysed to identify ways in which these men achieve, negotiate or defy normative gender expectations. A mixture of thematic and narrative analysis was used to interpret the data, revealing four prominent themes: powerlessness, entitlement, risk-taking and rigid thinking. Within each broad theme, several other factors were identified. For the theme of powerlessness these were: distorted perception, idealistic or nostalgic views of childhood, previous experience of trauma or abuse, an inability to seek help, experiences of humiliation or rejection, and perceived masculine failings. For the theme of entitlement these were: a propensity for resentment and blame, narratives of nice guys relegated to the friend zone, and valuing of hypermasculinity. For the theme of risk-taking these other factors were: narratives of boredom or addiction, as well as the existence of obsessive or compulsive tendencies. For the theme of rigid thinking these were: inconsistent or illogical cognitive patterns, poor or inappropriate boundary setting, and inflexible or unattainable religious ideals.

Overall, the results lend support to current theories of powerlessness and show that men's sexual offences against children can be interpreted as overcompensatory behaviour occurring within the spectrum of normative masculinities. These findings highlight the need for

rehabilitation to consider offenders' masculine identities as a point of treatment focus. It is argued that society must challenge the rigid and unattainable nature of hegemonic masculinity because of its potentially harmful consequences for men, women and children. It is hoped that the content of this thesis can contribute to academic knowledge about 'doing gender as an offender'.

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1. SETTING THE SCENE

Defining child sexual abuse

Debate has long prevailed over what constitutes child sexual abuse. Liberal definitions incorporate viewing explicit material, whereas more conventional theorists believe contact or penetration are required (Smallbone et al., 2008). These differences further complicate attempts to understand the prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse. In order to reduce confusion and provide a broader scope for analysis, this thesis adopts an inclusive definition of child sexual abuse: all contact or non-contact behaviour of a sexual nature committed against a child under the age of 16 by a person over the age of 18, and where there exists an age gap of more than five years. The lower limit is in keeping with the legal age of consent in New Zealand, and the age gap ensures exclusion of what could be deemed ‘statutory rape’ between similarly-aged yet otherwise-consenting adolescents.

The definition does, however, extend beyond traditional hands-on offences to encompass historical molestation that may not have met an earlier legal threshold for abuse, non-contact indecent exposure and flashing, as well as offences relating to the internet such as online grooming or downloading child pornography¹. It also includes less documented forms of cruelty, such as forcing a child to witness the sexual abuse of others. Without implying a hierarchy of harm — and with due acknowledgement that every victim experiences abuse and its consequences differently — some researchers have found it useful to categorise child sexual abuse by levels of intrusiveness, as show in Table 1.a.

The definition used in this thesis excludes unwanted or coercive sexual behaviour committed by children against their same-age counterparts. This is commonly referred to as child-on-child sexual abuse, and survivors experience similar psychological effects to those abused by adults (Shaw et al., 2000). However, holding minors criminally or morally accountable is fraught with ethical difficulties. Primarily, the naïveté of young children can mean one or both do not comprehend the conduct as sexual, nor fully realise its potential for harm. In addition, most children who sexually violate other

¹ Some authors have favoured the term ‘child abuse images’ because it more seriously reflects the nature of such images and the harm caused by them (Gallagher, 2007). This term is also used to describe explicit or hard-core material involving children, to distinguish from less-extreme-yet-still-pornographic content.

children are emulating or repeating their own experiences of victimisation (Bromberg & Johnson, 2001). Ultimately, it would be unfair to suggest children face the same blame or consequences as an abusive adult would, which creates an unusual situation where there exists a victim but no offender *per se*. In light of such difficulties, this thesis will not discuss children as perpetrators of abuse; such matters are only raised incidentally when participants recount their own histories.

Table 1.a. Levels of intrusiveness

Level	Abusive act	Example
1.0	Non-contact, no exposure	Peeping, exposure to pornography
1.5	Attempted exposure	
2.0	Non-contact, exposure	Masturbating in view of victim
2.5	Attempted contact	
3.0	Non-penetrative contact	Kissing, fondling, genital rubbing
3.5	Attempted non-penile penetration	
4.0	Non-penile penetration	Digital penetration
4.5	Attempted penile penetration	
5.0	Penile penetration	Anal, oral or vaginal rape

(adapted from Pratley & Goodman-Delahunty, 2011, p. 14).

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse

It is the power differential between adults and children that contextualises and frames the sexual abuse of children. Almost universally children are socialised to accept adult instruction and authority, a dynamic that is often exploited by offenders who occupy a role of supposed trustworthiness — whether it be parent, teacher, babysitter, extended family member, neighbour, sports coach or otherwise.

It is unsurprising that people who sexually abuse children are unlikely to come forward and seek treatment for themselves. Those who experience egosyntonic² fantasies about children may not perceive a need for help, and those with egodystonic feelings are understandably ashamed to the point of silence (Hall & Hall, 2007). Most individuals who do come to the attention of professionals will do so through the criminal justice system, mental health care providers or via dysfunctional sexual relationships (Stinson et al., 2008). As a result, the research cited herein excludes certain groups: those

² Egosyntonic describes behaviours, thoughts or values that are consistent with one's self-image.

who have committed sexual offences against children but have never been caught or confessed to such behaviours; people with sexual preference for children who have never acted on such urges; and anyone whose family have discovered and dealt with their matters privately. There is a very real possibility the demographic or psychology of such offenders will vary substantially from those who do come to official attention.

Due to the specific and gendered nature of inquiry, this thesis will focus solely on abuse perpetrated by males. It is well established that the majority of those who sexually offend against children are men (Cossins, 2000; 2007; Finkelhor, 1984; Freel, 2003; Seto, 2009; Smallbone et al., 2008). However, an exact figure is much more difficult to pinpoint, especially because a significant body of research overlooks the issue of gender entirely or deems it self-evident that almost all offenders are men. For example, a meta-analysis of studies on risk factors for perpetration of child sexual abuse — which examined 89 studies over a 13 year timeframe — did not once mention the most obvious risk factor of all: being a man (Whitaker et al., 2008). Freel (2003) commented on the reluctance of clinicians and academics to embrace the ‘ideological concept of a male monopoly’, which he said had prevented masculinity from being understood as a possible aetiological factor in child sexual abuse (p. 483).

According to Seto (2008), up to 95% of sexually abusers are male. This figure is conservative to allow for the fallibility of official records, which tend to show less than 1% of all sexual offenders are women. For example, of the 10,935 people incarcerated for sexual offences in England and Wales in 2011, only 0.95% were female (Cortini & Gannon, 2011). This figure is most likely skewed in favour of women since there exists a common misperception that female-perpetrated abuse is harmless or ‘far less reprehensible’ than that perpetrated by men (Turton, 2008, p. 10). In an attempt to circumvent such issues, Cortini et al. (2005; 2009) analysed both official and unofficial statistics from around the world. They concluded that women are responsible for between 4% and 5% of all sexual offences against children, and account for one in every twenty individuals who molest children (as cited in Cortini & Gannon, 2011; Smallbone et al., 2008).

This figure is consistent with New Zealand’s apprehension data which shows slightly less than 2% of those arrested for sexual offences are women (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). That reduces significantly when examining those who make it to prison. As seen in Table 1.b only 0.63% of

incarcerated child sex offenders are women (Department of Corrections, 2013). This attrition rate likely reflects an institutional — and arguably chivalrous — perception that women are less capable of hurting children. It is also possible that men are more likely to have previous convictions or commit more severe forms of abuse, which would increase their likelihood of receiving a sentence of imprisonment. Some studies from the United States put the rate of female offending as high as 14% (Turton, 2008). This is out of step with other data, and the reality probably lies somewhere between these figures. This is supported by claims that, despite increased awareness and reporting, ‘the *true* figure is still under 10%’ (Houston & Galloway, 2008, p. 16, [emphasis mine]). Others acknowledge that statistics of female-perpetrated child sexual abuse are likely to increase as the topic becomes more fully understood and less taboo (Collie et al., 2005).

Table 1.b. Incarcerated child sex offenders by gender, ethnicity and age

	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	Total
Female			3	3					6
European			1	2					3
Māori			1	1					2
Pasifika			1						1
Male	11	145	141	251	217	114	62	10	951
Asian	1	4		3					8
European	4	59	60	121	110	77	49	9	489
Māori	6	61	55	78	76	23	8	1	308
Pasifika		16	24	45	30	12	4		131
Other		5		2					7
Unknown			2	2	1	2	1		8
Unknown		2							2
Total	11	146	144	254	217	114	62	10	958

(compiled from Department of Corrections, 2013).

Language and terminology

Due to the emotional and political nature of this topic, many words used in this thesis will inevitably carry contestable connotations. A few are worth clarifying at the outset.

Paedophile v. sex offender

In keeping with clinical terminology, this thesis will distinguish between paedophiles — people with a persistent sexual preference for prepubescent children — and those who have molested or abused children but are primarily attracted to adult partners. It is important to understand that not all paedophiles are sex offenders and not all sex offenders against children are paedophiles. While empirical evidence does indicate a solid correlation between these two groups, approximately 50% of those who have committed sex offences against children would not meet the diagnostic criteria for paedophilia (American Psychological Association, 2000; Seto, 2009). The usefulness of this distinction lies in the treatment modalities used; paedophile offenders have higher rates of recidivism and require more intensive rehabilitation than other child sex offenders (Goldstein, 1999; Seto, 2008; 2009).

Some researchers have found it useful to distinguish hebephilia from paedophilia, although it is not a formal diagnosis in its own right. Hebephilia refers to primary sexual attraction to pubescent children aged between 11 and 15. It was proposed that this clarification be included in the 5th edition of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, in the form of a blended disorder called paedophebephilia (Blanchard, 2013). The suggestion was overwhelmingly rejected by the deciding panel, with one panellist claiming it was evolutionarily understandable for men to find pubescent children arousing and, as such, did not meet the threshold for disordered sexual interest (Blanchard, 2013; Frieden, 2009). However, the demarcation between hebephilia and paedophilia is primarily useful in a clinical context so this thesis will avoid such terminology unless used within cited research.

Victim v. survivor

The term ‘victim’ has been criticised for potentially invalidating the psychological coping mechanisms of individuals who have experienced child sexual abuse. Some researchers have highlighted the way the label reinforces the powerlessness experienced during such abuse (Jordan, 2001; 2013; Stanko, 1985). Others contend that it remains helpful for acknowledging the heinous nature of such crimes, and its use does not need to correspond with permanent or ongoing victimhood (Lees, 2002). On the other hand, it is distinctly possible that ‘survivor’ could belittle the memory of those who — for whatever reason — do not survive their abuse. Jordan (2001; 2013) warns against a dichotomous understanding

of victim-survivor categories. She explains this risks invalidating the complex realities of both victimisation and living through the aftermath of abuse.

Kirkwood (1993) argues that both terms can be helpful for contextualising and describing different elements of one's abusive experience. It is not my role as researcher to make a political statement on behalf of those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, and this thesis will use each term as the context requires. That is to say, usage will depend on the power dynamic being emphasised. However, since this research focuses primarily on offending and the offenders' perspective, it will generally favour use of the word victim.

For the most part 'victim' refers to those specifically and directly targeted for sexual abuse. At times a broader definition will be used, in line with Marshall, Anderson and Fernandez (1999). They emphasised how child sexual abuse is not just a crime between offender and victim, but ripples out to affect family and friends of both victims and perpetrators, as well as others dealing with the fallout from such events: therapists, law enforcement and healthcare workers. Particular usage within this thesis will be made obvious by context.

Pronoun usage

Due to the gendered focus of this thesis, masculine pronouns will be used unless context dictates otherwise.

Synonyms for abuse

The following words will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis: sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual offending, sexual assault, molestation and violation. When necessary the particular type of offending will be clarified.

Agency of perpetrators

Consistent with the tenets of labelling theory, and in order to emphasise offender agency and responsibility, this thesis will predominantly describe perpetrators as 'men who have sexually offended against children' rather than 'child sex offenders'. This approach is also consistent with the philosophy of community rehabilitation groups in New Zealand (Caroline Burns, personal communication, 17

March 2009). Having said that, the latter terminology will occasionally be used for brevity's sake, but only when its usage will not undermine offender agency or responsibility.

Thesis structure and overview

First and foremost, the subjective nature of this thesis must be acknowledged. The experience of victimisation is very much relative, as is that of abusing others. Indeed, more broadly, society responds to and interprets both victimisation and offending in a fluid, dynamic manner — changing throughout time and across different cultural milieux. Each man who sexually violates a child will understand and explain perpetration of that abuse differently. Further, the varying and variable identities of 'victim' and 'offender' are complex and unfixed, intersecting with race, class, age and other characteristics. It would be disingenuous to position victimisation and offending as mutually exclusive; an individual or group may occupy both spaces simultaneously, move between them or entirely reject such labels. Similarly complex systems are observed when examining gender identity and adherence to gender roles. Accordingly, the focal point of this thesis is the interrelationship between sexual offending against children and the gender identity of those who perpetrate such abuse — as well as how these factors intersect with other life experiences and characteristics.

Researcher perspective

Some may argue that, as a woman researching masculinities, I lack the necessary perspective and experience to fully understand the lived realities of men. It is true I do not know what it is like to live as a man in New Zealand, but I hope this distance serves to enhance my neutrality. In addition, and because femininity is largely defined by what masculinity *is not*, my own experience is not blind to the subtleties of how gender is constructed and enacted as a system. Furthermore, I hope that by drawing on the perspective of male authors where necessary, and actively decentring my own experiences as a woman, I can mitigate any possible shortcomings.

The personal motivation behind this research is a firm belief that fully understanding offenders is the most effective way to prevent future victims. I reject the idea that these men are evil or beyond redemption. As I imagine is the case for many criminologists, I am driven by the desire to learn *why* it is that some men sexually abuse children and others do not. This thesis cannot fully

answer that question, and a satisfactory answer may remain elusive. However, I decided the best strategy was talking with men who had committed such crimes and listening to their stories. At the very least, I hope to add a small piece of the puzzle of *why*.

Outline of chapters

This thesis is organised into thirteen chapters. The present chapter explains definitions used and the parameters of this research. It also locates and outlines the direction of this thesis. Chapter 2 provides background and context by tracing the legal and social history of child sex abuse. It also summarises both offender and victim attributes.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 review current literature and theoretical knowledge. This section integrates a range of perspectives that have informed and shaped this thesis: criminological, psychological, sociological and feminist. Chapter 3 summarises aetiological theories of child sexual abuse, including key feminist concepts. Chapter 4 discusses additional points of consideration such as religious and online offending, as well as treatment modalities and their effectiveness. Chapter 5 comprehensively reviews current literature on gender and masculinity, and specifically locates this thesis in its New Zealand context.

Chapters 7 and 8 cover research design and data analysis. Chapter 7 states the objectives of this study, as they arose from omissions in current literature. These objectives, in turn, make a case for the chosen research design and methods adopted for my fieldwork. Chapter 8 provides a detailed description of the exact undertaking. Chapter 9 introduces my findings and presents information about the participants as a group. Chapters 10 through 13 critically examine four themes: powerlessness, entitlement, risk-taking and rigid thinking, respectively. This discussion specifically focuses on the gendered implications of these main themes. Finally, chapter 14 summarises how findings from this thesis relate to existing theory and practice. It will also include some personal reflections on the project as a whole.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Legal and social history of child sexual abuse

The sexual abuse of children is not a recent phenomenon, but it is only during the last forty years that rights' campaigners have brought the issue to the forefront of public consciousness. This form of abuse is intimately invasive and is known to have extraordinarily damaging effects on victims. These effects can be long-lasting and range from psychological — depression, posttraumatic stress and anxiety disorders, to behavioural — promiscuity, substance abuse and eating disorders (Whitaker et al., 2008). Additionally, physical damage can occur as a result of the abuse itself, and indirectly due to psychological and behavioural changes.

Child sexual abuse is almost certainly a universal occurrence (Pereda et al., 2009; Seto, 2008). Some countries enacted child welfare laws in the 1880s, but these were largely aimed at preventing physical abuse, labour exploitation and parental neglect (Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act [UK], 1889). Even laws targeting sexual behaviour did not explicitly focus on preventing sexual contact with children per se. Others were ambiguous at best. For example, the United Kingdom's Punishment of Incest Act (1908) criminalised all consanguineous relations regardless of age or capability for consent. And while the Children and Young Persons Act (1933) did legislate against anyone 'causing, encouraging or favouring seduction or prostitution of [a] girl under sixteen', this only applied to people entrusted with 'custody, charge or care' of the child and, on literal interpretation, would not have applied to unknown offenders or to male victims (s. 2, pp. i, 3).

The United States' Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (1974) was one of the first pieces of legislation to deal comprehensively with the sexual abuse of children, and by this stage many countries also had mandatory reporting laws for medical practitioners who suspected abuse. New Zealand did not introduce similar legislation until fifteen years later with the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989). In the same year, the United Nations adopted legislation governing the rights of children worldwide (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). Articles 19 and 34 of this treaty stipulate that children are entitled to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. At the time

of writing, this agreement has been formally ratified by 194 countries, with the United States being a notable exception³.

Despite this increasing legal protection and political awareness, it was not until feminism's second wave⁴ that the secrecy and stigma surrounding child sexual abuse started to be actively dismantled. The prevailing Freudian view of child-as-seducer was vehemently challenged, as was the notion that sexual abuse caused no lasting or significant damage to victims (Turton, 2008). In particular these early activists sought to emphasise victims' needs, remove barriers to disclosure of abuse, and increase accountability for perpetrators. Florence Rush was one such radical feminist who successfully brought the matter to critical attention and gave power to the voices of survivors. Also groundbreaking was her emphasis on the psychological effects of abuse, and her astute dissection of the harm caused by victim-blaming attitudes (Rush, 1980). She specifically described this gaslighting effect whereby children were pathologised, cast as responsible for their own abuse and, in turn, made to question their sanity:

It categorically assigns a real experience to fantasy, or a harmless reality at best, while the known offender — the one concrete reality — is ignored. (...) [The victim] is trapped within a web of adult conjecture and is offered not protection but treatment for some speculative ailment, while the offender (...) is permitted to further indulge his predilection for little girls⁵. The child's experience is as terrifying as the worst horror of a Kafkaesque nightmare: her story is not believed, she is declared ill, and, worse, she is left to the mercy and the 'benevolence' of psychiatrically oriented 'child experts'.

(Rush, 1980, p. 97).

Throughout subsequent decades, feminist academics continued agitating for reform, protection and justice. They were largely successful in these aims; this period coincided with increased reporting of child sexual abuse, a growing tendency to believe children's allegations, and widespread recognition

³ This is largely because the United States' Constitution prohibits what could be seen as unreasonable government interference in the parent-child relationship. Further, the Convention on the Rights of the Child forbids signatories from sentencing minors to life imprisonment without parole or the death penalty, both of which the United States practises. Somalia and South Sudan are the other countries that have not yet ratified the agreement.

⁴ This spanned from the 1960s to the 1980s.

⁵ Rush's work focused almost exclusively on the sexual abuse of girls. Her limited commentary on the abuse of boys simplistically assumed their prepubescent effeminacy is what motivated perpetrators. While this assertion is difficult to prove it does have problematic implications due to its erasure of boyishness, as well as its heteronormative assumptions.

and acceptance of the potential for long term harm (Smart, 1989; Walklate, 1989). In turn, this consciousness-raising triggered research across other disciplines: psychology, psychiatry, criminology, sociology, health, law, religion and medicine — all of which established their own perspective and agenda. As popular interest amplified, child sexual abuse became an emotionally charged issue, with media-driven sensationalism exacerbating this rhetoric (Davidson, 2008).

Social attitudes towards child sex offenders

Media coverage of child sexual abuse is fraught with misconceptions and misrepresentations. Such misguided beliefs function to agitate an already-anxious public, and are often catalysts for political change — change that may not be proportionate or at all helpful. One prevailing image is that of the monstrous stranger lurking in playgrounds. Exceptionally rare cases may satisfy such stereotypes, but it is these which tend to saturate media and promote a distorted perception of risk. For example, the disappearance of six-year-old Teresa Cormack in 1987 was said to mark the ‘death of innocence for the nation’ (Taylor, 2001, p. A6), and fuelled speculation from politicians that a new danger was emerging. Michael Laws even expounded on a possible connection with the earlier disappearance of fourteen-year-old Kirsa Jensen in 1983 (Taylor, 2001, p. A6). Both cases were actually unrelated and diverged in most respects: offender profile, likely motivation, age of victim, timing and location. There is also no evidence Kirsa Jensen was sexually assaulted, although the case does remain unsolved. In any event, hyperbolic comments undoubtedly frightened and reinforced the perception of risk — a perception then exacerbated by sentimental and over-the-top reporting (Davidson, 2008; Kitzinger, 1988; 2004; McCartan, 2010; Meyer, 2007; Warner, 1995). An excerpt from one article describes the day of Cormack’s murder with typical sensationalism:

The hills, beige and olive in the light and shade of late sun, muscle their way to the sea which today is a steel-grey blue. A black band separates land and sea. From 500 metres up, it looks like sand but is in fact small dark stones. It was these stones her killer piled over her body, probably to the accompaniment of the boom of the Pacific drumming on the beach and the whoosh of the occasional car on the Napier-Wairoa Highway 10m away.

(Taylor, 2001).

The fervour surrounding child sexual abuse has not dissipated or plateaued since the 1980s, and social unease has arguably worsened in the 28 years since Teresa Cormack was abducted, raped and

murdered. Populist concern about social decay and the unravelling moral fibre resonate with Young's (1999) concept of ontological security; the 'universal condemnation' directed towards child molesters serves to reinforce cohesiveness and allay wider societal anxieties (Cricher, 2002, p. 533). However, harm can be experienced by offenders in the form of vigilante murders or simply a hateful public determined to ostracise or seek vengeance (Carter, 2001; Cleave, 2005; Fenton, 2014). It also harms those incorrectly identified as offenders, and further harm is caused by thwarting rehabilitative progress and increasing the likelihood of more victims (Fairfax, 2005; McAlinden, 2007; Morris, 2013; New Zealand Press Association, 2005). In addition, effort is still focused on 'stranger danger' while parents remain oblivious to the risk posed by more common perpetrators such as acquaintances or relatives (Watt, 2007). Kitzinger (2004) explained how media influence has become increasingly subtle in terms of how certain issues are framed and whose agenda is prioritised. This framing — that is, the intensity of coverage, angles adopted by journalists, stories highlighted and followed up, as well as ideological positions — has been demonstrated to directly affect public concern for a given issue (Kitzinger, 2004).

By the 2000s, child sex offenders had been socially, institutionally and individually marginalised as the deviant 'other'⁶. This process of 'othering' described how a particular sub-culture was demonised in order to protect and reinforce legitimate social behaviour (McAlinden, 2007; Meyer, 2007). By reaffirming in-group normality, society could foster a collective sense of ontological security. Meyer (2007) described this as a discursive process which produces and categorises The Sex Offender as an entity outside humanity (Meyer, 2007). Juxtaposing the vulnerability of childhood alongside moral revulsion towards deviant sex has seen otherwise opposing sections of society collaborate to express outrage and demand accountability — creating a nexus of fear, exclusionary behaviour and self-righteous morality. This framework of moral 'us' versus deviant 'them' has been well-established in the child sexual abuse literature (Levenson et al., 2007; McAlinden, 2007; Meyer, 2007; Schneider, 1984; Young, 1999), and is obvious in news coverage, where dehumanising language is commonplace. It has been said that this othering process was partly triggered by society's guilt for allowing sexual abuse to remain unchallenged for so long. This was described by Kitzinger (2004) as guilt of

⁶ A term coined by philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas (1972).

complicity rooted in hypocrisy. Moreover, by viewing offenders as utterly reprehensible, children have been free to occupy the position of ‘perfect victim’ — enabled by children’s structural and physical powerlessness, and a broader belief of childhood as innocent and inherently blameless (Davidson, 2008; Kitlinger, 1988; Meyer, 2007; Robinson, 2008; Walklate, 1989; Warner, 1995). This stands in contrast to victims of other crimes⁷, who are sometimes seen as active participants in their own victimisation or, at least, less deserving of sympathy than the ‘truly’ innocent.

Nature and extent of child sexual abuse

Identifying the victim

Variations in method and definition make it almost impossible to accurately ascertain the prevalence of child sexual abuse, or to meaningfully compare and critique research findings. The only discernible consensus seems to be that prevalence or incidence figures are almost certainly underestimates due to the sensitive nature of sexual victimisation (Goldman & Padayachi, 2000; Kelly, 1988). Fergusson et al. (2000) explained that statistics based on single reports are most likely to seriously underrepresent the incidence of child sexual abuse. This notion is supported extensively by the literature (Finkelhor, 1984; 2008; Houston, 2008; Kuehnle, 2003; Philpot, 2009; Price-Robertson, 2012; Seto, 2008; Smallbone et al., 2008; Stinson et al., 2008). This dark figure of child sexual abuse is compounded because false negative reports are disproportionately more frequent than false positives⁸. This occurs for various reasons, including the absence of corroborating witnesses, unwillingness to testify, desire to protect the perpetrator, internalised victim blaming, the potential for embarrassment when recounting abuse, and misinterpretation of arousal as consent. Furthermore, false negative reports have been found to comprise approximately half of all cases, meaning that 50% of people sexually abused as children did not ever report this (Fergusson et al., 2000). Goldstein (1999) puts the figure much higher, surmising that — as with victims of rape in adulthood — more than 90% of incidents are never disclosed.

⁷ The most apparent example being adult victims of rape.

⁸ The topic of false allegations of child sexual abuse is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a comprehensive analysis see Kuehnle (2003), Kuehnle and Connell (2008) and Mikkelsen et al. (1992). This issue is also complicated by the inevitable fact that many genuine allegations are hidden behind alleged offenders’ cries they have been wrongfully accused.

New Zealand research has found that between 23.5% and 28.2% of females are subject to sexual harassment or are forced to participate in sexual acts before they reach the age of fifteen (Fanslow et al., 2007; Fanslow et al., 2008). Notably, rates in rural areas were found to be significantly higher than those in urban areas. In addition, Māori girls were twice as likely to report victimisation as their Pākehā⁹ counterparts (Fanslow et al., 2008). This finding was not, however, borne out by the Christchurch longitudinal study, which found that while Māori children experienced a disproportionate amount of physical abuse and neglect, the same was not true for childhood sexual abuse (Marie et al., 2009). This is in contrast to a substantial body of research which concludes Māori are at a significantly higher risk of *all* forms of child maltreatment (for example see Crengle et al., 2013; Te Puni Kōkiri, 2010). The Christchurch authors speculated their contradictory findings could be due to reporting bias amongst official agencies or sampling error (Marie et al., 2009). However, there are fewer Māori living in the Christchurch region than the national average, which is mirrored in the composition of the longitudinal cohort (Fergusson, 1998).

Other New Zealand studies have uncovered rates of childhood sexual abuse as high as 32% (Anderson et al., 1993). This is supported by longitudinal research which indicates that 13.9 to 30.4% of girls and 2.7 to 6.1% of boys have experienced sexual victimisation prior to the age of sixteen (Fergusson et al., 1996a; 1997; Fergusson et al., 2000; Fergusson et al., 1996b). The difference between upper and lower figures depended on whether reports were taken at age 18 or 21, as well as how abuse was defined (Fergusson et al., 2000).

Outside New Zealand, data supports higher-end claims. For instance, research conducted by the United States' government discovered that 24.7% of girls and 16% of boys — from a total sample size of 17,300 — had been forced to engage in sexual activity with an adult, or someone more than five years older than themselves, prior to reaching the age of consent (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005). Some writers suggest that the variance between studies is so broad as to render them meaningless except as a snapshot in time. To illustrate this point, Kinnear (2007) presents lifetime victimisation rates ranging from 6 to 63% for girls and 3 to 31% for boys. Similarly

⁹ Pākehā is a Māori word that describes non-Māori New Zealanders, typically those with white skin of European ancestry. Pākehā is an ethnic identity and not a racial category, but is the best approximation of 'white New Zealander' available from official statistics.

wide-ranging figures are cited elsewhere (Cowburn, 2002; Pereda et al., 2009). Despite the ambiguity, two general statements can be made. First, that girls are much more frequently abused than boys — with one exception being cases of sexual abuse perpetrated by religious leaders or clergy¹⁰ (Kinnear, 2007). Second, the actual incidence of victimisation is almost certainly higher than realised (Browne, 1994; Finkelhor, 1984; 2008; Goldstein, 1999; Houston & Galloway, 2008; Kinnear, 2007; Seto, 2008; Turton, 2008).

Further difficulties arise when standard avenues for uncovering hidden victimisation are blocked. For a start, most victimisation surveys — including the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey and the New Zealand General Social Survey — exclude almost all crimes against children by only interviewing participants over the age of 15 about experiences within the previous twelve months (Ministry of Justice, 2010; Morris & Reilly, 2003). In an attempt to circumvent the ethical difficulties of interviewing children, some researchers choose to rely on adults' retrospective reporting of abuse. Bromberg and Johnson (2001) used this approach and found childhood victimisation rates of 27% and 16% for girls and boys respectively. Other researchers are wary of relying on the accuracy of adult memories; studies also show a 'substantial proportion' of known childhood abuse is not uncovered through retrospective reporting — with the trend being more evident among men (Fergusson et al., 2000, p. 530).

Finkelhor (2008) argued that childhood sexual abuse is such an important area of focus due to its prevalence compared with adult victimisation. For instance, Baum (2005) calculated 1.3 victims of rape per 1,000 adults compared with 3.2 victims of rape per 1,000 children. This difference is likely due to offenders' propensity to select vulnerable targets, but it corresponded with child victimisation rates for non-sexual crimes cited in the same work. He further argued that cases of child sexual abuse have been decreasing steadily in Western countries since the early 1990s (Finkelhor, 2008). However, these are merely official reports and are subject to corresponding limitations. While some of these criticisms are acknowledged, Finkelhor (2008) suggested the figures showed, 'at least in part', a genuine decrease in occurrence due to a parallel reduction in 'uncontroversial' cases — those involving an admission of guilt or DNA evidence — as well as equivalent increases in other measures of child

¹⁰ This issue is discussed further in chapter 4.

wellbeing (p. 125). However, this decrease seems to be consistent with falling rates of violent crime in many Western countries (for further discussion see LaFree, 1999).

Identifying the offender

It is more difficult to pinpoint, but it is worthwhile exploring the prevalence of offenders themselves. There are three ways this can be addressed. Firstly, the number of child sex offenders as a proportion of overall criminal populations. Secondly, the rate of self-report garnered from the general population. And thirdly, an extrapolation based on rates of victimisation and the known ratio of offenders to victims.

New Zealand statistics show 1,816 men were arrested for sexual assault or similar crimes in 2012, which is slightly higher than the ten-year average of 1,640 per year (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). While no further clarity is provided as to whether these arrests related to adult victims or children, a government report indicates those who abuse children comprise approximately 63% of all incarcerated sex offenders (Nadesu, 2011). Relying on apprehension data makes matters murky; arrest does not always lead to conviction or incarceration, and there is reason to assume a higher attrition rate exists for men who sexually assault adults¹¹. Having said this, current data shows 11.93%¹² of the male prison population were convicted for some sort of sexual offence against a child¹³. A breakdown of these demographics was previously presented in Table 1.b.

The second method, self-report, is fraught with difficulties, most obviously due to denial and minimisation that is common among offending populations (Marshall et al., 1999; Marshall et al., 2006; Seto, 2008; Smallbone et al., 2008; Stinson et al., 2008; Turton, 2008). As some put it, 'sex offenders are remarkably poor historians' (Stinson et al., 2008, p. 19). In addition to a baseline level of dishonesty, there are other possible reasons for memory deficiency: ongoing substance abuse, own experience of childhood trauma, lowered intellectual abilities or mental illness, as well as the mental effects of incarceration or institutionalisation (Marshall et al., 2005; Stinson et al., 2008). Such factors are important when reviewing self-report statistics.

¹¹ For a comprehensive discussion of how adult rape victims are discounted, discredited or not disbelieved see Jordan (2001; 2004).

¹² When both genders were incorporated into calculations, the figure was slightly lower at 11.32%

¹³ Individuals convicted for multiple offences have been counted once under their most serious charge.

One of the earliest self-report studies was conducted by Abel et al. (1987) who interviewed 560 non-incarcerated sex offenders regarding a variety of paraphilic behaviours¹⁴. The men in this sample confessed to *thirty* times more sexual offences — against both children and adults — than they had ever been arrested for (Abel et al., 1987). This indicates the degree to which official statistics must be amplified to reflect actual occurrence, and further indicates that perhaps participants are more honest than given credit for. In addition, this study usefully distinguished between four subgroups: non-incest female victims, non-incest male victims, and incest offenders targeting both genders. As expected, incest perpetrators were more likely to repeatedly target a small number of victims; they had on average 1.75 victims and molested each of them 40.95¹⁵ times (Abel et al., 1987). In contrast, those who offended against male children outside the home tended to do so much more prolifically; these men had a median 4.4 victims each and committed an average of 1.8 offences per victim (Abel et al., 1987). However, they had a *mean* of 150.2 victims indicating that a tiny fraction of perpetrators were responsible for an extraordinarily high number of victims. While some of these figures seem scarcely believable, it is important to remember some men have offending careers that span decades, during which time they will have had access to thousands of possible victims. In contrast, Marshall et al. (1991) found an average of five victims per offender. However, sampling differences meant Abel et al.'s (1987) participants tended to experience higher levels of deviant arousal and had more entrenched offending histories than those investigated by Marshall et al. (1991).

Both of these studies were conducted over two decades ago so more recent research must be examined. Unfortunately, there is not an abundance of self-report studies on this topic and many still cite these landmark studies (for example see Jones et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2010; Schaefer et al., 2010; Ward & Beech, 2005; Ward et al., 2006b). One sample of adolescent sex offenders — aged 12 to 17 — found that in the course of treatment, 53.2% disclosed a previously unknown offence, victim or both (Baker et al., 2001, as cited in Pratley & Goodman-Delahunty, 2011). Crucially, though, this study only included juvenile offenders who may have been more likely to disclose due to lower risk of

¹⁴ As well as child molestation and the rape of adults, this study also interviewed offenders about legal paraphilias like transvestitism, sadism and coprophilia. It is impossible to glean from the article whether 'sex offences' included any acts that have since been legalised. However, the age of consent has not radically changed since 1987 and it is probably safe to conclude the specific data on child sexual abuse is still reliable.

¹⁵ With 36.7 molestations per boy victim to 45.2 molestations per girl victim.

incarceration or less-entrenched denial and minimisation patterns. Additional studies have confirmed that honesty and length of treatment are positively correlated (Handeyside et al., 2007; Langton et al., 2008; Pratley & Goodman-Delahunty, 2011), although this finding could be skewed because offenders who maintain innocence are precluded from entering many treatment programmes in the first instance (Bakker et al., 1998; Hudson et al., 1998).

Research on representative population samples has revealed some surprising and worrying figures. Herman (1990) found between 4% and 7% of adult men had confessed to perpetrating some form of child molestation (as cited in Marshall et al., 2006). Based on a review of McConaghy et al. (1993) and Malamuth (1989), it was claimed that ‘15% of males reveal *some likelihood* of having sex with a child’ (both cited in Marshall et al., 2006, p. 4, [emphasis mine]). More recent research has revealed 15% of men self-report sexual interest in children, compared with 4% of women (Freel, 2003). When viewing numbers like these, it becomes clear just how much abuse is truly hidden from academic scrutiny.

Other research has found child sex offenders tend to be older than both the average sexual and non-sexual offender profile (Dickey et al., 2002; Hall & Hall, 2007). Some studies have suggested adolescents are disproportionately represented as perpetrators but most agree the ‘prominent peak’ in offending occurs after the age of thirty (Harker, 2013; Smallbone et al., 2008, p. 5). This stands in contrast to the usual criminological pattern where offending declines with advancing age (Walters & Bradley, 2005). However, it must be noted that with technological advances over the past two decades — and a corresponding increase in opportunities for offending online¹⁶ — the demographic profile of men who sexually abuse children is getting younger (Babchishin et al., 2011; Neutze et al., 2011). However, this may simply reflect age-related patterns of technology use and may revert over coming generations.

Research has established that most offenders will know their victims prior to abusing them, either as acquaintances or family members (Lievore et al., 2007). Early figures claimed up to 87% of men knew the children they abused (Groth & Birnbaum, 1978). A meta-analytical review concluded that known offenders account for 70% to 90% of all cases, with family members accounting for 30% to

¹⁶ This issue is discussed further in chapter 4.

50% (Finkelhor, 1994). Others have confirmed that child abuse committed by strangers is a ‘comparatively rare’ occurrence, describing the risk as an ‘extreme improbability’ (Philpot, 2009, p. 101). In many ways this makes sense, and reflects the reality for most children where little time is spent unsupervised in the company of strangers.

The significant majority of child sex offenders are white males (Greenfeld, 1997; Lambie & Stewart, 2003; Lievore et al., 2007; Walsh, 2012). While gender remains the most consistent factor, the high proportion of white offenders stands in stark contrast to the racial inequalities evident in other areas of the criminal justice system where minorities are extremely over-represented (Walters & Bradley, 2005). However, there is heated debate about whether this white majority can be deemed *disproportionate*. Approximately 71% of child sex offenders in New Zealand are Pākehā¹⁷, which roughly matches the 74% of the general population who identified as such in the 2013 Census (Statistics New Zealand, 2014)¹⁸. This supports claims that child sex offenders are disproportionately white, relative to other types of offenders and particularly when understood within the context of institutional racism that pervades New Zealand’s justice system as a whole (United Nations, 2014; Workman, 2011). Slightly over half of all prison inmates are Māori, compared with 15% of the general population (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Moreover, the general prison population is only 33% Pākehā¹⁹, which means child sex offenders are more than twice as likely to be white than the average prisoner (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Due to the power and privilege afforded to whiteness in Western societies, this topic has been a taken-for-granted and generally invisible attribute that has not been studied in any depth. However, it is this same privilege that possibly explains the preponderance of white men who perpetrate child sexual abuse. Specifically, white men are more likely to occupy — and, therefore, have the opportunity to exploit — trusted positions of power. Recently, some social commentators have attempted to draw public attention to the issue (Harker, 2013; Walsh, 2012), but further research is needed.

¹⁷ This figure was derived from averaging six offending populations, as listed in Table 2.a.

¹⁸ Some of these people also identified with other ethnic groups; 65% identified exclusively as Pākehā (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

¹⁹ The remaining 16% is predominantly Pasifika or Asian ethnic groups.

It is the premise of this thesis that these characteristics are worthy of examination, in particular the overwhelming and overlooked propensity for offenders to be men. The compelling question becomes whether it is possible to identify facets of male socialisation that may contribute to this particular type of offending.

Table 2.a. Pākehā men as a proportion of different offender groups

%	Group	Source
51	Incarcerated child sex offenders	(Department of Corrections, 2013)
66	Te Piriti prison rehabilitation unit	(Nathan et al., 2003)
85	Kia Mārama prison rehabilitation unit	(Bakker et al., 1998)
71	Auckland community rehabilitation	(Lambie & Stewart, 2012)
74	Wellington community rehabilitation	(Lambie & Stewart, 2012)
79	Christchurch community rehabilitation	(Lambie & Stewart, 2012)

Understanding the offender

To truly understand offenders it is important to look behind the complex and sometimes compelling façade of demographics. Alfred Kinsey's landmark research on male sexual behaviour included a comprehensive examination of so-called 'illicit' sex. Unfortunately, much of the commentary focused on 'sex play' between young boys rather than sexual offences perpetrated by older individuals. There was one reference to child molestation by adult men, and it was couched largely in the context of sexual inadequacy and failure to perform:

Among the older sex offenders who have given histories for the present study, a considerable number insist that they are impotent, and many of them give a history of long-standing impotence. (...) Many of these men are in actuality incapable of erection. The usual professional interpretation describes these offenders as sexually thwarted, incapable of winning attention from older females, and reduced in vain attempts with children who are unable to defend themselves.

(Kinsey et al., 1948, pp. 237-238)²⁰.

Interestingly, the implication was one of failed masculinity; the assumption being that any 'real' man would be capable of intercourse and obtaining a same-age partner. This is noteworthy because it was

²⁰ Kinsey et al. (1948) put forward some problematic ideas in the course of their discussion, and they are not presented here as a reliable resource. One such claim was that 'many a child (...) interprets affection and simple caressing, from anyone except her own parents, as attempts at rape' (p. 238).

not until the 1990s that criminologists began to specifically investigate the role of masculinity in offending, and it was only at the turn of the century that such discussions were applied to child sex offenders (Collier, 2008; Cossins, 2000; Evans & Jamieson, 2008).

Between 1950 and 1970, literature on offender psychology contained a preponderance of falsehoods and victim blaming. Noyes and Kolb (1958), for example, supported the idea that paedophilia was an alternative form of homosexuality (as cited in Mohr et al., 1964). In addition, the absence of force was sometimes erroneously interpreted as consent. One case described the offender as merely ‘roughhousing’ with their victim ‘who evidently provoked it by tickling the offender first’ (Gebhard et al., 1965, p. 788). To their credit, psychologists had started challenging the assumption that sex offenders were motivated by ‘senile dementia’ or were otherwise affected by developmental disability (Gebhard et al., 1965; Karpman, 1954; Mohr et al., 1964, p. 45).

Even by 1981 the issue was still regularly phrased as sexual ‘interest’ in children — as opposed to violation or abuse (Cook & Howells, 1981). Sentiments expressed in this following excerpt were not uncharacteristic of the time period:

In the classic paedophiliac crime the offender is a timid person, usually without adult contacts, childish and immature. In these cases many of the child victims belong to the groups ‘provocative’ or ‘participating’ (...) In the cases where the features of victim precipitation were involved, the offenders had clearly a weaker intelligence than the other paedophiliac offenders.

(Virkkunen, 1981, pp. 122, 124)

Virkkunen (1981) quoted other research, all of which explicitly or implicitly held children accountable for their victimisation. Some claimed the victim would be ‘aggressive and seductive’, or indeed that ‘the child may very well be a willing participant if not instigator of a sexual act with an adult’ (p. 123). This sentiment was taken further with the suggestion that sometimes neither victim nor offender were at fault, but a separate non-offending adult entirely: ‘in incest crimes, the root of the situation in which a girl assumes the mother role in a family, frequently seems to lie in the behaviour of the mother’ (p. 131). This shift from child-blaming to mother-blaming showed a reluctance to hold offenders wholly accountable. It is a mark of progress that this is now considered offensive.

Now regarded as pioneers in the field of child sexual abuse, Groth and Birnbaum (1978) investigated the psychology of a random sample of 175 men convicted of sexual abuse of children.

They were primarily interested in determining offenders' sexual orientation in relation to the gender of chosen victims. This knowledge gave rise to what is now known as the fixated-regressed typology (Groth & Birnbaum, 1978). The fixated offender aligned with clinical notions of paedophilia and was thought to be more difficult to rehabilitate and less likely to know his victim prior to offending. In contrast, the regressed abuser was someone who temporarily or circumstantially reverted from his normal preference for same-age partners. He was also more likely to choose a female victim.

Another early contribution came from Finkelhor (1984) who attempted to address the paucity of empirical research regarding child sexual abuse. His seminal work covered both victims and offenders, and contributed significantly to the development of theoretical analysis. He elucidated the difference between feminist campaigns — which couched the issue of child sexual abuse in terms of rape culture and social control of women — and welfare advocacy groups that viewed the problem in the broader context of child neglect and physical abuse (Finkelhor, 1984). Crucially, he pushed for greater understanding of the people who commit sexual offences against children. It was in this context he proposed what is now known as the precondition model²¹. This piqued the interest of other researchers and paved the way for current aetiological theories, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

²¹ This theoretical model is explained under multi-factor theories in chapter 3.

3. EXPLANATIONS FOR OFFENDING

There are numerous theories put forward to explain what causes someone to sexually abuse children. This summary is by no means exhaustive, but will explain the most prominent single- and multi-factor theories. In addition to these broad categories, Ward et al. (2006b) have recognised the emergence of ‘theory knitting’ whereby researchers integrate the most successful aspects of existing models and present it as a revamped framework.

Single-factor theories

Put simply, these models focus on one element of the offence process at the exclusion of all others. Cognitive distortions, lack of victim empathy, deviant sexual arousal and intimacy deficits are some of the aspects explored within these models. Others include poor parent-child²² relationships, personality deficits, sexual immaturity and disinhibition (Seto, 2008).

Cognitive distortions

Abel et al. (1984) were among the first to report that child sex offenders commonly justified and rationalised their offending. Their landmark study compared a sample of child molesters with non-offending paraphiliacs, and with a control group of men who had neither offended nor experienced deviant sexual arousal. Bandura’s (1969; 1977) social learning theory postulated that ‘cognitive mediation’ enables and facilitates all human behaviour (Abel et al., 1989, p. 138). This led to an understanding that distorted cognition was what permitted sex offenders to engage in deviant behaviour without internal repercussion²³. Their study confirmed that — when measured against a pre-selected set of statements — child sexual offenders could be easily distinguished from the general population and non-offending paraphiliacs by the nature of their cognitive distortions. They measured a range of offence justifications such as: ‘a child who does not physically resist an adult’s sexual advances really wants to have sex’, ‘having sex with a child is a good way for an adult to teach the child about sex’, and ‘it is better to have sex with your child than to have an affair’ (Abel et al., 1989, p. 150).

²² Between the offender and his own parents.

²³ Many years later, Bandura (1999) investigated the process of moral disengagement that permits humans to perpetrate inhumanities and atrocities.

Early research by Barbaree (1991) found evidence of cognitive distortions, denial or minimisation in 98% of cases (as cited in Marshall et al., 1999). They noticed that offenders refused to take responsibility, attributed fault to other people, blamed intoxicating substances, and downplayed the nature and impact of their behaviour (Gannon & Polaschek, 2006; Gannon et al., 2007; Jones, 2008; Marshall et al., 1999). It is interesting to reflect how some of these offence-supportive beliefs resonate with victim-blaming attitudes held by professionals decades earlier. Abel et al. (1984) also discovered that offence-supportive beliefs would become more entrenched over time. It has since been noted that some offenders claim to have forgotten their wrongdoings altogether (Marshall et al., 2005). But while some may have experienced genuine memory loss — due to intoxication or similar — most would simply be in a state of denial (Seto, 2008).

Harris (1991) argued it was human instinct to filter incoming information to support and affirm one's own behaviour, and that a child molester was no different — varying only in the content of his thoughts (as cited in Marshall et al., 1999). Collie et al. (2005) suggested that men who had sexually abused children only showed poor empathy as a result of their cognitive distortions, rather than it being symptomatic of any biological deficit. These observations highlighted the difficulty of examining single aetiological factors in isolation; human behaviour operates as a cohesive and interrelated system and not as a series of separate character traits.

Since its conception, the theory of distorted cognitive processing has been expanded and critiqued by many writers (Covell & Scalora, 2002; Gannon et al., 2007; Jones, 2008; Langton & Marshall, 2000; Marshall et al., 1999; Ward, 2009; Wood & Riggs, 2009). The topic has been further divided into subcategories of minimisation, justification, denial, and evasion of truth (Langton et al., 2008). More recently, Ward (2009) proposed changing the parameters of cognition because 'the boundaries of the mind *extend beyond* the boundaries of skull and skin, and into the world beyond' (Ward, 2009, p. 248, [emphasis in original]). His ultimate goal was to tailor treatment to utilise the role of therapists in offenders' extended minds (Ward, 2009). While this concept has merit, it somewhat obfuscated the interaction between individual and environment. Such ideas are already incorporated into some treatment modalities despite not being articulated (for example see Langton & Marshall, 2000). The most important contribution of Ward's (2009) theory was to recognise cognitive

distortions were not rigidly applied to all social environments but could change according to external influences.

Other research has explained that distortions vary according to how credible the offender can make himself appear to others. Jones (2008) described this as an attempt to increase social desirability using a combination of self-deception and impression management. Self-deception relates to internal denial while impression management describes how someone can deceive others about their trustworthiness, honesty or integrity. Child sex offenders have been shown to have higher levels of impression management than men who sexually offend against adults (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2000; Nugent & Kroner, 1996; both cited in Jones, 2008; Vanhoeck & Van Daele, 2011). Moreover, they were more skilled at faking socially-acceptable behaviour, particularly when they felt it advantageous to mask offence-supportive cognitive distortions (Gannon & Polaschek, 2005, as cited in Jones, 2008).

Social desirability could similarly be used to discredit a victim's version of events, and this could further reinforce an offender's own distorted thinking about victims initiating the offence. Vanhoeck and Van Daele (2011) wondered whether 'social desirability may be more likely to be a deep-set enduring defensive response, rather than a temporary behavioural strategy' (p. 358). This implied that denial and minimisation were cognitive distortions in their own right instead of overt manipulation strategies. Nonetheless, distinguishing between explicit and implicit behaviour can be difficult. It is not always possible to verify if an offender is knowingly and wilfully behaving in a self-interested manner, or merely acting in accordance with faulty thinking.

Hanson and Bussière (1998) conducted a meta-analysis of factors associated with recidivism and discovered that levels of denial did not actually correlate with sexual recidivism, although it did have a weak but significant association with general recidivism. However, a distinction must be drawn between causative factors that trigger initial offending, and enabling or maintenance factors that permit offending to continue. While some will have crossover influence, others — in this case denial — may solely produce primary offending. It is also possible that the ability to avoid detection following initial offending will embolden individuals to commit further abuse. Ward et al. (2012) argued that isolating certain skills for treatment was not necessarily constructive or even conducive to rehabilitation. Instead, they stressed importance of whole-life competence rather than honing specific

traits. Hanson and Bussière's (1998) meta-analysis was specifically criticised for its failure to 'reduce the variation in operationalisations of denial' (Langton et al., 2008, p. 71). This referred to the fact that denial was defined differently within each chosen study; some excluded outright deniers and others erroneously classified denial as a 'thinking error' rather than affording denial its own category.

In response, Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2005) undertook a further meta-analysis and concluded that denial was a 'potentially misleading risk factor' (p. 1158, as cited in Langton et al., 2008, p. 71) for reoffending. Nonetheless, this did not preclude it being a crucial component of initial offending. In this regard, cognitive distortions can be said to shape how someone views the world, rather than being post-hoc justifications for behaviour. Ward and Keenan (1999) explained that 'people do not have direct access to reality but, rather, construct the world mentally'; it was said to be this construction which 'guides their actions and interpretations' of how others behave (p. 824). Based on this understanding, it would be possible for different people exposed to the same information to reach legitimate yet disparate conclusions about a given situation. For example, two people could believe humans are inherently sexual beings; one may conclude this extends to children but the other does not. While normal childhood development often includes sexualised play or physical exploration, what remains important is how adults respond to this.

Ward and Keenan (1999) also advanced the notion of implicit theories. These were underlying beliefs that served to justify distorted cognitive processing, and were said to be based on how someone interpreted their place in the world. They included beliefs of children as sexual objects, a sense of entitlement, perceptions of a dangerous world, uncontrollability of self, and minimised perceptions of the nature of harm (Ward & Keenan, 1999). Implicit theories facilitated a comprehensive understanding of what triggers and enables child sexual abuse, but it was not clear why and how such theories become entrenched. The authors illustrated some of the complex processes involved:

Consistently rejecting and indifferent parenting may result in the acquisition of a dismissive attachment style and an associated internal working model stressing the importance of personal independence and an avoidance of emotions. Such individuals may develop an exaggerated sense of self-entitlement and find it difficult to appreciate other people's points of view. Some maladaptive beliefs may be culturally entrenched and their manifestation in cultural products, such as films, television shows, and books, provide an alternative source of information

concerning the role of deviant sexual preferences in human activities. Arguably, patriarch societies legitimise male dominance over females and children and, therefore, provide reinforcement for implicit theories that stress male entitlement. (Ward & Keenan, 1999, pp. 835-836).

Of all implicit theories, entitlement carries the most overt gender connotations. Masculinity is frequently constructed around the notion that men are entitled to occupy space, to speak freely, and to act without hindrance (for example see AskMen, 2011; Clifton, 2014). Ward and Keenan (1999) thought victim-specific implicit theories encapsulated both belief and desire. For example, an individual may have superimposed their entitled desire for sex over their belief that children are subordinates. This could then distort their cognitive processing so they justified using children for sexual purposes. This cognitive distortion would then be said to have arisen from two implicit theories: sense of entitlement and a view of children as inherently sexual. Ward and Keenan (1999) commented: 'because of their superior [male] status such individuals have the right to assert their needs above others and expect that this will be acknowledged and agreed to by those who are judged to be less important' (p. 828).

Empathy deficits

Other single factor theories have argued lack of empathy is the core factor in sexual offending (Bumby, 2000; Covell & Scalora, 2002; Simons et al., 2002). Whether learned or biologically dictated, the ability to perceive, understand and relate to the emotions of another person is a vital part of life and social interaction. While it is rare for child sex offenders to show insufficient levels of general empathy, their ability to empathise with children, and more specifically their victims, has been shown to be lacking (Bumby, 2000; Mandeville-Norden & Beech, 2004; Marshall et al., 1999).

Marshall et al. (1995) articulated four stages of empathy development which were distorted or entirely absent within child sex offenders: emotional recognition in others; the ability to grasp another's perspective; replicating that perception; and enacting an empathic response (as cited in Ward et al., 2006b). While this factor is definitely a feature of child sex offenders' psychology, a meta-analysis found empathy deficit had no bearing on sexual recidivism and — as with denial — was only very slightly related to non-sexual reoffending (Hanson & Bussière, 1998). However, this does not mean empathy deficits are unimportant. Evidence is that poor victim empathy remains an

established and important pathway to initial offending (Seto, 2008; Ward et al., 2006b). Its relevance depends on whether one is focused on preventing offending in the first instance or reducing recidivism. While both initial and subsequent offending are important areas to address, the latter is more crucial for the development of rehabilitation programmes.

At this juncture, it is worth noting the considerable overlap between deficits in empathy, intimacy, attachment styles and self-esteem. Bowlby (1969; 1973; 1980) first developed attachment theory as a psychological concept (as cited in Jones, 2008). He described the process wherein secure attachment is nurtured through childhood protection, positive parental bonding and safe early relationships. He theorised early exposure to trauma would adversely affect how individuals developed, and could cause emotionally distant attachment styles or more general difficulties sustaining interpersonal connections. Craissati et al. (2002) found 46% of child molesters²⁴ were sexually abused as children, and only 18% had no history of physical or sexual abuse, or emotional neglect. The authors found sexually-victimised perpetrators were more dysfunctional overall, and were 'significantly poorer at making spontaneous attempts to take another's perspective and were less able to handle negative emotional experiences' (Craissati et al., 2002, p. 233). Jones (2008) explained how insecure attachment may render some men unable to form romantic relationships with same-age partners. Such findings may have implications for individuals who negatively experience societal expectations of masculinity.

Hanson (2003) argued low victim empathy arose from indifferent personal relationships and poor early bonding — particularly the inability to adopt someone else's perspective, and inadequate response to the perceived distress of another. Current thinking on secure early attachment relationships confirms this:

[It provides] the developmental foundation for acquiring key mechanisms of self-restraint, namely: a) the capacity to autonomously regulate emotions, especially intense negative emotions; b) empathy and perspective taking; c) the adoption of a cooperative, rather than a coercive, orientation to influencing others; and d) the translation of moral reasoning to moral action. (...) Insecure early attachment experiences are linked to later aggressive and opportunistic sexual

²⁴ Their sample comprised 178 men convicted for child sexual abuse, having previously excluded any with severe mental illness diagnosis.

behaviour through weak self-restraint and through the incorporation of sexual behaviour into a broader orientation towards social and interpersonal behaviour.
(Smallbone et al., 2008, pp. 30-31).

This excerpt implies insecure attachment or empathy deficits may produce cognitive distortions that undermine the ability to form stable relationships with other adults — perhaps even an extension of dangerous world theory. This theoretical overlap again highlights the weakness of single-factor theories.

Collie et al. (2005) argued that men who sexually abused children typically displayed inadequate empathy *as a result of* their distorted belief that the victim was not harmed, rather than it being symptomatic of any innate incapacity for empathic feeling. This was also suggested by Covell and Scalora (2002). The ability to perceive another's point of view is necessary to successfully deceive others, and deception is a crucial component of most abuse. This could be one way that undetected — and therefore unresearched — offenders differ from those who have been identified. As Sneyd (2000) pointed out, being a good liar requires an awareness of what other people will believe and how they will respond to any fabricated stories. Research by Simons et al. (2002) has also supported the victim-specific nature of empathy deficits among child sex offenders. They found that men who had early exposure to pornographic material²⁵ displayed even further deficits in their ability to understand the perspective of their child victims. The presence of such desensitising experiences suggested low empathy could arise from or be worsened by life circumstances.

It is also possible that behavioural problems common to child sex offenders — including use of alcohol and drugs — may exacerbate low empathy. For example, a depressed offender would already have a well-established inward and egocentric focus that, when fuelled by substance abuse, could result in an inability to feel empathy. Interestingly, elevated rates of alcohol and drug abuse have been correlated with sexual abuse against both adults and children (Watt & Withington, 2011). In turn, this could exacerbate pre-existing intimacy deficits seen when men identify more closely with children. Alcohol or drug consumption is also cited in many multi-factor theories, namely for its ability to reduce internal inhibitors in both offender and victim (for example see Finkelhor, 1984). Hall and Hirschman (1992) also included substance abuse within the scope of poor self-regulation strategies —

²⁵ Unspecified if this was adult or child pornography.

one component of their quadripartite model. Others have suggested that alcohol is used to maintain cognitive distortions by shutting out rational thinking or a guilty conscience (Vanhoeck & Van Daele, 2011).

It is also important to understand how alcohol or drug use may differ between child and adult sexual abuse. A prominent rape myth for adults ascribes participant blame according to intoxication levels; drunkenness simultaneously renders male attackers as less blameworthy and female victims more so (Stone, 2013; Wenger & Bornstein, 2006). Supposedly alcohol leaves men at the mercy of animalistic desire yet makes women vulnerable to inevitable assault, which they clearly should have known to avoid (for example see Molloy, 2013). It is unlikely such victim-blaming extends to children, as they are comparatively protected by their 'perfect victim' status (Davidson, 2008; Nandy, 1984; Robinson, 2008; Warner, 1995). However, alcohol consumption in New Zealand is distinctly gendered, with beer consumption a hallmark of masculinity (Campbell et al., 1999; Hardy, 2007; Phillips, 1987). In addition, Mosher and Sirkin (1984) reported hypermasculine personalities were significantly correlated with higher levels of substance abuse, and reflected stronger beliefs in danger as exciting. Accordingly, it will be important to explore participants' narratives in light of reported intoxication and perceived culpability, as well as how both these factors relate to intimacy or empathy deficits, self-esteem measures, and attachment styles.

Deviant sexual arousal

A further single-factor theory has focused on deviant sexual arousal. Studies have found offenders who pair deviant fantasies with frequent masturbation were more likely to have started abusing children earlier, and to report more victims throughout their offending careers (Marshall et al., 1991). However, only 21.7% of Marshall et al.'s (1991) sample reported deviant fantasies prior to sexually abusing their first child. The authors speculated that such deviance could have 'entrenched and maintained a sexual interest in children *subsequent* to the first offence' (p. 334, [emphasis in original]). Given this, treatment programmes with modules on arousal reconditioning may be more helpful at lowering recidivism among participants.

Other studies found men who sexually abuse children were more likely to use sex as a coping strategy (Marshall & Marshall, 2000). Masturbation can be repeatedly and reliably used as a source of

comfort and, unlike drugs or alcohol, carries no immediate negative repercussions. As behaviour learning theory dictates, the coupling of a stimulus — in this case sexual contact with a child — with a positive physiological response — orgasm, erection or ejaculation — causes intense reinforcement of this deviant stimulus. The tendency of offenders to use maladaptive masturbation is recognised and targeted by treatment methodologies throughout the world. It is also important to consider these matters in light of societal attitudes that endorse hypersexual displays of masculinity.

Treatment that targets deviant arousal is largely based on classical conditioning principles. One approach, called aversion therapy, pairs deviant arousal with repulsive experiences or pain — such as the smell of rotting meat, electric shocks or ammonia salts. Alternatively, desensitisation is taught, based on principles of operant conditioning. This time an offender must masturbate to non-deviant thoughts until orgasm is reached and, when arousal is at its lowest ebb, must masturbate to deviant images. In studies, these techniques successfully and gradually reduced the intensity of and predilection towards deviant sexual arousal (Ward et al., 2006b).

Smid et al. (2011) queried the way deviance was defined. They debated whether any useful distinction could be made between unusual, illegal, distressing, compulsive, strange or fetishised sexual arousal. They concluded the most useful definition would focus on any sexual fantasies that fuelled sexual offending against children — whether they were fantasies about non-consensual partners or individuals under the age of sixteen. However, this came with a caveat that attraction to underage children was not uncommon; penile plethysmography²⁶ assessments found arousal response in 20% of ‘normal’ adults presented with sexualised images of children under twelve (Smid et al., 2011). While the authors clarified arousal was only one step in the motivational chain, they said someone with no sexual arousal towards children would be ‘highly unlikely’ to ever molest a child (p. 177).

Barbaree (1989) described how deviant arousal manifested in child sex offenders. His review found consistent results: men who molested non-related children were more likely to report deviant sexual arousal towards children, compared with both non-offenders and incestuous offenders. Interestingly, this group also reported strong sexual arousal to adults. However, incest offenders showed lower levels of arousal towards children yet also registered overall lower arousal toward adults.

²⁶ For discussion of this metric, along with possible limitations, refer to Merdian and Jones (2011).

In addition, they found men with predominantly child-centric arousal patterns were more likely to have used force in their offending and more likely to have abused a larger number of victims. While trends were evident, Barbaree (1989) iterated the heterogeneity of arousal patterns amongst child molesters as a group, and cautioned against generalisations in this regard.

Sexual deviancy is also a component of many multi-factor theories, including Hall and Hirschman's (1992) quadripartite model and Finkelhor's (1984) precondition model²⁷. Finkelhor (1984) suggested deviant arousal would be acted upon only when self-control diminished. In some respects, the relevance of sexual deviancy cannot be understated. Even if only a subset of offenders experience deviant arousal²⁸, sexual pleasure is a powerful conditioning force and, therefore, establishes habitual behaviour that is difficult to extinguish. In other words, for a particular subset of child molesters, deviant sexual fantasies may exert disproportionate influence on their offending. Intriguingly, research found that self-esteem increase was associated with deviant sexual arousal decrease (Marhsall et al., 1997, as cited in Ireland & Craig, 2011).

Ward and Siegert (2002) also incorporated deviant sexual arousal into their pathways theory²⁹. They explained how sexual offenders' arousal patterns could deviate in three respects: choosing age-disparate partners, indulging in sadistic behaviour, or having anonymous or impersonal sexual encounters. They considered deviant sexual arousal to result from an offender's own childhood experience of abuse. At first it may seem more reasonable for men abused in childhood to have an enhanced awareness of what it is like to suffer through sexual violation, and a corresponding abhorrence of inflicting such pain on other children. However, in reality this empathic response would only occur if they had dealt with their own victimisation; it could not be true for those who unconsciously repeated the cycle of abuse.

²⁷ Both of these models are discussed in more detail later in chapter 3.

²⁸ Marshall et al. (1991) reported between 25% and 50% of child molesters would develop strong deviant sexual interests by the age of 18. Variance was based on offence type as well as victim gender.

²⁹ This model is discussed later in chapter 3.

Multi-factor theories

Multi-factor explanatory models examine various factors contributing to sexual offending — personal, cultural, familial — and tend to base their assumptions on empirical research. They also incorporate many of the single-factors discussed already. Finkelhor's (1984) precondition model was arguably the most influential (Browne, 1994; Ward et al., 2006b). He isolated four circumstances necessary for sexual offending to occur. Foremost, men needed to be motivated to abuse children. This motivation could be threefold: emotional congruence³⁰ with children, deviant sexual arousal and blockage of otherwise adaptive responses to stress. Secondly, internal inhibitors had to be removed. This could happen consciously — e.g. the offender decided to become intoxicated — or unintentionally — e.g. as a result of psychosis. Thirdly, external inhibitors needed to be eliminated. This meant the offender needed to remove environmental barriers to offending, e.g. distracting parents so they would leave children unsupervised. Finally, any resistance from the victim had to be challenged and overcome (Finkelhor, 1984). Ward et al. (2006b) praised the precondition model for its clear framework and theoretical richness, but also argued this was its weakness. They also exposed its failure to explain why 'non-sexual needs such as emotional congruence or blockage are expressed sexually' (Ward et al., 2006b, p. 324). Despite such criticisms, the broad concepts of Finkelhor's precondition model remain useful and relevant.

Marshall and Barbaree's (1990) integrated theory focused on the origin and maintenance of sexual offending against children. It has been described as a framework that 'integrates biological vulnerabilities and adverse early experiences (...) in the development of social skills deficits and self-regulation problems' (Seto, 2008, p. 76). Theirs was one of the few aetiological theories to mention gender at all. It discussed the male disposition towards highly-sexed behaviour and physical aggression. Offending was specifically framed on a spectrum of resilience to vulnerability (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Ward, 2002). Resilience was said to encompass the way that offending was resisted — through skills, attributes, values and beliefs; vulnerability referred to weakness and the propensity to

³⁰ While Finkelhor (1984) used the word congruence himself, it might be better replaced with 'affinity' since congruence carries positive connotations; ideally, such meaning should not be associated with sexual grooming or abuse of children.

abuse children — arising from insecure attachment, faulty problem solving and a sense of reduced autonomy. For example, a young boy subjected to physical discipline at home would learn early in life that the world was dangerous and unforgiving. This might then cause him to express less emotion, thereby laying the foundation for an antisocial mindset. In turn, this would prevent the child from ever learning social controls regarding sex or aggression. Supposedly, he ‘may later find it difficult to discriminate between sexual and aggressive impulses and inclinations (...) because they originate on the same neural substrates’ (Ward, 2002, pp. 213-214). According to integrated theory, pubertal development is fraught with vulnerabilities and potential pitfalls.

While integrated theory does examine socialisation to an extent, it risks being too reliant on biological explanations. Ward and Siegert (2002) were correct to claim this model has led to innovative treatment targeting developmental adversity. Despite offering such praise, these authors conceded the focus on aggression was misleading and risked overlooking other pathways to offending.

Hall and Hirschman (1992) proposed the quadripartite model to explain sexual offending against children. This was an expansion of their similarly-named theory of adult rape published the previous year (Hall & Hirschman, 1991). It arose from rejection of the ‘one size fits all’ nature of previous theories, and aimed to recognise and accommodate the heterogeneity of child sex offenders (Hall & Hirschman, 1992; Ward et al., 2006b). It comprised four core aspects that drew on individual mindset as well as environment — the theory being that the unique interaction of these factors would trigger sexual offending against children. The components were physiological arousal, emotional dysregulation, cognition that justified sexual violence, and some form of personality problem (Hall & Hirschman, 1992; Ward & Siegert, 2002). The first three aspects were situational, while personality was viewed in terms of ongoing risk (Ward & Beech, 2005). What set this aetiological theory apart from its predecessors was its ability to adapt to specific offenders by locating one of the four factors as a primary driving influence. This led to the establishment of a new typology:

For the first subtype of sexual aggressor, psychological sexual arousal would be the primary motivational precursor. This subtype often is described in physiological models of sexual aggression and may be the most frequent of all subtypes. (...) The second subtype is characterised by a cognitive primary motivational precursor for sexual aggression. (...) For example, a perpetrator may inaccurately perceive that a prospective victim would enjoy the sexually aggressive act. (...) A negative affect is the primary motivational precursor of the third subtype. The sexually

aggressive act typical of this subtype is opportunistic and unplanned, rather than deliberate, compulsive and controlled as in the second subtype. (...) The primary motivational precursor of the fourth subtype of sexual aggressor is developmentally-related personality problems or disorders (...) including intellectual impairment, family conflicts, childhood physical or sexual victimisation, emotional difficulties, poor social skills, substance abuse and poor adult adjustment. (Hall & Hirschman, 1992, pp. 14-20).

Despite its merit for application in a range of circumstances, the quadripartite framework has dropped from favour in recent years, and has been heavily criticised for its excessive complexity (Ward et al., 2006b). For the most part, simpler theories attained popularity over more nuanced models. Ward et al. (2006b) argued the quadripartite succeeded where other theories had failed — by addressing the diversity of child sex offenders. This argument seems to have merit; if sexual offending against children could be simplified to one or two factors it would be far easier to pre-empt.

Descriptive models

Descriptive models were considerably more complex than their predecessors. For example, Ward et al.'s (1998) offence chain theory incorporated cognitive, behavioural, motivational and contextual aspects of the offence process. Their framework was rather convoluted and is best explained with supporting illustrations. They began by adapting Carver and Scheier's (1981; 1990) theory of self-regulation (as cited in Ward et al., 1998). Self-regulation theory described three psychological levels that would, ideally, work in harmony: the systemic level — relating to ideology and social messages; the principle control level — governing morals and guiding behaviour; and the script level — dealing with particular actions and behaviour. Self-regulation theory outlined reasons why these levels would cease harmonious interaction: unregulated behaviour such as excessive drinking, misguided strategies to cope such as masturbatory self-soothing, or *over* self-regulation where inappropriate behaviour is reframed as acceptable (Ward et al., 1998).

An overview of the offence chain is depicted in Figure 3.a. At the top sit any background factors that have shaped the offender's life. The theory described how an offender would take a positive or negative route to the next stage. The planning stage involved covert, opportunistic or explicit grooming methods. The offender then moved to initiating non-sexual contact with a victim. During the fourth stage the offender reframed their relationship with the victim, and during the fifth

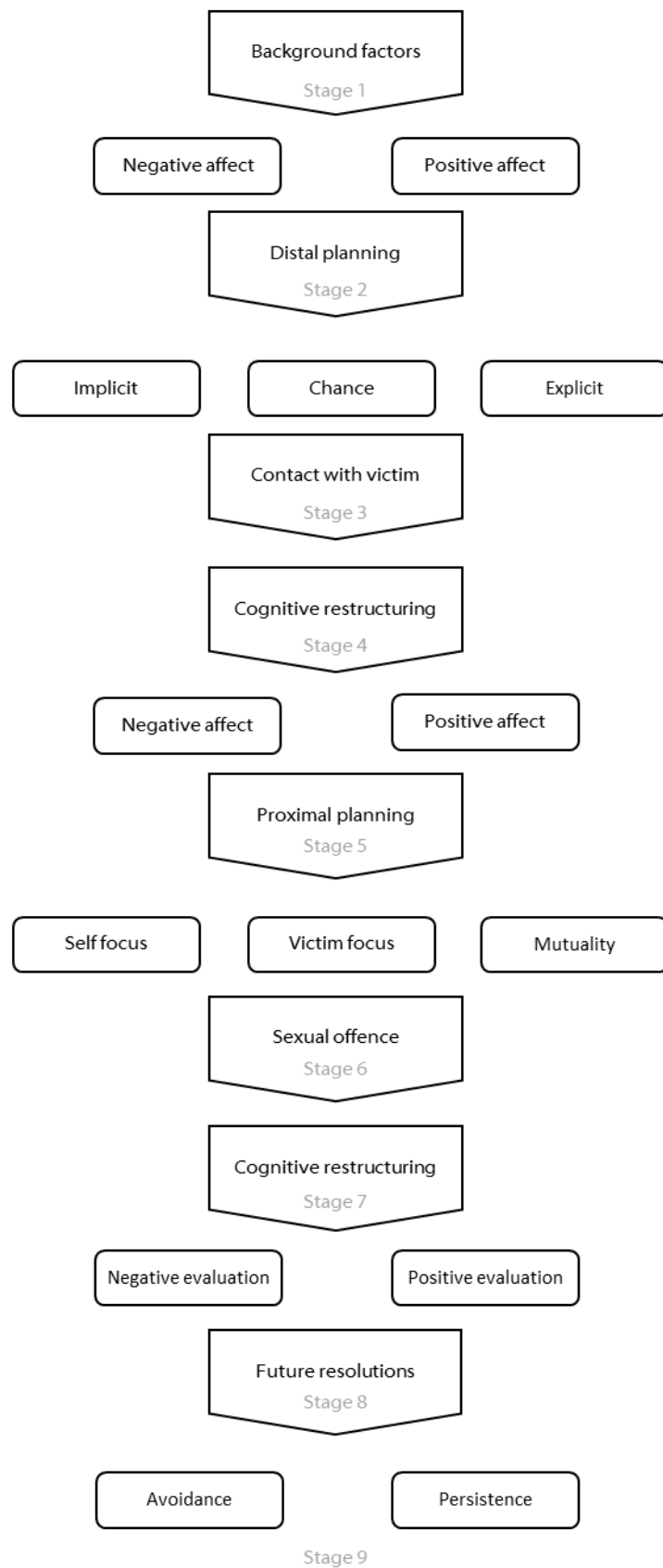
they set up the offence; stage six was the offence itself. The final three stages involved positive or negative cognitive restructuring — where cognitive distortions came into play — followed by decisions about whether to reoffend (Hudson et al., 1999; Ward & Hudson, 1998). Later, Ward and Siegert (2002) incorporated what they saw as successful aspects of several previous theories:

Finkelhor's theory neatly links offenders' psychological vulnerabilities with the offence process, Hall and Hirschman comprehensively address the issue of typology, while Marshall and Barbaree convincingly describe the way developmental adversity can result in vulnerability to sexually abuse a child. It would be a waste of intellectual resources to simply dismiss these theories as inadequate and start from scratch.

(Ward & Siegert, 2002, p. 330).

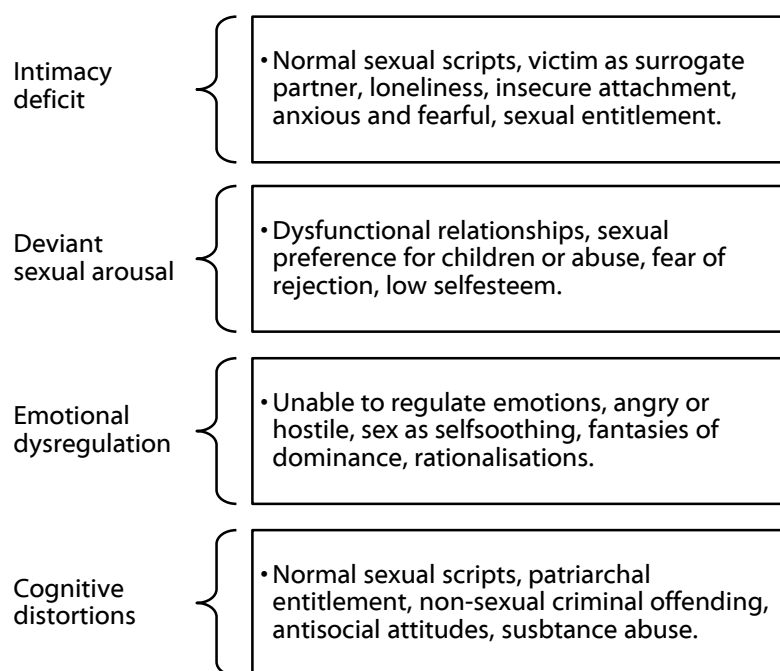
This 'theory knitting' accommodated a range of potential issues: developmental difficulties, cultural and social systems, individual psychology, family factors, plus biological and environmental variables (Ward & Siegert, 2002, p. 319). They argued that four vulnerabilities made men susceptible to sexually abusing children: emotional dysregulation, deviant sexual arousal, intimacy deficits, and antisocial attitudes or cognitive distortions (Gannon et al., 2012; Ward & Siegert, 2002). Each of these constituted a pathway to offending, and was often associated with other traits or behaviours. These have been summarised in Figure 3.b. There was also a fifth pathway to describe offenders who demonstrated all four vulnerabilities. For the most part, however, a prominent vulnerability could be identified (Connolly, 2004; Gannon et al., 2012; Hudson et al., 1999).

Figure 3.a. Stages of the offence chain



(adapted from Hudson et al., 1999).

Figure 3.b. Four main pathways to offending



(adapted from Hudson et al., 1999).

Feminist theories

Over the past fifty years, the feminist movement has addressed and challenged deep-rooted misconceptions regarding violence against women and children. Despite commendable advances in this respect, aetiological theories of child sexual abuse still frame gender as an afterthought — if referenced at all. The primary focus remains on individual psychology. This is possibly because rehabilitating specific people is deemed easier than repairing structural problems within society. It may also be because blaming other individuals is less threatening than examining one's own complicity in perpetuating harmful social structures. Ward et al. (2006b) commented on the 'disagreement within the broad range of feminist literature regarding how [cultural] processes work in relation to child sexual abuse' (p. 168). However, disagreement does not render the contribution worthless. Feminists broadly agree on one point: patriarchal oppression of women and children has created conditions that allow individual men to sexually abuse women and children.

Competing feminist perspectives have also been categorised by chronology. First wave feminism focused on the struggle for women's suffrage and fought to overturn legal barriers that prevented women from fully participating in society. However, this was not a unified battle and some saw suffrage as a right only due to white women. For example, Carrie Catt played an integral role in

agitating for women's voting rights in the United States; she appealed to Southern states to ratify the nineteenth constitutional amendment by reminding them: 'white supremacy will be strengthened, not weakened, by women's suffrage' (Associated Press, 1996, p. 1). It is important to acknowledge that similarly racist sentiments persisted during subsequent waves of feminism, but a full discussion of these matters is outside the scope of this thesis³¹.

Friedan's (1963) publication, *The Feminine Mystique*, is often credited as the starting point of second wave feminism — alternatively known as radical feminism. In it she advocated social and cultural equality for women, particularly emancipation from the restrictive roles of mother and housewife. Radical feminists argued that child sexual abuse was merely another facet of patriarchal oppression that had to be dismantled (MacLeod & Saraga, 1988; Purvis & Ward, 2006; Ward et al., 2006b). However, there was some internal confusion in this regard. For instance, Smart (1989) argued that increasing the age of consent from 13 to 16 would be another way in which men controlled and regulated the bodies of women and children³². If anything, this claim actually undermined her own argument. If men desired to subjugate children's bodies by sexually violating them, then *increasing* the age of consent would have been counterintuitive.

The radical perspective has been criticised for its oversimplification of power dynamics. Ward et al. (2006b) believed power should 'be understood in terms of who has power over whom, why and how this changes over circumstances in time' (Ward et al., 2006b, p. 171). However, radical feminism never claimed otherwise. It was chiefly focused on *institutional* power as expressed by individuals, not on micro-level interactions; that some individual men were powerless over some individual women is moot. Alternative criticisms have debated the existence of society-wide expressions of patriarchal violence given not all men abuse children. Brownmiller (1975) countered this by highlighting the tyranny of fear, and how the actions of a few dangerous men served to control the lives of all women and children. Having said this, radical feminism was not without flaws. It did well to highlight men's proprietary attitudes, but it glossed over substantive differences in the social

³¹ For further information, refer to Breines (2006), Simons (1979), Suleyman (2014) and Ware (1992).

³² In addition to the sexual violation of adult women.

roles of women and children. One of its most important contributions was to enhance understanding of the nuclear family's role in structuring and perpetuating gender roles:

The commonly found perceptions of and socialisation of male and female children serves patriarchal ends. Infant daughters are rated as soft, fine featured and small; sons are rated as hard, large featured and attentive. Parents tend to expect sons to display physical strength and aggressiveness, and expect daughters to be weaker and less assertive. (...) By the time children are aged three or four, they apply these gender role distinctions to themselves. (...) Social norms concerning male sexuality assume that men should prefer smaller and younger sexual objects. Consequently, a sexual relationship between fathers and daughters has more in common with adult heterosexual relationships than would a mother-son relationship. (...) The female child, being both a *female* and a *child*, occupies a position at the bottom of the authority structure.

(Solomon, 1992, pp. 476-477, [emphasis in original]).

In this way, radical feminism succeeded in framing sexual abuse as 'an extension of socially normative behaviour between men and women' (Bolen, 2003, p. 174). Postmodern feminism built on this knowledge by rejecting the dichotomy of gender. However, in its own right postmodernism was more of a critical framework and did not posit original theories to explain why men sexually abuse children.

Liberal or third wave feminism entered the criminological discourse with the work of Anne Cossins (1999; 2000). She proposed an overhaul of radicalism while still acknowledging the intellectual context it had usefully provided. Cossins (1999; 2000) hypothesised that men who engaged in sexual behaviour with children would have experienced powerlessness in their own relationships; the act of offending was thought to be overcompensation for this perceived weakness. This bore similarity to Connell's (1995) notion of marginalised masculinity, which described men who were physically violent to overcompensate for social and cultural powerlessness (as cited in Connell, 2005). Around this time, researchers also started to explore whether perpetrators of child sexual abuse would display more masculine or feminine gender role characteristics (Allen & Pothast, 1994; Pothast & Allen, 1994; Solomon, 1992).

Since Cossins (2000) proposed her power/powerlessness theory, others have challenged the suggestion that aberrant sexual behaviour, particularly that perpetrated against children, could be associated with normative masculinity (Purvis & Ward, 2006; Ward et al., 2006b). Logically, any potential for masculinity affirmation could be negated by subsequent social hostility and condemnation,

and this is likely given society's revulsion of child sexual abuse compared with the myths that endorse rape against adult women. However, the enactment of gender roles is not necessarily rational or consciously articulated, and the process is likely to be significantly more complex — and potentially contradictory — than first appearance indicates.

To reject the connection between child sexual abuse and normative masculinity would involve accepting one of two alternative explanations. Either there is something essential in the nature of men that makes them more likely to sexually abuse children, or the men who do sexually abuse children have some significant deviance or disturbance. In respect of this first position, Freel (2003) warned against individualising what is predominantly 'a social issue concerning the construction of masculinity and male sexuality' (p. 484). Furthermore, the infantilisation of adult women and the sexualisation of children could also be said to constitute a distinct rape culture in respect of children (for example see Durham, 2009; Jensen, 2010; NSPCC, 2011). Cossins (2000) also rejected the relevance of individual psychology and biological functionality — an approach criticised by Ward et al. (2006b). Cossins (2000) explained that theories 'based on essentialist assumptions about male sexuality will have questionable validity' because they were 'underpinned by cultural assumptions about male and female behaviour' (p. 42). Doing this, she said, amounted to 'excusing rather than finding answers to the problem' (p. 42). Fine (2010) has also criticised the extent to which gender differences could be explained by biology. She suggested that such explanations could promote 'damaging, limiting [and] potentially self-fulfilling stereotypes' (p. 174). She cited several studies which found inadvertent gender socialisation practices even from parents who had adopted a 'gender-neutral' approach to raising children. She contended that very few innate differences existed between male and female; in most cases, differences could be explained by unequal socialisation which began 'even before conception' (Fine, 2010, p. 196).

There is truth to these claims, just as there is something unsettling about the inference that men are simply born with the propensity for rape and violence. Cossins (2000) is correct; no explanation for offending can exist independently from culture, even those with seemingly exclusive biological or genetic focus. Putting aside the fact 'consent' itself is a socially constructed concept, research from the field of neuroplasticity has demonstrated the human brain changes in response to environmental and behavioural patterns (Doidge, 2007). In other words, nurture changes nature.

Biological functionality is rewired and reprogrammed as a *direct result* of social and cultural experiences — not the other way around (Doidge, 2007). For instance, Cantor et al. (2008) reported paedophilic men showed less white matter in magnetic resonance imaging of their brains. They argued white matter was the precipitating variable. While they did consider whether paedophilia could have caused the brain difference, they dismissed it as implausible:

Limiting the plausibility of this interpretation is the accumulating evidence that paedophilic men neuroanatomically differ from nonpaedophilic men early in life. For example, handedness preferences are exhibited in utero, and the odds of non-right-handedness are three times higher in paedophilic than in nonpaedophilic men. Although one might hypothesise behaviours of adulthood that could plausibly reduce white matter volumes in the noted fibre bundles, it is more difficult (although still possible) to hypothesise what behaviours that a pre-paedophilic infant or foetus might exhibit that would do so.

(Cantor et al., 2008, p. 179).

However, fetuses do have hormonal sensory experiences in utero that can exert morphological influence (DeCasper et al., 1994; Lecanuet & Schaal, 1996). This means the plausibility is much higher than Cantor et al. (2008) suggested. In addition:

Neuroplasticity research has shown us that every sustained activity ever mapped — including physical activities, sensory activities, learning, thinking and imagining — changes the brain as well as the mind. Cultural ideas and activities are no exception. Our brains are modified by the cultural activities we do.

(Doidge, 2007, p. 288).

The second position — that men who do sexually abuse children have some significant deviance or psychological disturbance — is compelling, but even clinical psychologists have started to acknowledge a need to look beyond individual pathology (for example see Ward, 2009). Blaming individual deviance also reinforces a problematic division wherein ‘we’ can avoid collective responsibility or accountability for shaping ‘their’ behaviour; people do not exist outside of their social and cultural environment. Moreover, given the widespread prevalence and incidence of child sexual abuse, it is difficult to see how this type of offending could be the sole domain of deviant or deranged individuals.

Cossins (2000) has made the most compelling criticism of individual pathology, and argued instead that normative masculine practices are the context in which men sexually abuse children. Similarly, Mowat’s (2012) analysis of child sex offender narratives found ‘a dominant form of

heterosexuality where masculine privilege was so embedded in cultural practices that it was rendered invisible' (p. i). It is this invisibility that allows society to overlook the importance of gender socialisation and uncritically accept crime as a result of individual pathology. Cossins (1999) stated:

There are similarities between different men's social practices. In other words, normative sexual elements can be affirmed in the reproduction of different masculinities through sexual behaviour that constructs a power differential between a man and the object of his desire. Thus, child sex offending can be understood as being consonant with normative masculine sexual practices that are structured by reference to the Masculine Ideal, since it allows some men to express a type of sexuality that is characterised by dominance and control. In other words, it could be said that the behaviour of child sex offenders is symptomatic of a broader cultural framework in which exploitative masculinity is normative (that is, culturally prescribed) and in which the lives of men are characterised by a combination of experiences of power and powerlessness. Nonetheless, it is necessary to point out that the creation of relations of power are not an inevitable result of all heterosexual or homosexual practices.

(p. 4).

This framework of normative culturally exploitative masculinities has been established in the literature on adult rape culture, and it can be argued that similar processes underpin the sexual abuse against children. Cossins' (1999; 2000; 2007; in press) work has been influential for these reasons. She highlighted the problem with biological and psychological theories of offending, which pathologised their offending as an 'inevitable practice' (Cossins, 2000, p. 260). She also brought much-needed attention to the absence of gender in traditional aetiological theories (Cowburn, 2005; Schafer, 2013). In addition, she successfully reframed child sexual abuse as an extension of normative masculine practices.

Cossins' (2000) work relied on interviews previously conducted by Colton and Vanstone (1996). This meant she did not have the privilege of asking questions to assist her specific research aims, and was limited to questions asked by the original interviewers. However, she contended this was preferable:

Colton and Vanstone made attempts to minimise their influence on the offenders' narratives. For example, they assert that 'the men in this study talked very easily, fluently and openly with a minimal level of prompting from us interviewers'.

(1996, p. 175, as cited in Cossins, 2000, p. 208).

While undirected interviews would undoubtedly benefit some qualitative research, it could be a hindrance in the context of theory testing. By using Colton and Vanston's interviews, Cossins (2000) had to rely on what participants had revealed with minimal prompting. She was also unable to seek necessary clarification or expansion on any points of particular interest. In addition, her source material was only seven interviews, with two eventually being excluded for not containing sufficiently relevant content. This was a small number but it did function well as a pilot study.

Almost a decade and a half later, current knowledge is still emerging and there remains a need for further investigation. This thesis aims to address this shortfall. Articulating the interrelationship between masculinity and sexual violence against children could pave the way for a broader critique of the gendered processes that drive human behaviour. This thesis will examine the nuances and underlying subjectivities of masculinities, and aims to show how sociological and feminist perspectives can be applied to psychological theories of criminal offending.

4. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Religion as a context for deviance

Celibacy, poverty and obedience are the three commitments of Catholic priestly ordinance. These vows are intended to facilitate a profound connection with God. However, amongst proponents of virtue and morality, there often occur paradoxical displays of deviance. In particular, sexual offending by priests has gained the attention of many academics (for example see Burkett & Bruni, 1993; Keenan, 2012; Loseke & Cavendish, 2003; Thomson et al., 1998). Individual churchgoers also sexually abuse children but this does not seem to have received similar attention. In both cases, however, the act of abuse stands in hypocritical contrast to the offender's religious ideology — an incongruity that is hard to comprehend.

Roman Catholic clergy seem to perpetrate a disproportionate amount of child sex abuse so will be discussed here as the main example (Keenan, 2012; Robertson, 2010). While children are sexually abused by leaders of other religious denominations³³, these leaders are often free to marry and pursue chaste romantic relationships (Keenan, 2012; Longwood, 2003). The demands of celibacy render Catholicism worthy of special analysis. In addition, Catholicism enforces the dichotomy of good and evil; God is positioned directly opposite the Devil, and the side of 'good' has strict obligations and expectations that must be fulfilled. It is this pursuit of goodness that stands in strong contrast to the act of sexually abusing a child.

Davies (2003) studied clergy with, what he described as, sexual addiction³⁴. He found most had inflexible and deeply judgemental beliefs supported by theology. In this group he also included non-offending clergy who had violated laws of the church but not laws of the state, such as masturbating or viewing adult pornography. His argument was that a significant number of clergy have diagnosable sexual addiction, and this facilitates sexual malfeasance — including the molestation

³³ Including Anglican, Baptist, Episcopal, Jewish, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Buddhist, Hare Krishna (as listed in Keenan, 2012, p. 3).

³⁴ It is possible this medicalisation only emerged as a result of religious restrictions and would not exist independently of them. In other words, it is unclear how many of these 'clergy sex addicts' would meet the diagnostic threshold for addiction if religious beliefs had not prevented them from a fulfilling sex life. This is not to say the some people cannot live without sex — many people do precisely this (Prause & Graham, 2007) — but for most, celibacy would be a difficult proposition.

of children (Davies, 2003). He cited the lack of boundaries between clergy and worshipper as a relevant factor. This ambiguously-defined relationship was said to contribute to feelings of shame and failure, as well as loss of personal identity — further exacerbated by pressure to model good behaviour and suppress one's own emotional needs (Adams, 2003; Davies, 2003). Other writers have claimed celibacy conflicts with the biological drive towards sexual reproduction, and ultimately stunts the emotional maturation of individuals who adhere to it (Adams, 2003; Cozzens, 2006; O'Neill, 1965; Rice, 1990; Sipe, 1990; 2003). Such pressures are undoubtedly compounded by heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity³⁵.

Some authors have challenged the idea that celibacy stunts sexual maturity. Greeley (2004) — a priest himself — wrote that clergy who abused children were no more dysfunctional than the male population at large. He argued celibacy was only difficult for a select few priests. However, this does remove the possibility that celibacy is a relevant or contributing factor. No one has, after all, suggested a majority of clergy have sexually molested children. In contrast, Sipe (1990), a sociologist and former priest, blamed mandatory celibacy for the high rate of sexual offending by Catholic clergy. He criticised Greeley (1981; 1982; 1983) for being overly simplistic and using false equivalencies (all cited in Sipe, 1990). He also criticised the theological justification for celibacy by saying it was principally introduced to maintain power structures rather than for reasons of moral purity (Sipe, 1990; 2004). He claimed: 'sociologically and economically men are more easily controlled if single' (Sipe, 2003, p. 20). Perhaps less cynically, Brown (1988) suggested the mandate for celibacy arose from a classical understanding of male sexuality. It was once widely believed that ejaculation caused 'loss of vital spirit', so those who refrained from intercourse were thought to be physically and mentally stronger than their copulating counterparts (p. 19). These gendered underpinnings provide an interesting point of contrast with contemporary ideals of hyper-sexed masculinity.

Other theorists have suggested it may not be celibacy causing the problem, but rather its consequences if unmanaged: loneliness, depression, sexual frustration, alcohol or drug addiction, or decreased self-esteem (Cozzens, 2003; Robertson, 2010). Adopting a different perspective, Keenan (2012) criticised the ecclesiastical belief that celibacy is a spiritual gift, or the presence of something —

³⁵ This concept is defined and discussed further in chapter 5.

rather than a sacrifice, or the absence of something. She wrote, ‘no grieving is facilitated or takes place’ so if a priest breaks his vow of celibacy, this is internalised as unworthiness of God’s gift (Keenan, 2012, p. 234).

Overall, academic consensus is that many factors have contributed to high levels of sexual offending by Catholic clergy. These include: vows of celibacy, rigid and mutually exclusive categories of good and evil, people joining the priesthood to suppress pre-existing sexual deviancy, secrecy permitted by the confessional, teachings against homosexuality, God-on-earth status ascribed to religious leaders, and hierarchical obedience (Adams, 2003; Hidalgo, 2007; Jenkins, 1998; Keenan, 2012; Krebs, 1998; Markham & Mikail, 2004; Robertson, 2010; Shupe, 1998; Sipe, 1990; 2003; 2004; Terry et al., 2011).

One fact is undisputed: the widespread occurrence of child sexual abuse perpetrated by Catholic clergy. A meta-analysis of American diocese records since 1950 found over 4% of all Catholic clergy had been the focus of *substantiated* abuse allegations (Keenan, 2012; Steinfelds, 2004). Considering the difficulty in corroborating accounts of child sexual abuse, the true figure would have been much higher. Other literature has put the number of sexually abusive priests somewhere between 2% and 8% (Goodstein, 2003; Greely, 1993; Sipe, 1995; Quinn, 2005; all cited in Keenan, 2012; Sipe, 1990). Another certainty — which differs from child sexual abuse perpetrated in other contexts — is that boys are more likely to be victimised. Research has reported an overwhelming 80% to 90% of clergy abuse victims are boys (Cozzens et al., 2004; Hidalgo, 2007; Keenan, 2012; Robertson, 2010). The reason for this difference is unclear but is likely because young boys most commonly occupy church roles for children. Further research found young boys were not usually targeted specifically by offending clergy, but were abused more frequently because of opportunities, situation and environmental context (Holt & Massey, 2012; Kappler et al., 2012). This same study found females began to be victimised at higher rates after the mid-1980s, a time which correlated with increasing participation of young girls in church activities.

Broadly speaking, the sexual abuse of children can be interpreted as an individual, social or institutional act — and each context requires tailored consideration and analysis. However, these spheres are not always discrete and often overlap, and individuals may be more likely to accept behaviour that is not confronted at an institutional level. The Vatican’s initial response to accusations

of clergy-perpetrated child sexual abuse was one of utter silence. It was not until 1993 — at least two decades after reports first emerged — that the Catholic Church issued any kind of formal response to the allegations (Krebs, 1998; Longwood, 2003; Robertson, 2010; Terry et al., 2011). Even then, it was only media coverage and threat of lawsuits that forced the Church to break its silence (Berry, 1992; Boyle, 1994; Dunne, 2004; Jenkins, 1998). Arguably, institutional responses like this could have the effect of implicitly endorsing such behaviour on an individual level.

Pollock and Hashmall (1991) summarised how official responses developed over time: beginning with outright denial — ‘nothing happened’; subsequent denial of liability — ‘something happened, but it was not my idea’; followed by denial of prurient motivation — ‘something happened and it was my idea, but it was not sexual’; then denial of deviance or immorality — ‘something happened and it was my idea, and it was sexual, but it was not wrong’; and finally denial of self-determination due to mitigating circumstances — ‘something happened and it was my idea, and it was sexual and it was wrong, but there were extenuating factors’ (as cited in Parkinson, 1997, p. 54). It is, therefore, important to explore parallels between institutional defensiveness and individual denial or cognitive distortions.

Thomson et al. (1998) examined narratives constructed by priests accused of molesting children. They discovered two ways in which priests attempted to deflect allegations: *disclaimers* articulated within the boundaries of perpetrator-victim relationships, and *accounts* that consisted largely of retrospective justification (Thomson et al., 1998, [emphasis in original]). The main difference is that disclaimers were employed while the abuse was ongoing, perhaps to appease a guilty conscience, whereas the accounts were post hoc excuses.

An extensive review of relevant literature revealed a paucity of gendered analysis or feminist discussion. Cozzens et al. (2004) declared a strong connection between masculinity and child sexual abuse perpetrated by priests. Their paper discussed the overwhelming propensity for such offenders to be psycho-sexually immature, as well as deficient in emotionally fulfilling relationships — specifically non-sexual friendships with other men (Cozzens, 2003; Terry et al., 2011). This was said to be worsened by the fact most priests positioned their religious identity over and above their sense of themselves as men. It was argued that this eventually led to erosion of boundaries and ‘other compensatory behaviours’ (Cozzens et al., 2004, p. 9). While not specifically worded as such, this

implied that priests who molest children could be lacking appropriate outlets for doing gender³⁶. In addition, their paper discussed how inner conflict arose from diametrically opposed constructions of hegemonic masculinity and religious masculinity; in particular, ecclesiastical expectations of gentleness and pastoral care on the one hand, and societal expectations of authoritative or dominant expression on the other (Cozzens et al., 2004). Keenan (2012) also wrote about the connection between clergy abuse and masculinity. She took feminist theories and assessed their validity in terms of priest-perpetrated child sexual abuse. In particular, she discussed patriarchal power structures embedded in church hierarchy. She criticised as simplistic the idea of 'power as a possession and power as something all men have', saying it ignored the relational, dynamic and unstable nature of power (Keenan, 2012, p. 116). She concluded clerical masculinity requires further attention in order to understand its role in the perpetration of child sexual abuse. Longwood et al. (2004) also contributed to the understanding of how masculinity is constructed in religious contexts. They did not explicitly discuss the connection between masculinity and *offending* clergy, but some of their conclusions were nonetheless relevant. For example, they suggested religion rendered men effeminate by allowing them to display emotion and weakness, and by encouraging submission to a higher authority. The authors recommended churches spend time addressing society's 'burdensome masculine standards' by fostering dialogue and community, with an emphasis on how to sustain fulfilling friendships and how to reconcile competing demands of society and the church (Longwood et al., 2004, p. 88).

Overall, a complete review and critique of clergy sexual abuse is well beyond the scope of this thesis. This brief overview functions to provide useful background for understanding abuse perpetrated by individual men in a religious context. It also identifies the potential for gender role stress to arise from the conflict between hegemonic masculinity and many of the demands of faith.

Child pornography and online grooming

The manufacture and distribution of child pornography long precedes the internet, but consumption has proliferated in recent years due to increasing broadband speeds, widespread connectivity and the

³⁶ This concept is discussed further in chapter 5.

advent of bit-torrenting³⁷. In many respects, child sexual abuse perpetrated online — whether through trading images, trafficking children into sex work, or grooming victims — is no different from that perpetrated offline; the internet merely facilitates the meeting of like-minded individuals. However, it differs from other sexual crimes in that it does not always require physical contact between victim and offender (O'Donnell & Milner, 2007; Taylor & Quayle, 2003; Wolak et al., 2011).

Feminist academics have long criticised pornography as being harmful to women and children (for example see Dines et al., 1998; Dworkin, 1981; MacKinnon, 2005). In response to the anti-pornography attitudes of many second wave feminists, the third wave saw a vocal group of sex-positive feminists emerge. They criticised their predecessors for paternalistic and condescending view of women, as well as for talking over the voices of sex workers and pornography actresses (Easton & Liszt, 2002; McElroy, 1995; Queen, 2001; 2003). One writer explained:

We value our [sex] work when it allows us autonomy, free time, and a comfortable income; we often like living outside the narrow circle society circumscribes of ladylike behaviour; we are not 'good girls', nor do we aspire to be; and we often relish the opportunity our work provides us to learn secrets, to support our clients' forays away from traditional masculine sexuality, to transgress restrictive boundaries and rebel against the rigid limitations created by our own fear of sex.
(Queen, 2001, p. 102).

Sex-positive feminism was in turn criticised for playing into the patriarchal fantasy of sexual promiscuity and not challenging or opposing restrictions of the male gaze (Glick, 2000). Brasfield (2006) commented that sex-positivity played into a 'hegemonic feminism' — epitomised in shows like *Sex and the City* — that was largely cis-centric³⁸, ignored class and wealth, and erased the experiences of ethnic minorities (p. 130). By uncritically accepting these narratives, she said, 'we run the risk of internalising and reproducing our own oppression' (p. 138). However, many women of colour sex workers have countered this, pointing out that anti-porn and sex-negative rhetoric has caused more damage to their lives and welfare than sex-positivity (Kempadoo, 2001; Shrage, 2005). More generally,

³⁷ Direct peer-to-peer file sharing between individual computers anywhere in the world, primarily used to distribute copyrighted media.

³⁸ Cis describes someone whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. In particular, cis-centric describes feminist theory that erases trans identities and perpetuates transphobia — for example, by positioning 'womyn born womyn' as more 'authentic' than trans women.

other writers have questioned whether consent can truly and freely be given while women's agency remains constrained by male supremacy (Horowitz, 2013).

These debates provide a background for contemporary discussion about both adult and child pornography. An ethical discussion of the former falls outside the remit of this literature review, as do any assertions about the distinction between art, mainstream media and adult pornography. In any event, this distinction varies according to creator intent, method of distribution, and chosen use by the viewer. This section will focus solely on child pornography and other forms of child sexual abuse perpetrated via the internet.

The legality of child pornography varies around the world, and policing and enforcement problems are exacerbated because the internet transcends jurisdictional boundaries (Endrass et al., 2009; O'Donnell & Milner, 2007). Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child specifically protects children from exploitation in 'pornographic performances and materials' (United Nations General Assembly, 1989); 194 member states have ratified this treaty but only 92 have laws³⁹ that specifically relate to child pornography⁴⁰ (International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, 2008). In New Zealand the Films, Videos and Publications Classification Act (1993) governs 'objectionable material' and made it illegal to browse, attempt to obtain, obtain, produce or distribute any form of child pornography⁴¹. The consequences range from fines to imprisonment, but are usually less punitive than those meted out for contact offences (Carr, 2004; Department of Internal Affairs, 2002; 2009).

Perpetrators share some demographic similarities with hands-on offenders. However, records show key differences: most were under the age of the 30, and the significant majority did not have access to children outside of their internet activities (Carr, 2004; Department of Internal Affairs, 2002; 2009). These findings are similar to those reported overseas (Babchishin et al., 2011; Neutze et

³⁹ The United States has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child but does have laws relating to child pornography. Accurate information was not available for nine signatory member states: Kiribati, Micronesia, North Korea, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

⁴⁰ Many of these countries with laws do not actually define child pornography, and many others allow individual possession but outlaw manufacture and distribution. It should be noted that some countries *without* specific laws for child pornography can prosecute for it within the remit of child labour laws.

⁴¹ In some instances this has extended to cartoon depictions of such acts (for example see Steward, 2013). Another unusual case involved a teacher who photoshopped faces of his male students on top of adult pornography (Greenland, 2013).

al., 2011). The younger age range is not unexpected since this sort of offending necessitates at least a moderate level of technological competence. As computer literacy has improved over the last decade, statistics have shown an increasing number of offenders over the age of 30 — particularly in the 45 to 60 age group (Carr, 2004; Department of Internal Affairs, 2009).

Interestingly, men who worked with children, or had frequent contact with them, comprised only 12% of all prosecutions for child pornography (Department of Internal Affairs, 2009). Other studies have focused on the crossover between online and offline offending. Wolak et al. (2011) found that 41% of those possessing child pornography had previously, or were concurrently, committing hands-on sexual offences against children. At the other end of the scale, figures as low as 1% have been reported, with the consensus tending towards 10% (Endrass et al., 2009; Gallagher et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2012). As with most criminological statistics, the lower estimates tended to come from official police records whereas higher figures were found in self-report studies (Endrass et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2012). Despite this, it remains unclear whether a direct link exists between online and contact offending. The Department of Internal Affairs⁴² concluded any such link would ‘be mediated by factors other than exposure to child pornography’ (Department of Internal Affairs, 2009, p. 3). There is a substantial body of research that supports the gateway theory (Seto et al., 2006; Seto & Eke, 2005; Taylor & Quayle, 2003). However, a number have discounted the connection, certainly in the absence of any other predisposing factors (Endrass et al., 2009; Gallagher et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2012). One study showed there has been no spike in child sexual abuse to correspond with the upsurge in child pornography over the past two decades (Wolak et al., 2011).

Gail Dines has been an outspoken critic of adult pornography, describing the increasingly blurry line of ‘childified porn’ (as cited in Bindel, 2010, p. 3). By this she referred to websites featuring youthful-looking women in sexualised poses, or shown having sex with older men. Dines argued the proliferation of this material has eroded the societal taboo of sex with children. Following interviews with a number of men in prison for child rape, she said:

What they said to me was they got bored with ‘regular’ porn and wanted something fresh. They were horrified at the idea of sex with a prepubescent child

⁴² Child pornography investigations in New Zealand are predominantly managed by Department of Internal Affairs; cases are handed over to the Police once evidence has been obtained for prosecution.

initially, but within six months they had all raped a child. (...) We need an anti-porn campaign that alerts people to the individual and cultural harms it creates.

(as cited in Bindel, 2010, p. 4).

This 'slippery slope' argument may seem appealing, but it is important to remember the adage about correlation not equalling causation. In addition, such explanations from offenders are more likely to be retrospective attempts to minimise and justify their behaviour (Gallagher et al., 2006). More worryingly, though, is how this argument from Bindel and Dines could be taken to mean pornography actresses are responsible for 'creating' the harms of child rape.

Despite its questionable truth, the slippery slope logic is often adopted by politicians. David Cameron⁴³ recently adopted a hardline stance on all forms of online pornography; according to him even licit images were 'corroding childhood' (Wright, 2013, p. 1). In 2013, Google introduced a worldwide block to prevent child abuse images from appearing in search results, and they have recently started scanning email attachments against a master database of offending material (Hachman, 2014). On the other side of this issue, Cossins (in press) referred to the 'adultification' of children, where they are commercialised, sexualised and forced to mature before their time (p. 4). It is also possible that processes such as childification or adultification reinforce each other and initiate flow-on effects that are not yet fully understood.

Middleton (2000) conducted a comprehensive literature review but found no causal link between consumption of child pornography and hands-on offending. Instead, he concluded that such material 'conveys messages that create pro-offending attitudes (...) [and] enhance[s] the cognitive distortions of sexual offenders (...) such as the child is cooperative or even enthusiastic' (pp. 72-73, as cited in Middleton et al., 2006, p. 590). Other literature has supported this relationship (Babchishin et al., 2011; Elliott & Beech, 2009; Endrass et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2012; O'Donnell & Milner, 2007; Taylor & Quayle, 2003). This could be interpreted to mean that child pornography is critical to the maintenance of offending, but does not necessarily promote initial offending in all those who access it.

At the other end of the offence chain, it is important to examine how existing offenders make use of child pornography, and whether this material facilitates recidivism or reduces internal

⁴³ Prime Minister of the United Kingdom since 2010.

inhibitors. Some research has suggested child pornography could exacerbate sexual deviance or be utilised by individuals with higher levels of existing deviant arousal (Lee et al., 2012; Taylor & Quayle, 2003). Seto et al. (2006) concluded child pornography consumption was ‘a valid diagnostic indicator of paedophilia’ and users ‘were more likely to show a paedophilic pattern of sexual arousal than were a combined group of offenders against children’ (p. 613). They explained that while non-paedophilic men may sexually abuse children, it is unlikely these same men would have used child pornography (Elliott & Beech, 2009; Seto et al., 2006). In other words: sexual arousal would not motivate all hands-on child molestation, but it could be the main reason for choosing certain forms of pornography over others. These authors did, however, recommend cautious interpretation of their results because participants were referred through clinical contexts and may not have been representative of all child pornography offenders.

Having said this, meta-analyses have supported the finding of greater sexual deviance amongst online offenders (Babchishin et al., 2011; Elliott & Beech, 2009). Other research found that, of child pornography offenders with at least one prior conviction for molestation, 27% had reoffended in the two and a half years following their arrest for child pornography (Seto & Eke, 2005). Such results are not overly surprising given the reduced deterrent effect that corresponds with each additional apprehension; someone with two previous convictions is more likely to reoffend than someone with only one (Walters & Bradley, 2005). Overall, research has found internet offenders have lower recidivism rates compared to their offline counterparts (Babchishin et al., 2011; Eke et al., 2011; Endrass et al., 2009; Neutze et al., 2011), but dual offenders have the highest risk of ongoing criminality — sexual or otherwise (Eke et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2012).

Taylor and Quayle (2003) reported child molesters were more likely than adult rapists to use pornographic material before and during their offences. This may mean child pornography is being used to reduce internal inhibitors. Other research found internet offenders showed greater levels of victim empathy than hands-on child molesters (Babchishin et al., 2011; Neutze et al., 2011). As a result of this heightened empathy, pornography may have been needed or used to assuage feelings of guilt or apprehension, or to desensitise the offender before they committed a sexual crime. In another study, researchers found 21% of hands-on molesters knew where to obtain child pornography or underage sex workers, and had used one of these as an outlet prior to offending (Elliott et al., 1995).

In this same study, 14% of participants said pornography and other media had taught them how to approach potential child victims. Additional evidence has shown offenders ‘quite often use’ child pornography during abuse in order to groom or arouse their victim (Gallagher et al., 2006, p. 107; O’Donnell & Milner, 2007). However, it would be incorrect to assume hands-on and internet perpetrators would necessarily share common ground for comparison. In one study, almost half of the child pornography offenders did not share any of the ‘psychological vulnerabilities’ normally displayed by men who sexually abused children offline (Middleton et al., 2006, p. 599).

It is accepted that consumption of, and increased demand for child pornography causes tangible and widespread harm to children (Neutze et al., 2011). Production and manufacture involve physical sexual abuse in their own right, and circulation creates a permanent record of abuse that is almost impossible to destroy (Department of Internal Affairs, 2002; 2009; Middleton et al., 2006; O’Donnell & Milner, 2007). While individual possession may seem innocuous — and is often rationalised by men as ‘only pictures’ — it is the primary factor driving creation of such images (Carr, 2004, p. 78; Neutze et al.). One could argue child pornography reduces the incidence of hands-on offending; a photograph of one abusive act could satisfy numerous individuals. However, this incorrectly assumes each user would otherwise have acted out their fantasies. Similarly, some have argued child pornography could provide a sufficient outlet for ‘intense and suppressed sexual feelings’ about children, which would wholly satisfy the urge to abuse children offline (Carr, 2004, p. 9). Overall, the nature of this relationship remains murky, and its direction unclear. What is certain is that child pornography is one of the myriad factors involved in hands-on offending, and constitutes child sexual abuse in its own right. It would be dangerous to support any positive comments about its existence.

There does not appear to be any literature concerning how — or if — child pornography plays into narratives of masculinity, but studies have found a positive correlation between use of adult pornography and masculine hostility expressed as sexual harassment (Maass et al., 2003, as cited in Willer, 2005). Without explicitly stating masculinity as a factor, other literature has alluded to a possible connection. Carr (2004) commented that for ‘some individuals, increasing mastery of the internet provides a sense of power and control that may be missing from other aspects of their lives’ (p. 10). In addition, the internet is said to provide a supportive environment in which sex offenders can

socialise and support each other (Middleton et al., 2006; Taylor & Quayle, 2003). This, in turn, may provide a sense of male bonding or camaraderie missing from these men's offline lives.

The gendered nature of online offending itself cannot be ignored, and is even starker than for contact offenders. When summarising the literature, Endrass et al. (2009) wrote 'one of the most consistent findings when trying to characterise the "typical" user of child pornography is — not surprisingly — that there are only male consumers [...] it is safe to assume that female child pornography consumers are non-existent' (p. 44). It would seem safer to assume that if female child pornography offenders do exist, they have yet to come to the attention of researchers in the field.

It is also interesting to observe how media coverage, including reported comments from offenders themselves, has hinted at themes of masculinity. One example was observed in the *Irish Examiner*, when an offender claimed he was 'not looking at the children but at the people who were hurting them' because it 'made him feel like a better man' (2007, p. 1). It is curious that someone would participate in the very activity deemed offensive in order to feel superior, yet such distorted thinking is characteristic. Other news reports have likened child pornography users to 'someone who collects classic car magazines' (Greenland, 2013, p. 1). While this analogy was primarily to highlight addictive behaviour, it is interesting such a stereotypically masculine pastime was chosen.

Rather than trying to establish directional or causative relationships, Middleton et al. (2006) suggested future research should focus on 'the context and meaning of pornography for each individual user in meeting their sexual needs' (p. 591). They also highlighted the heterogeneity of internet offenders and stressed the importance of understanding this diverse group. Other writers concluded there were 'more similarities than differences' between online, offline and dual offenders (Neutze et al., 2011, p. 212).

Worthy of final comment is the growing online community of support groups for self-identified paedophiles (for example see Devin & Edwards, 2012). These groups comprise men who acknowledge their sexual preference for children, treat it as an orientation that is not chosen, and vow to live an offence-free life and never hurt any children (Clark-Flory, 2012). They speak of finding support, encouragement and therapeutic connectedness in these online forums. An organisation calling itself *Virtuous Paedophiles* explained the main goal was:

To reduce the stigma attached to paedophilia by letting people know that a substantial number of paedophiles do not molest children, and to provide peer support and information about available resources to help paedophiles lead happy, productive lives. Our highest priority is to help paedophiles never abuse children.

(Devin & Edwards, 2012, p. 1)

A comprehensive search did not yield any academic literature on this topic and it is worth researching in its own right. All academic references to online networking have focused on either: those who collaborate for the commission of further offences (Babchishin et al., 2011; Elliott & Beech, 2009; Elliott et al., 1995; Gallagher, 2007; Gallagher et al., 2006), or those who participate in pro-paedophilia activism by campaigning for age-of-consent laws to be abolished and encouraging societal acceptance of sex with children (Cook & Howells, 1981; O'Donnell & Milner, 2007; Rossman, 1976).

Treatment modalities

Overview of treatment and recidivism

Despite widespread belief that child sex offenders are irreversibly deviant, there are many rehabilitation programmes that operate with varying degrees of success. Contemporary treatment modalities have been tailored for increasingly diverse populations: disabled sex offenders, those with psychiatric disturbances, youth and children, clergy, incarcerated men, parolees in the community, indigenous populations, female offenders, high-risk perpetrators and online offenders (for example see Marshall et al., 1998). Most commonly, offenders participate in 'multi-model' programmes. These are a mixture of individual and group therapy, with modules based upon evidence-based techniques such as norm building, enhancing victim empathy, improving emotional regulation, sexual reconditioning, relapse prevention, understanding the offence process, and interpersonal skill development (Marshall et al., 1999; Marshall et al., 2006).

In New Zealand men may be treated within prison or community settings; many do not receive the necessary treatment at all. The Department of Corrections runs two targeted programmes: Kia Mārama at Rolleston Prison in Christchurch and Te Piriti at Paremoremo Prison in Auckland — housing 120 men combined (Bakker et al., 1998; Nathan et al., 2003). Both programmes adopt a similar approach, but Te Piriti maintains stronger adherence to the values of Māori culture (Larsen et

al., 1998). Te Piriti's rehabilitation emphasis is on restoring mana⁴⁴ lost through offending: 'one of the overt strengths of a tikanga⁴⁵ Māori framework for rehabilitation [is] the potential [for these men] to enhance their mana through their own efforts and the tautoko⁴⁶ of whānau⁴⁷, friends, and their tūpuna⁴⁸' (Nathan et al., 2003, pp. 12-13). In addition to these units, three community groups currently operate in New Zealand: WellStop in Palmerston North and Wellington, SAFE Network in Auckland, Hamilton and Kaitaia, and STOP Trust in Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill and Nelson. These groups offer group and individual therapy, as well as family and couple counselling if required (SAFE Network, 2014; STOP Trust, 2014; WellStop, 2014).

Longitudinal evaluations of cognitive behavioural treatment have found a significant reduction in reoffending rates for both sexual and general crimes. For example, Kia Mārama graduates had an overall reconviction rate of between 8% and 10% compared with 22% for the control group⁴⁹ (Bakker et al., 1998). Of those who reoffended within the follow-up period, almost all continued to hold offence-supportive beliefs; the report suggested treatment may have actually reinforced distorted thinking in some men. Based on this finding, a subset of offenders may benefit from further treatment, although early identification of such individuals would be difficult. Te Piriti's comprehensive focus on tikanga has caused it to be very successful treating Māori offenders. Overall recidivism was 5.47% for the four years following completion of the programme; for Māori men specifically the figure was 4.41%, compared with 13.58% for Māori who completed the Kia Mārama programme and 22% for Māori in their control group (Nathan et al., 2003). Furthermore, the report concluded 'non-Māori men do not appear to have been negatively affected by the Te Piriti programme's focus on tikanga values and processes' (Nathan et al., 2003, p. 9). Outside New Zealand, research by MacGregor (2008)

⁴⁴ Mana is a Māori word that describes authority, power, prestige or strength of character. Mana can be possessed by individuals or groups, and can be transferred, lost, increased or bestowed as a result of behaviour (Ministry of Justice, 2001).

⁴⁵ Tikanga is Māori cultural protocol which governs daily life and all interactions.

⁴⁶ Tautoko means to support or endorse.

⁴⁷ Whānau is broadly similar to the Pākehā notion of extended family, but it can be influenced by spiritual or emotional connections, as well as ancestral (Taonui, 2014).

⁴⁸ Tūpuna are ancestors or grandparents.

⁴⁹ The control group comprised convicted child sex offenders who had not received treatment. It contained a higher percentage of Māori and Pasifika men.

has supported additional benefits from rehabilitation programmes congruent with indigenous belief systems (as cited in Lambie & Stewart, 2012).

Rehabilitating men in the community poses specific challenges. Lambie and Stewart (2012) cited a drop-out rate of 45%, compared with 15% for programmes run through prisons. They also commented on the frequent lack of access to such community groups. One particular problem was that these programmes' longer duration often exceeded offenders' probationary periods. In addition, men in the community are likely to face economic or geographic barriers their incarcerated counterparts would not. Lambie and Stewart (2012) analysed the outcomes of community-based rehabilitation in New Zealand and found overall recidivism was 8.1%, with 5.2% for men who had completed the full treatment programme.

On the whole, international figures support local findings of significantly reduced reoffending rates for men who have participated in treatment (for example see Alexander, 1999; Aytes et al., 2001; Craig et al., 2003; Hanson et al., 2002; Schmucker & Losel, 2008; Turner et al., 2000; all cited in Lambie & Stewart, 2012). Nevertheless, a recent systematic review concluded there was 'weak evidence for interventions aimed at reducing reoffending in identified sexual abusers of children' (Långström et al., 2013, p. 1). These authors identified 167 potentially-eligible studies, and ultimately whittled this down to eight for comprehensive analysis. While their inclusion criteria do not appear to have been unduly strict, a list of excluded studies was not provided and this made it difficult to understand their atypical conclusion⁵⁰.

Difficulties surrounding treatment

Collie et al. (2005) discussed how public anxiety has shaped treatment design and delivery. They noted a growing focus on community safety and risk management, coupled with a diminishing focus on offender wellbeing or welfare⁵¹. Similarly, Brown (2010) commented that populist discourse had triggered a raft of poorly thought-out legislation which had resulted in increasingly punitive sentences. Sadly, these factors have been implicated as reducing the effectiveness of rehabilitation and increasing

⁵⁰ The authors were contacted in January 2014 with a request for additional information but did not respond.

⁵¹ An example being the 'risk-need-responsivity' model (for further discussion see Collie et al., 2005; Ward et al., 2012).

risk of recidivism (Maxwell, 2005, as cited in Sonti, 2005). McAlinden (2007) summarised the situation:

Governments are abandoning rehabilitative strategies in favour of more retributive approaches to give the public the impression that something is being done to protect them from dangerous, violent and sexual offenders in the community and to manage the risk they are seen as presenting.

(p. 15).

This quote underscores the importance placed on public perception at the expense of evidence-based treatment methods. Particularly worrying is the risk that ‘name and shame’ campaigns — as well as offshoots like public registers or neighbourhood notification — may reinforce an offender’s distorted belief that the adult world is dangerous and hostile (Bennett, 2011; Jones & Vess, 2010; Ward & Keenan, 1999). That said, shame can sometimes play a useful role in restorative justice. Braithwaite (1989) distinguished between reintegrative and stigmatising shame, where the essential difference was whether the *offence* or *offender* were shamed. He argued that reintegrative shaming would help an offender understand the harm they had caused, while still promoting accountability and responsibility. On the other hand, stigmatising shame would alienate offenders from their community, reduce employment opportunities, and forever label them deviants.

Balancing these concerns may seem difficult, but this paucity of wraparound care has given rise to the good lives model — an approach that incorporates the best of cognitive behavioural therapy and ensures offender wellbeing and welfare are supported through comprehensive release planning (Ward et al., 2006a; Ward et al., 2012; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Willis & Ward, 2011; Willis et al., 2013). This comprehensive model is described by its architect as ‘a bridging theory’ that is able to explain ‘what it is that offenders seek through antisocial actions’ (Ward et al., 2006a, p. 90). Thus, offending behaviour is seen as a maladaptive strategy wherein men seek ‘primary goods’, that are ‘sought for their own sake and are likely to increase psychological wellbeing if achieved’ (p. 90). Primary goods are various measures of wellbeing: autonomy, friendship, spirituality, knowledge, health, creativity and others. In addition, actualisation or expression of gender identity could be understood in terms of primary human goods. While the authors did not specifically mention gender as part of this theory, they did articulate aspects within a loosely gendered framework. For example, they observed that, if a treatment plan overlooks the primary good of work-related competence, offenders may

experience ‘chronic feelings of inadequacy or frustration’ (p. 92). It has been said that work-related competence is a prominent societal yardstick for masculinity (Collinson & Hearn, 1996; 2005). Sexual abuse may be one strategy for restoring a sense of general competence — at least according to the logic of someone with distorted cognitive processes. Rehabilitation must, according to this theory, provide internal and external conditions that enable offenders to live good — noncriminal, rewarding and personally satisfying — lives.

Scoones et al. (2012) argued for the rehabilitative importance of release planning, even when dynamic and static risk factors are controlled. Other studies have spoken about offenders’ pervasive fear of returning to the community (Russell et al., 2013). Almost all participants from Russell et al.’s (2013) study experienced persecution or rejection from members of the community. Many also perceived judgement or outright obstruction from their probation officers and other so-called support workers. Interestingly, none of their interview subjects were concerned about cultural identity issues prior to release, but their later experience caused most to acknowledge the benefit of being held ‘culturally accountable’ for their offending (p. 65). As a result, Russell et al. (2013) encouraged a shift from avoidance goals to approach goals. This was similar to Ward et al. (2006a) who advocated use of positive language to enhance treatment efficacy. Russell et al. (2013) favoured goals which encouraged men to develop new behaviours — such as better adult relationships — rather than unhelpful goals that focused on avoidance of certain behaviours. Others have avoided negative labelling, too — instead describing offenders as ‘individuals who have acted inappropriately in a sexual manner’ (Abracen & Looman, 2004, p. 234). There is undoubtedly positive psychological benefit in this approach, but this distancing language may also risk reinforcing cognitive distortions of denial and minimisation.

A crucial treatment parameter relates to rehabilitation of men who are uncooperative and unwilling (Boer et al., 2011). The significant majority of treatment programmes stipulate admission of guilt as a prerequisite to participation (Abracen & Looman, 2004). Even those without this entry criterion can have ambiguous clauses that effectively exclude offenders for this reason. For example, Kia Mārama does not require participants to admit offences they are convicted for, but ‘persistent and total denial which survives the “understanding your offending” and “victim impact and empathy” modules would result in the man’s discharge from the programme’ (Bakker et al., 1998, p. 5). Lambie and Stewart (2012) proposed a specific programme to treat men who denied their behaviour outright.

Schlank and Shaw (1996) devised such a group, and claimed it reduced denial by up to 50% (as cited in Abracen & Looman, 2004). These results may also have made the men 'more amenable to subsequent standard programmes' (Lambie & Stewart, 2012, p. 1034). Pratley and Goodman-Delahunty (2011) also declared that 'refusal of offenders into treatment programs based on denial and minimisation is a practice that warrants review' because 'denial is integral to the offender's modus operandi' (2011, p. 10). Further, excluding men who are in denial could positively skew statistics regarding treatment efficacy. This means that very low recidivism rates must be interpreted cautiously.

5. GENDERED OFFENDING

At the outset, it may be helpful to distinguish between sex and gender. Sex is a biological descriptor that is usually assigned at birth based on phenotypic genitalia⁵². Generally speaking, babies with a penis/testes will be assigned male, babies with a vulva/vagina will be assigned female, and babies with ambiguous genitalia will be assigned intersex — at least according to current medical practice in many countries (Purves et al., 2001). Gender, on the other hand, describes the subjective and culturally-influenced sense of belonging someone has with masculine, feminine, nonbinary or genderqueer identities⁵³. The extent to which sex and gender are predetermined or socially constructed is heavily contested⁵⁴. Broadly, the concept of gender encompasses the lived experiences and socially-constructed ideology associated with a given gender identity.

Gender analysis in criminology can be traced back to Lombroso's work on the 'atavistic man' (Collier, 1998, p. 9). Edwin Sutherland and Albert Cohen have been credited with 'placing masculinity on the criminological agenda' (Messerschmidt, 2000, p. 2). However, these early theorists were primarily interested in physical differences between criminal and non-criminal men (Messerschmidt, 2000; Walters & Bradley, 2005). Their work did not acknowledge the social dimensions of gender, focusing instead on the biology of sex-role theory. They focused somewhat on the behaviour of men but it was not a sociological analysis of gender. Sociological theories of gender did not emerge until the second half of the 20th century, after which point they became meshed with feminist theories concerning the relational nature of power (Connell, 2002a; Cossins, 2000; Messerschmidt, 1993; 2000). A full account of the history of gender studies is beyond the scope of this thesis, so this 'enmeshing' point will be used as a starting point for theoretical review.

⁵² Genotypic sex refers to chromosomal makeup, but is not usually known or tested.

⁵³ Genderqueer is an umbrella term including any gender identity outside the male-female binary. The most comprehensive review outlines 25 labels within this category: androgyny, pangender, agender, bigender, trigender, neutrois, retransitioners, appearance-gendered, transbinary, transcrossdressers, binary's butch, fancy, epicene, intergender, transmasculine, transfeminine, demi girl, demi guy, girl fags, guy dykes, genderfluid, tomboy, sissy, nonbinary butch, nonbinary femme, cross dresser (as listed in Shankar, 2013, pp. 2-3). Nonbinary refers to people who eschew any gender identification.

⁵⁴ For various perspectives see Butler (1990; 2004) Fausto-Sterling (2000), Fine (2010), Haig (2004), ISNA (2008), Laqueur (1992), Sell (2009) and Shankar (2013).

Convergence of ideology and behaviour

The academic study of masculinities is divided into two overlapping subsets: the characteristic traits of individual males and the ideological aspects of masculinity that men are encouraged to strive towards (McMahon, 1993, as cited in Cossins, 2000). The relationship between these two subsets is influenced by individual power dynamics, as well as various historical, political, social and cultural factors. Messerschmidt (2001) described masculinity as 'never a static or finished product' and explained how men were 'involved in a self-regulating process where they monitor their own and others' gendered conduct' (p. 67). He elaborated that masculinity was at once personally meaningful and individually enacted, while also being socially regulated and structurally divided. In this sense, gender is a truly ubiquitous construct.

While numerous studies have researched the sociology of gender, the most significant early contribution came from the Hite Report (1981). Although this work was criticised for its methodological shortcomings, it made a worthwhile contribution to the wider sociological understanding of human gender and sexuality. Hite's (1981) survey sought to discover, amongst other things, how male sexual behaviour reflected men's gender identity and self-concept. This revealed an emphasis on characteristics like physical prowess, autonomy, dominance, integrity, sexual desire, and the ability to control emotion. Participants reported being subject to social pressure to conceal their true feelings and present a brave front at all times; they believed sensitivity would be mistaken for weakness. In instances where they did openly express emotion, they described how this was met with disdain or disregard by their peers. Interestingly, the men commented that it was more socially acceptable for them to divulge inner thoughts to female friends or partners. These comments demonstrate how external audiences and situational variables have played a pivotal role in constructing and regulating men's expressions of gender. It also highlighted a requirement for men to conceal what could be perceived as traditionally feminine attributes. This resonates with what other writers have since observed: masculinity is defined by what femininity is not (Cossins, 2000; 2007; Lees, 1997; Lisak, 1991).

Another seminal study was conducted by Thompson and Pleck (1987) who investigated the extent to which participants agreed with gendered expectations. While their sample did not always

adhere to traditional male gender roles in their own behaviour, most respondents did agree that men should be tough and 'fists are sometimes necessary' (Thompson & Pleck, 1987, p. 33). This discrepancy between belief and behaviour — described as cognitive dissonance — has a long history in the field of psychology (Cooper, 2007; Festinger, 1957). Theoretically, if someone holds two or more inconsistent beliefs or exhibits two or more inconsistent behaviours, they would experience cognitive dissonance — a negative intrapersonal state of discomfort or tension (Cooper, 2007; Elliot & Devine, 1994; Festinger, 1957). Reduction strategies would then be engaged to mitigate this mental stress. These reduction strategies include: altering the conflicting behaviour or belief in order to achieve congruity; justifying the belief or behaviour so normal rules are exempt; adding a new belief or behaviours that compensates or alleviates the dissonance; or denying or avoiding the conflicting belief or behaviour (Festinger, 1957). These strategies have the same effect as cognitive distortions commonly held by most child sex offenders.

Cognitive dissonance has been observed in a variety of contexts, and the degree of dissonance is experienced along cultural lines. For example, people from individualist cultures reportedly experience equal cognitive dissonance when their behaviour transgresses either a personal or social principle, whereas those from collectivist cultures perceive the latter to be significantly more distressing (Cooper, 2007; Kitayama et al., 2004). There is a paucity of research that has examined cognitive dissonance in terms of gender identity. However, a study on drinking culture is somewhat relevant. Mäkelä (1997) described a phenomenon known as the 'majority fallacy', where those with negative beliefs about alcohol would exaggerate the amount they perceived others were drinking (p. 733). The author concluded: 'the intensity of dissonance and the corresponding tendency to exaggerate other people's [drinking behaviour], depends on the degree of discrepancy between the normative standard and an individual's actual behaviour' (Mäkelä, 1997, p. 733). It would be interesting to explore whether this logic could be applied to gender norms; that is, whether men with negative attitudes towards masculine gender roles, would have a correspondingly-inflated perception of others' adherence to such norms compared to their own. This is speculative, but given the gendered connotations of alcohol consumption in New Zealand (Towns, 2009; Towns et al., 2012), some parallels could exist. A similar suggestion was made by Whitehead (2005). He hypothesised:

Tension in the individual man between his Ideal Masculine Self and his lived-in reality may produce cognitive dissonance in him. (...) Violence by him may be regarded as functional in maintaining an idealised and internalised sense of manhood in the face of external realities that point to his inability to do so. This suggests that the effectiveness of intervention is likely to depend on exposing two levels of cognition in the individual man: his surface cognition as an individual and his deeper, internalised level of cognition as a man.

(Whitehead, 2005, p. 414).

According to constructivism, masculinity cannot exist independently of femininity. In this same way, an individual cannot exist independently of society or free from the influence of gendered norms.

Traditional theory positioned masculine characteristics as mutually exclusive with their feminine counterparts; absence of one indicated the presence of the other (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

However, this dichotomous perspective was rightly criticised for its reductive and simplistic nature; a binary understanding of gender could not account for its fluidity or dynamic nature (Connell, 2002a; 2002b; 2005; Cossins, 2000). In response, academics adopted a continuum-based paradigm of gender as depicted in Figure 5.a. This new model overcame many shortcomings of past theories because it was able to explain why an individual may display different gendered behaviours according to context (Cohn, 2006; Kilmartin, 2000). From a criminological perspective, one of these 'contexts' could be when sexual offending is committed.

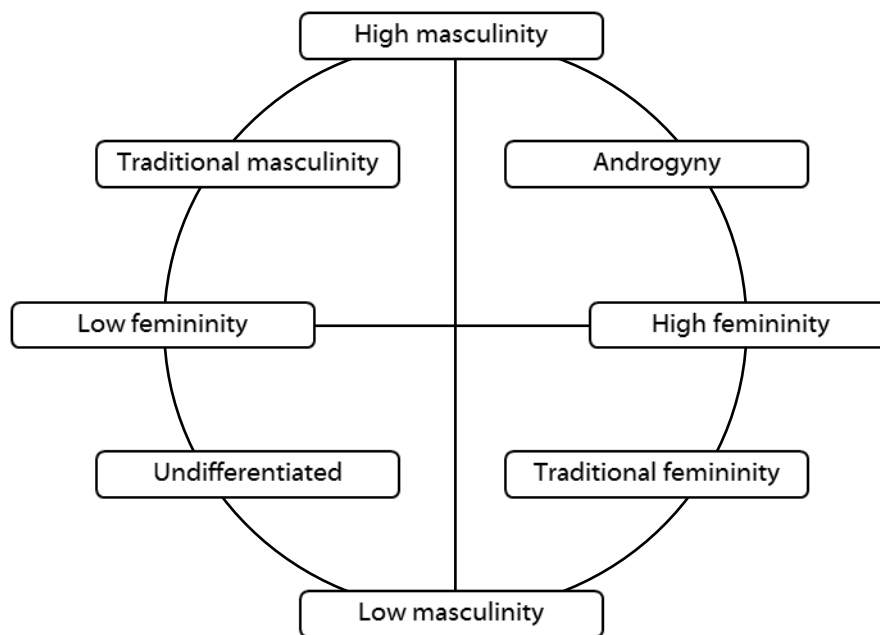
External audiences and shared cultural expectations have been shown to be pivotal in the construction and regulation of masculinity (Connell, 2002a; 2005; Cossins, 2000; Messerschmidt, 2000; 2001; 2005). As Messerschmidt (2001) suggested, it is important to understand how these external expectations are negotiated, overcome or reconciled by individual men. Doing so requires an examination of 'shared repertoires of meaning', through which members of a society understand themselves and others (Gardner & Gabriel, 2004, p. 202). However, because men are diverse and complex individuals who navigate, internalise and respond to gendered expectations in unique ways it could be argued that a *true* understanding of masculinities will remain elusive. Ward and Keenan (1999) explained further:

People do not have direct access to reality but, rather, construct the world mentally. It is this construction that guides their actions and interpretations of others' actions. (...) People who are exposed to the same information may legitimately come to different beliefs about the situation or person.

(p. 824).

Messerschmidt (2001) commented that perpetrating sex crimes could be ‘a practice through which masculinities are differentiated from one another [and] a resource that may be summoned when men lack other resources to accomplish gender’ (2001, p. 69). By fully understanding this process, as well as the role of external feedback and reinforcement, researchers can expand their knowledge of gendered identities and sociological positioning — as well as how that relates to behaviour and criminality.

Figure 5.a. Gender as independent but related dimensions



(adapted from Kilmartin, 2000, p. 30).

Gender strain and perceived inadequacy

During the 70s and 80s, researchers argued that healthy psychological development and future wellbeing were predicated on the establishment and maintenance of secure sex-role identity (Pleck, 1987; Spence & Helmreich, 1978; Ullian, 1976). Pleck (1987) observed what he described as the precariousness of masculinity. By this he meant masculinity was narrowly defined and rigidly enforced. Others have noted that, ‘compared to womanhood, manhood is often viewed as a status that is earned via the passage of social rather than physical or biological milestones’ (Bosson et al., 2009, p. 623). In this sense, a boy did not merely *become* a man but had to fight to be deemed worthy of manhood. And, once attained, his status could be swiftly lost due to social transgression. Vandello et al. (2009) asked college students what transgressions this might include, and they said ‘losing a job’, ‘being unable to

support a family' and 'letting others down' (as cited in Bosson et al., 2009, p. 624). Women who were asked comparable questions initially struggled to answer, but then gave biological responses like 'having a hysterectomy' (p. 624). Based on these findings it would seem manhood could be lost almost through carelessness.

Since Pleck (1987) first studied precarious masculinity, a large body of research has confirmed the often-unattainable ideals of manhood can place strain upon individual gender identity (Bosson et al., 2009; Copenhaver et al., 2000; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Heesacker & Snowden, 2013; Jurkovic & Walker, 2006; Vandello et al., 2008). Pleck (1987), however, attributed this insecure gender development to a lack of inspiring male role models and the perception that women were increasingly dominant in society. Morgan (1992) outlined what he saw as the three main challenges to masculinity: unemployment, which threatened men's breadwinner status; feminisation of the workplace, which had unsettled the male-dominated labour market; and vestiges of the suffrage movement. Other writers have agreed that employment is crucial to the social construction of masculinity (Carrigan et al., 2002; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Willott & Griffin, 1996). Collinson and Hearn (1996) observed that men dominated most spheres of organisational and economic life, and that work itself has been historically defined by what men did; women's domestic labour and parenting efforts were not commonly defined as work, and were not deemed worthy of financial reimbursement (Acker, 2008; Reskin, 2008). In a similar way, work performed by women was often viewed in terms of its benefit to men rather than its inherent value. These beliefs have been further perpetuated by narratives of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 2002). On many levels, it is unsurprising that employment is so strongly gendered; it remains a significant part of life with explicitly enforced power dynamics and an overt hierarchical structure.

These ideas resonate with early feminist arguments that masculine development involved a rejection of femininity. Lees (1993) was one of many feminists who argued that men achieved dominance by denigrating and disparaging women. There has been extensive support for this assertion (Adams et al., 1995; Bourdieu, 2001; Connell, 2005; Darke, 1989; Gidycz et al., 2007; Hanmer, 1990; hooks, 2004; Katz, 2006; 2013; Lisak, 2008; Messerschmidt, 2008; Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Accordingly, situations where men are perceived as sensitive or feminine may be more likely to induce a gendered sense of anxiety. Eisler and Skidmore (1987) also noted that perceived sexual inferiority

could induce a sense of worthlessness or failure. Along similar lines, Messerschmidt (2005) argued that men's bodies served as a primary tool for exerting masculine agency, and that this included the performative aspects of sexual activity. hooks (2004) emphasised how these constructions of masculinity have permitted and encouraged violence:

Underlying this assumption is the belief that if men are not sexually active, they will act out or go crazy. This is why male-on-male sexual violence is accepted in our nation's prisons. This is why rape — whether date rape, marital rape, or stranger rape — is still not deemed a serious crime. This is why the rape of children, especially when conducted by mild-mannered, nice men, is allowed. If this were not so, celebrities accused of sexually abusing children would no longer be cultural icons.⁵⁵ The assumption that 'he's got to have it' underlies much of our culture's acceptance of male sexual violence.

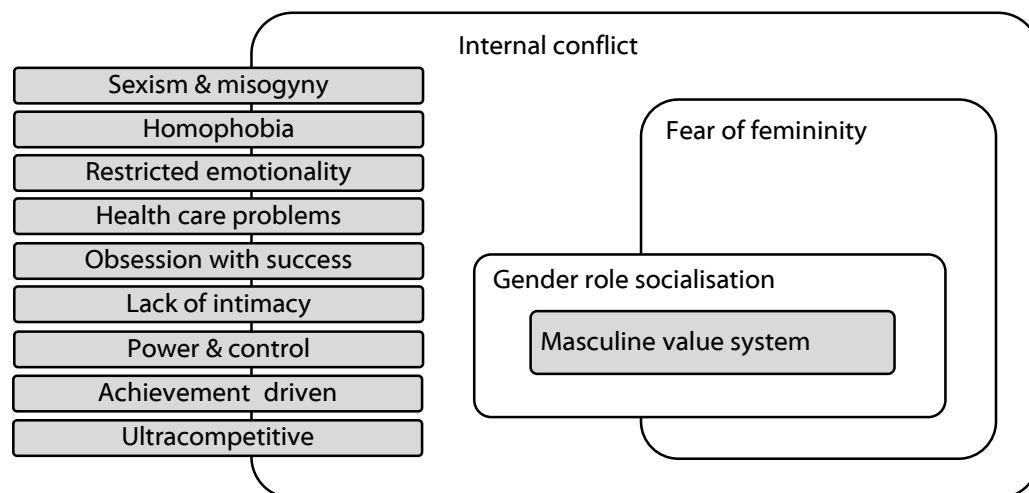
(pp. 76-77).

This claim is supported by Truman et al. (1996), who found that men with strongly-held conventional gender role attitudes were more able to justify violence against adult women (as cited in Copenhaver et al., 2000). Moreover, men who had perpetrated intimate violence against women were significantly more inclined to suppress their emotional expression than non-offenders. Similar findings were reported by Covell (1998), who found that gender role inconsistencies and sexist attitudes tended to increase a man's propensity to sexually harass women. Other research has supported these assertions to varying extents (Baljon, 2011; Blazina & Watkins, 1996; Bosson et al., 2009; Good & Mintz, 1990; Gullickson, 1993; Kaufman, 2007; Lackie & Man, 1997; Lancet Publishing Group, 2006; Lea & Auburn, 2001; O'Neil, 2008; Schwartz & Tylka, 2008; Scully & Marolla, 1995; Todryk, 1999; Walters, 2001). Copenhaver et al. (2000) found that many men would resort to substance abuse to reduce feelings of anxiety regarding gender identity stress. This propensity to self-medicate with alcohol or drugs is known to lower inhibitions that may otherwise prevent perpetrators from offending (Ward et al., 1995). However, self-report data must be interpreted cautiously; offenders may deliberately exaggerate their level of intoxication to justify and minimise their crimes (Pithers, 1989; Seto, 2008).

⁵⁵ For example Michael Jackson, R. Kelly, Woody Allen and Roman Polanski. A similar level of tolerance has been extended to celebrities accused of various other violent or sexual crimes against adult women: Julian Assange, Chris Brown, Dr Dre, Mel Gibson, Tommy Lee, John Lennon, Sean Penn and Charlie Sheen.

This body of research can be distilled into the gender strain model, depicted in Figure 5.b. At the crux of this ‘strain’ lies the conflict between gender role socialisation, prevailing masculine expectations and the extreme fear of femininity (Kilmartin, 2000; Lees, 1993; Spence & Helmreich, 1978). For example, men are encouraged to avoid everything feminine but also marry and be intimate with women as heteronormativity dictates (Bosson et al., 2009; Kilmartin, 2000). This inner conflict is said to give rise to a range of maladaptive and potentially negative consequences, including: sexist or homophobic attitudes, restrictive emotionality, medical problems, obsession with success or achievement, a lack of intimacy, displays of power and control, and an increased competitive drive (O’Neil, 1981, as cited in Kilmartin, 2000). The suggestion is that men with insecure gender identity, or those who experienced gender strain, would overcompensate for these inadequacies by indulging in hypermasculine behaviours such as hostility towards women, violence and risk-taking (Collier, 1998; Copenhagen et al., 2000; Cossins, 2000; Eisler & Skidmore, 1987; Kilmartin, 2000; Messerschmidt, 1993; 2005; Pleck, 1987; Pothast & Allen, 1994; Thompson & Pleck, 1987; Willer, 2005).

Figure 5.b. Gender strain model



(adapted from Kilmartin, 2000, p. 38).

Masculinity as a concept and construct

Masculinity is a powerful construct that transcends many other aspects of male existence and dictates codes of conduct accordingly — in both legitimate and criminal spheres. Many theorists have pointed out the existence of multiple masculinities — each with their own niche and degree of social

acceptability or influence (Collier, 1998; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cossins, 2000; Messerschmidt, 1993; Newburn & Stanko, 1994). This plurality of masculinities is central to the theoretical conceptualisation of gender. Gocke (1991) explained that 'masculinity is experienced in a messy and contradictory way by different groups of men — and indeed within individual men themselves' (p. 7). This heterogeneity of masculinities reflects a process where maleness becomes entrenched through peer interaction and enculturation. On this point, Kimmel (2004) explained that social gender differences and ideology were deliberately manufactured to facilitate the structural inequality upon which Western culture depends. This macro-level superiority of males in Western societies has been referred to as hegemonic masculinity (Brasfield, 2006; Carrigan et al., 1985; 2002; Connell, 2002b; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cowburn, 2005; Cowburn & Dominelli, 2001).

Hegemonic masculinity

During a critique of sex-role and gender strain theories, Connell (1982) proposed the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a gendered interpretation of cultural hegemony⁵⁶ (as cited in Carrigan et al., 1985; Carrigan et al., 2002; Connell, 2002c; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). At its very essence, hegemonic masculinity describes how social power structures are enacted and negotiated in a way that maintains and perpetuates them. The concept does not denote individual power or privilege per se. Instead, it refers to how cultural expectations, institutional systems and social spheres intersect to value certain expressions of masculinity over others (Carrigan et al., 1985; 2002). It encapsulates a guiding framework for the performance of masculinities. Connell (2005) explained:

At any given time one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (...) Hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual. (...) [It] is a historically mobile relation. Its ebb and flow is a key element of the picture of masculinity.

(pp. 77-78).

⁵⁶ Gramsci (1971) defined hegemony within the realm of capitalism: ruling classes maintain dominance through threat of violence, political and economic coercion, and ideological principles (as cited in Cowburn, 2005). Hegemony operates through a sort of artificial consensus — where the best interests of the elite are manipulated to appear as if they are the best interests of everyone. Once the values of the bourgeoisie are thoroughly entrenched, the whole class structure can be preserved (Carrigan et al., 2002; Connell, 2002c).

Her theory also contained subsets of subordinated, complicit and marginalised masculinities — all defined by how gendered relations were enacted between men. One example given was the subordination of gay men, who were said to be stigmatised and oppressed by ‘an array of quite material practices’, and rejected because of their supposed femininity (pp. 77-78). Complicity referred to those men who perpetuated the patriarchal system despite not meeting the standards for hegemonic masculinity themselves. However, they still received what Connell (2005) described as a ‘patriarchal dividend’ for their complicity in upholding the system (p. 79). Marginalisation arose when gender intersected with other structural forms of oppression like race or class. For example, in the case of Black American men, it was white supremacy that marginalised their Blackness but hegemonic masculinity that shaped how this happened.

Connell (2005) also explained how certain situations could arise where subordinate or marginalised identities were temporarily ‘authorised’ as hegemonic (p. 81). She explained how someone with sufficient masculine credibility in one sphere could display supposedly inferior masculinities in another without rebuke or censure. A New Zealand example of this was seen when John Kirwan⁵⁷ fronted an awareness campaign for mental health. This was someone who represented an archetypal New Zealand Man, going on national television to speak of his emotional vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Many men would not have been so favourably received, but Kirwan was credited for ‘challenging some stereotypes of masculinity’ and making it seem ‘powerful’ to ask for help (McKenzie-Minifie, 2006, p. 1). This campaign, and the overwhelming positive public response, highlighted how overcompensation in one sphere of hegemonic masculinity can mitigate supposed weaknesses in other areas. When viewed like this it can be seen as a reverse example of Cossins’ (2000) power/powerlessness theory. It is also worth noting that Kirwan’s narrative of depression did remain steeped in traditionally-masculine concepts; mental illness was described as a battle requiring ongoing strength, and he regularly used sporting analogies: ‘depression is like rugby — you’ve got to have a plan and a way through’ (Kirwan & Thompson, 2010; Tohill, 2014, p. 1).

Connell (1982) pioneered her theory of hegemonic masculinity as an alternative to the earlier gender role theories. For the first time, masculine norms were described in relation to their structural

⁵⁷ All Blacks player from 1984-1994.

power rather than their effect on men's individual lives (as cited in Carrigan et al., 1985). This made it important to critique the practices men use to maintain collective dominance. For example, social strategies that scorned any display of effeminacy, widespread encouragement of subversive violence, and heteronormative discourses. Courtenay (2000) outlined common standards of Western hegemonic masculinities: 'denial of weakness or vulnerability, emotional and physical control, the appearance of being strong and robust, dismissal of any need for help, a ceaseless interest in sex, [and] the display of aggressive behaviour and physical dominance' (p. 1389). These traits and behaviours have been repeated extensively in the literature (Blanco & Robinett, 2014; Collier, 2008; Connell, 2005; Cossins, 2007; Easton, 2014; Levant et al., 2013; Messerschmidt, 2005; Mowat, 2012; Murphy, 2009; Smiler, 2014; Towns et al., 2012; West, 2011; Willer, 2005; Wilson et al., 2010). However, it is important to view these not as attributes or performances of individual men, but as a structural ideology that implicitly endorses male superiority. In this way, hegemony does not need to be maintained by force; violence is only necessary to reinforce concealed hegemonic values (Bird, 1996; Carrigan et al., 2002).

However, not all academics have embraced the theory of hegemonic masculinities. Jefferson (2002) was critical of the way it had come to be used, but did not quibble with its original tenets. He objected to the tendency for sociologists and criminologists to erase contextual differences. He argued that, 'one consequence of reducing hegemonic masculinity to a set of traits or characteristics is to render the notion static, not something which is incessantly struggled over, as Connell's theoretical usage insists' (Jefferson, 2002, p. 71). He was correct to prioritise this relational and malleable understanding of masculinities but arguably it will always be useful to discuss the specific ways these are enacted — and sometimes this necessitates the 'attributional' focus he criticised (p. 71).

Other theorists have attempted to extend or clarify the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Wetherell and Edley (1999) thought the theory was insufficiently developed and did not articulate how men 'position themselves as gendered beings' (p. 335). They tried to explore this issue themselves, and found a 'relatively straightforward basis to the reproduction of male power as men act out and take on some of the imaginary characters conventionally associated with hegemonic masculinity' (Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 350). However, they were not totally critical of Connell's work, and concluded:

What seems worth keeping from [Connell's] account is the notion of hegemonic forms of intelligibility — the notion that men's conduct is regulated by shared

forms of sense-making which are consensual although contested, which maintain male privilege, which are largely taken for granted, and which are highly invested.
(Wetherell & Edley, 1999, p. 350).

This reference to investment echoes the premise of Cossins' power/powerlessness theory; someone who strives to overcompensate for perceived masculine inadequacies must be highly invested in the system of gender and relational powers.

Doing gender

West and Zimmerman (1987) coined the expression 'doing gender' to describe the performative nature of such identities; gender was said to be 'a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction' (p. 125). The concept of doing gender was seen as relevant at both individual and structural levels.

They conceived gender 'both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society' (p. 125). This latter part was also the basis of hegemony; enacting structural roles will validate their existence. The authors reasoned that, in order to successfully 'do' gender, an individual had to navigate, interact with, participate in and negotiate with various environments — each with their own unspoken rules. This gave rise to varying and various ways of doing gender, which were said to reinforce society's belief in the difference between men and women. This theory encouraged a revolutionary understanding of gender as something people actively performed, rather than as an identity they possessed (West & Zimmerman, 1987; 2000; 2002). However, the relevance of identity was not discarded entirely. The authors explained:

Individuals have many social identities that may be donned or shed, muted or made more salient, depending on the situation. (...) What this means is our identificatory displays will provide an ever-available resource for doing gender under an infinitely diverse set of circumstances.

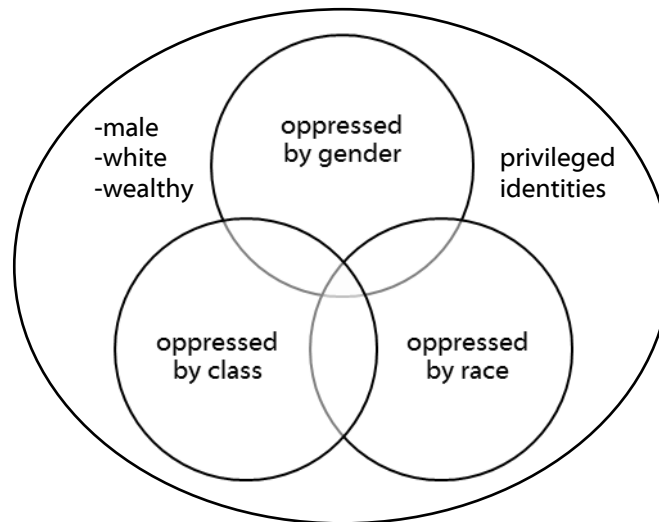
(West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 139).

Furthermore, gender is 'done' in such a way that its performative nature is obscured, which adds further legitimacy to gender-based social divisions (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Gender was described as both ongoing and unavoidable; all people were doing gender at all times. The act of doing gender also transcended biological restrictions by providing situational opportunities for the accomplishment of masculine ideals (Collier, 1998; Yates, 2003). For example, men who did not

possess physical strength to dominate on the sports field could still enact gendered ideals of authority and control to demonstrate their mental strengths. The concept of doing gender was later revisited and updated by West and Fenstermaker (1995a). They acknowledged that their earlier work had overlooked race and class, agreeing it was an ‘incomplete framework for understanding social inequality’. To this end, they proposed a comprehensive model that would illustrate the intersecting nature of oppression (p. 9). However, their model did not account for all axes of oppression, and omitted ones like disability or sexual orientation. Their model is shown in Figure 5.c.

Risman (2009) criticised how the concept of doing gender had come to be used within academia. She highlighted its theoretical tautology; whatever gendered people did was defined as an example of them doing gender — which unhelpfully encompassed all human behaviour. However, this oversimplified a complex issue and not all behaviour exists *primarily* within a gendered framework. Butler (2004) suggested it would be more useful to analyse the ways in which gender was ‘undone’ — a sentiment also supported by Risman (2009). West and Zimmerman (2009) responded to this, pointing out that gender was not merely a fixed list of specifications, and that any undoing would amount to abandoning gender altogether. They explained this would imply gender made no difference to people’s lives. They concluded: ‘we should emphasise that the oppressive character of gender rests not just on difference but the inferences from and the consequences of those differences’, adding that gender was ‘not *undone* so much as *redone*’ (West & Zimmerman, 2009, pp. 117-118, [emphasis in original]).

Figure 5.c. Intersectionality of oppression



(adapted from West & Fenstermaker, 1995a, p. 14).

Intersectionality

It would be disingenuous to introduce intersectionality without acknowledging the woman of colour who coined it, Kimberlé Crenshaw, as well as her ground-breaking work on womanism and Black feminism (Crenshaw, 1989). Second and third wave feminism largely ignored the ways in which gender interacted with other facets of identity — race, class, mental or physical ability, age, cultural identity or religion. Broadly speaking, feminism has been woefully one-dimensional in its focus, treating women as some sort of homogenous entity (Crenshaw, 1989; Shields, 2008). West and Fenstermaker (1995a) reasoned this was due to the identities of those who had produced it. Particular privilege was, and still is, afforded to white, cis, middle-class women at the expense of those oppressed for several identities. In other words, the marginalised were further silenced by a movement that purported to advocate equality and emancipation. To address this, the notion of kyriarchy was proposed to replace the traditional feminist concept of patriarchy (Fiorenza, 1993). The concept of kyriarchal oppression encouraged analysis of how gendered oppression interacted with other avenues of institutional discrimination. This pyramid-like model was favoured for increased nuance compared to the ladder-like understanding of patriarchal hierarchy (Nasrallah & Fiorenza, 2009):

[The kyriarchy is] stratified by gender, race, class, religion, heterosexualism and age; these are structural positions that are assigned to us more or less by birth. However, how people live these structural kyriarchal positions is conditioned not simply by these structural positions themselves, but also by the subject position through which we live our structural kyriarchal positions. (...) Our subject position

becomes coherent and compelling through political discourse, interpretive frameworks, and the development of theoretical horizons regarding domination. (...) [It] works through the violence of economic exploitation and lived subordination.

(Fiorenza, 1993, pp. 10,14).

Others explained intersectionality using the analogy of a game of pick-up sticks; each stick represented an axis of inequality and carried an assigned value or desirability (Bereswill et al., 2011). Applying either of these models would involve a comprehensive understanding of how various social identities influence and shape both the experience and expression of gender. Accordingly, Bereswill et al. (2011) strove to theoretically and empirically grasp ‘the points of overlap and intersection between various constellations of difference *without* employing gender as a privileged master category, but *also without* losing sight of the structuration of gender relations’ (pp. 69-70, [emphasis mine]). This made the pick-up sticks analogy quite appropriate; any given stick could be positioned above another stick at one end while remaining below another stick at another point of intersection. It also explained how some women could wield power over some men, while overall women remain oppressed by the patriarchy.

Bereswill et al. (2011) proposed scrutinising the ‘everyday patterns of action and interpretation’ — in other words: the layout of different pick-up sticks from the perspective of each player. This resonated with Connell (2005) who had emphasised that marginalisation was relative to the way hegemonic masculinity was authorised by dominant groups. Connell (2005) also explained how marginalisation and authorisation could exist between subordinated expressions of gender. She suggested these different relationships could constitute an overarching theoretical framework from which to analyse specific masculinities.

Since intersectionality is a relatively recent concept in feminist literature, there is little written that specifically relates to masculinity — and even less which discusses men who experience more than two axes of oppression. Some writers have succeeded with this multi-level analysis (for example see O’Neill, 2002; Ongiri, 1997; Shakespeare, 1999) but most have not widened their scope beyond race and gender (for example see Cooper, 2005; Gutmann & Vigoya, 2005; Hurtado & Sinha, 2008; Morrell & Swart, 2005; Stecopoulos & Uebe, 1997; Taga, 2005). Further, while some literature does operate with intersectional awareness, it has not always explicitly discussed the implications of this. For example, Icard (1986) portrayed sexual orientation as competing with racial identity rather

than complementing it. Other studies have examined attitudes between individuals who occupy different social identities. For example, Lemelle and Battle studied Black men's attitudes towards homosexuality (2004). However, framing these identities as incompatible overlooked the existence of queer Black men — particularly their unique experiences of homophobia⁵⁸. To a certain extent this positioning also reinforced the homophobia and whiteness it purported to challenge. 'Black man' and 'white man' were implicitly read as 'heterosexual Black man' and 'heterosexual white man'; heteronormative masculinity was the default. In this same way, 'gay man' was said when 'gay *white* man' was meant.

At its core, intersectional analysis requires power dynamics to be closely examined — specifically how power is embedded in various labels and social identities (Shields, 2008). Some have suggested geographical analysis is needed to 'explore not simply how masculinities are played out in different spaces, but how those spaces shape the very nature of the experience of masculinity, and how it articulates with other key dimensions of social relations' (Hopkins & Noble, 2009, p. 814). This analysis involves stepping away from individual psychology and avoiding an essentialist understanding of gender. Regarding this, Cossins (2000) suggested theorists avoid lists of character traits or masculine attributes. Hearn (1996a) further questioned the practicality of such lists, and suggested they did not reveal the active and participatory practices of men. He further commented that most theories of masculinity actively diverted attention away from material practice and the analysis of gendered power relations (Hearn, 1996a). It is unclear, however, how one might examine gendered power relations without first scrutinising individual expressions of masculinity. Inevitably, this involves some form of attribute list — at least at a rudimentary level. To settle this, theorists have emphasised the value of truly comprehending lived experience; that is, the first-hand accounts of men (Collier, 1998; Connell, 2002b; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Cossins, 2000; Cowburn, 2002; 2006; Fuller, 1993; Hearn, 1998; Hearn & Morgan, 1990; Kilmartin, 2000; Kimmel, 2008; Messerschmidt, 1993; 1997; 2000; 2005; 2008; Seidler, 2010).

⁵⁸The authors commented 'the data did not allow us to control for homosexual identity' (Lemelle & Battle, 2004, p. 49).

Understanding the complex construction of masculine identity, its expression, and the implications for individual men, is what originally motivated this thesis. Accordingly, it concentrates on the ramifications for men who do not manage to achieve gendered expectations, particularly those who express this inadequacy through criminal pathways. In other words: within the context of men who sexually abuse children, how does the social become individualised, and how can this lived experience be interpreted through a feminist framework?

6. MASCULINITIES IN PRACTICE

Masculinities and child sexual abuse

Hypermasculinity and overcompensation are mentioned throughout the literature on masculinity and crime — particularly in the context of sexual offending against adult women. A brief summary of that work will be provided here, as well as how such findings might specifically link to child sexual abuse. Only a few have written on this precise link and, accordingly, these studies will be presented in more depth.

Hypermasculinity

The notion of hypermasculinity was popularised by Mosher and Sirkin (1984) as a way of measuring machismo. They used a ‘forced-choice inventory’ to assess three traits that constituted hypermasculinity: callous or derogatory attitudes towards women, believing violence is manly, and viewing danger as exciting (p. 151). Pleck (1987) stressed that hypermasculinity was important in the conceptualisation of gender identity and consequent maintenance of hegemony. He described men who unconsciously adopted exaggerated masculine traits as a pre-emptive defence against perceived femininity (Bartolucci & Zeichner, 2003; Pleck, 1982). This was thought to trigger an identity crisis that could lead to sexual violence, but primarily reflected an extreme adherence to stereotypes of dominance, sexual conquest, aggression and heterosexuality. To clarify, character traits themselves are not said to be hypermasculine. It is the enactment of gender identity that can be described as hypermasculine when compared with the performance of normative masculinities. For example, in certain contexts, hegemonic masculinity mandates minimal emotional expression from men; the corresponding hypermasculine enactment would be an absolute rigid refusal to express any emotionality regardless of cues or context.

Some theorists have located hypermasculinity as a product of socio-historical processes, explaining that traditional 18th century manhood reflected a hyperbole of power and authority (Wiener, 1998). For the first half of the 19th century, masculinity was talked about as a ‘social problem’ for supposedly encouraging delinquency and underachievement (Carrigan et al., 2002, p. 103). Interestingly, Wiener (1998) argued that ‘to stigmatise (...) physical force is to

disproportionately (...) criminalise men' (p. 199). Such sentiment risks overlooking the gendered reality of interpersonal violence, which is disproportionately committed by men actively engaged in doing gender (Collier, 1998; Cossins, 2000; Messerschmidt, 1993; 2005). The focus on men and masculinities is not unjustified, as implied by Wiener (1998).

Willer (2005) investigated the social consequences of threatened masculinity. He found less authoritative men were significantly more likely to feel shame, guilt, sadness and hostility than their secure and dominant counterparts. Moreover, men who perceived their masculinity as threatened would respond by indulging in hypermasculine behaviours. This included expressing homophobic sentiment, increased support for the war in Iraq, and developing the desire to purchase an expensive SUV (Willer, 2005). Of interest, his research also found women exhibited no such behavioural change when their femininity was threatened, which supported earlier research about the comparative precariousness of masculinity; women's deviation from gender norms is widely deemed less serious and prompts fewer behavioural consequences.

Kimmel (2004) argued that men who came from a position of individual powerlessness could rape out of revenge or an attempt to regain structural advantage. He reasoned that because women's beauty was discursively expressed as a dangerous weapon — dressed to kill, bombshell — men experienced sexual allure as an aggressive act; rape was simple retaliation. This argument has limited applicability to sexual violence against children because men are not necessarily seeking revenge when they sexually violate children — although some might well be. Many are said to be motivated by the relative safety and comfort of childhood, as outlined in Ward and Keenan's (1999) dangerous world implicit theory. In this respect, offending could be interpreted as an adaptive strategy rather than retaliation. It would also seem prudent to move away from any analysis wherein individual men could be said to perpetrate sexual violence as a result of how women dress.

At this point, the distinction must be reiterated between masculine behaviours of individual men and the wider social ideology. These two do not necessarily correspond, and the latter holds ideals that are often unachievable (Connell, 2002b; 2002c). This conflict between structural power and personal response has formed the basis of many criminological debates, apropos why the structurally

powerful — i.e. men — commit crime when it is *powerlessness* that is known to be criminogenic⁵⁹.

Again, it is important to examine the relative way that power is experienced. As Messerschmidt (1997) commented, ‘the capacity to exercise power is, for the most part, a reflection of one’s position in social relationships’ (p. 9). Other writers have agreed that the inequality of gender relations has had ‘profound consequences for the character of men’ (Carrigan et al., 2002, p. 100). These same authors also commented on the seeming ‘contradictions between local situations and global relationships’ (Carrigan et al., 2002, p. 111). By this they meant situations where individual women wielded power over individual men, or were at least equal to them.

Overall, there is nothing men inherently possess that justifies their current position within the social hierarchy (Collier, 1998). While reproduction usually results from a penis penetrating a vagina — which conveys roles of both action and reception — it is problematic to claim that society should be organised on this basis. To do so also erases trans people’s realities by equating gender and genitals. Butler (1990) argued against the sex-gender distinction as it has been traditionally understood. She claimed both sex and gender were socially constructed, and that the sexed body was moulded to reflect political and societal influence rather than the other way around.

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex-gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of ‘men’ will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that ‘women’ will interpret only female bodies. (...) It would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category. Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex; gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to cultural as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or ‘a natural sex’ is produced and established as ‘prediscursive’, prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts.

(Butler, 1990, pp. 6, 7, [emphasis in original]).

The radical reinterpretation, allowed arguments that relied on evolutionary notions of strength, and the supposed biological superiority of men, to be dismissed as reductive and flawed (Butler, 2004;

⁵⁹ For further discussion see Merton (1957) and Agnew (1992).

Kimmel, 2004). It also successfully avoids the transphobic assumption that one's gender is dictated by genital configuration. Furthermore, the diversity within gender groupings far exceeds diversity between individuals of any given gender (Hyde, 2008). Granted, meta-analytic research does indicate the existence of fundamental biological differences between men and women (Ruigrok et al., 2014). However, other research has found that sex differences are less marked in societies with higher equality, which suggests that many supposedly-innate differences have arisen due to socialisation (Weber et al., 2014).

In order to further explore the link between power, masculinity and sexual offending, it is necessary to critique the connections between each factor. During a review of then-current literature on masculine socialisation, Lisak (1997) found fourteen studies — theoretical and empirical — that supported a significant correlation between sexual violence and hypermasculine traits (Kilmartin, 2000; Lisak, 1997). Of these, Malamuth et al. (1991) was the most methodologically rigorous; it concluded masculine socialisation, specifically hostile or hypermasculinity, was 'implicated causally in the genesis of sexual victimisation' (as cited in Lisak, 1997, p. 157). Lisak (1997; 2008) suggested this socialisation contributed to rape through a combination of proximal and distal environmental factors; sexual violence was just one of the 'myriad manifestations of a misogynist and patriarchal culture' (Lisak, 1991, p. 242). He contended the evidence was overwhelming enough to view masculine socialisation as a public health issue. Cowburn (2010) also endorsed this view of masculinity as a community safety issue, saying it had been ignored for too long.

Lisak (2008) commented on the existence of crossover offenders — that is, men who have offended against more than one group of victims. Research by Abel et al. (1992) found 33% to 66% of rapists had also molested children, 82% of men who sexually abused children had likewise violated adults, and 50% to 66% of incest offenders had victimised unrelated children (as cited in Heil et al., 2003). Heil et al. (2003) used polygraph testing on people incarcerated for sexual offences. They found that the majority had offended against both adults and children, with 78% of child molesters confessing to having sexually assaulted adults as well. In contrast, research from Cann et al. (2007) found age-crossover offending only in 17% of their sample. However, their reliance on official conviction history was likely the reason for this lower rate. Crucially, though, they found that crossover offenders had significantly higher risk profiles — both for sexual and violent recidivism — than those

who had targeted a specific type of victim. Overall, these figures indicate that research on adult rapists, particularly that addressing hypermasculinity, could perhaps also apply to some child molesters. At the very least, it is clear that offending categories are not as discrete as once thought.

A comprehensive literature review was conducted by Murnen et al. (2002). They found a substantial body of research to support the connection between hypermasculinity and sexual violence against adult women. For example, a cross-cultural comparison found rape was most prevalent within societies that subordinated and segregated women, and those that endorsed macho stereotypes. Another study explained how ‘traditional sexual scripts’ for men encouraged irresponsibility, alcohol consumption and risk-taking — behaviours that cultivated acceptance for sexual violence against women (Murnen et al., 2002, p. 360). The review also detailed how masculine ideals could ‘promote maladaptive sexual behaviour’ by teaching men to objectify women (Murnen et al., 2002, p. 361). In total, Murnen et al. (2002) evaluated 39 studies with respect to various masculine ideologies⁶⁰; all but one — that is, sexual conservatism — correlated with sexual violence against women; the strongest association was for both hostile⁶¹ and hypermasculinities. The authors reasoned that masculine ideology ‘encourages men to be dominant and aggressive, and it teaches that women are inferior to men and sometimes worthy of victimisation’ (Murnen et al., 2002, p. 359). This conclusion has interesting implications for this thesis. Society also deems children worthy of victimisation; physical discipline is accepted by many parents, and children are defined as inferior to their fathers. Further research would be required to explore the extent to which the rape-supportive culture surrounding adult women extends to children’s bodies and sexual experiences.

Hartsock (1983) located hostility towards women as a central component of men’s sexual arousal; intimacy and pleasure were said to be incidental. This sentiment has been supported by anti-pornography feminists, who have claimed that women’s pain and suffering has been sexualised for the male gaze (for example see Bindel, 2010; Dines et al., 1998; Dworkin, 1981). Hartsock (1983)

⁶⁰ Ideologies measured were: 1) acceptance of interpersonal violence, 2) adversarial sexual beliefs, 3) attitudes towards women, 4) dominance and power over women, 5) hostile masculinity, 6) hostility toward women, 7) hypermasculinity, 8) masculine personality traits, 9) rape myth acceptance, 10) sex role conservatism, and 11) sex role stereotyping (Murnen et al., 2002).

⁶¹ Hostile masculinity is one of two factors — the other being impersonal sex — that comprise Malamuth’s (1996) confluence model of sexual aggression.

used feminist theory to examine how social institutions condoned sexual violence against adults. A significant body of literature has substantiated this argument and confirmed the existence of rape culture; that is, institutionalised, structurally-implemented and individually disseminated attitudes that endorse sexual violence against women (Adams et al., 1995; Brownmiller, 1975; Dahl, 1999; Jordan, 2001; 2004; Lea & Auburn, 2001; Lees, 1997; 2002; Osman, 2011; Sanday, 2008; Scully & Marolla, 1995; Voller & Long, 2009). However, this does not explain why sexual violence should be conceptualised under the umbrella of deviance if it merely involves enacting normative masculine behaviours; further, how this could be explained in light of universal derision directed towards men who sexually abuse children. These questions have significant bearing on this thesis, and answering them could clarify ways in which ‘doing gender’ is influenced by internal and external factors. If there does exist a form of misogyny directed towards children, it would be useful to understand how this fits with the prevailing conception of children as wholly innocent and virtuous (Kitzinger, 1988; Meyer, 2007; Robinson, 2008; Warner, 1995). Perhaps, as Kitzinger (1988) commented, the ideological innocence of childhood is so fetishised that it functions to titillate would-be abusers.

Overcompensation and powerlessness

Issues of power and masculinity pertaining to adult rapists become even more pronounced when discussing men who sexually abuse children; socially constructed vulnerability and biological powerlessness make young people an easier target. It is also important to identify how characteristic traits of child sex offenders — such as cognitive distortions, low victim empathy and deviant sexual arousal — relate to power dynamics and gendered experiences. For example, exploring whether these characteristics might predispose an individual to having less structural power, and subsequently prevent individuals from accessing legitimate sources of masculinity. Or perhaps whether these traits cast some men outside the realm of normative gender expression and thus preclude non-criminal mechanisms for doing gender (Phillips, 2005).

Collier (1995) said that child sexual abuse, particularly incest, constituted an ‘accusation against [the concept of] masculinity’ itself (p. 246). This was because such behaviour conflicted with socially constructed notions of safe, protective and natural fatherhood. In order to reconcile this inconsistency, masculinity became hypersexualised. He explained:

This model of masculinity repeats the idea that (...) men somehow cannot control their own sexuality and that women and children must then be responsible for ensuring that *they* do not arouse men. An effect of this is to both accept the inevitability of child sexual abuse whilst, ultimately, holding women responsible for controlling male sexuality.

(Collier, 1995, p. 247, [emphasis in original]).

hooks (2004) argued that ‘fathers cannot love their sons because the rules of patriarchy dictate they stand in competition (...), ready to prove that they are the real man, the one in charge’ (p. 44). She further explained how physical violence was unnecessary in this forceful socialising process; ‘to keep their sons in check [fathers] use various techniques of psychological terrorism, the primary one being the practice of shaming’ (p. 47). Siedler (1997) confirmed this is a recurring theme in interviews with men, and refers to it as a ‘deep and largely unacknowledged wound’ in the collective consciousness of masculinity (p. 67). Supporting this, Lisak (1991) found that rapists exhibited strong feelings of resentment toward fathers who had emasculated them during childhood. In contrast, the men’s emotional reaction to mothering patterns was inconsistent, with no clear pattern emerging (Lisak, 1991). Such findings have reinforced the need for further analysis of parenting and attachment styles, particularly with reference to gender identity, powerlessness and overcompensation. Overall, the roles of parenthood and gender socialisation are strictly intertwined and the precise nature of this relationship will be analysed as it appears in participants’ narratives.

Longitudinal research conducted by Salter et al. (2003) added support to the theory of overcompensation. Their findings suggested victims of childhood sexual abuse at the hands of female perpetrators were significantly more likely to commit offences in adulthood — especially sexual offences against children. This could be explained as the shock of gender roles being subverted as well as the abuse inflicted on them. It is known that boys who have survived child sexual abuse themselves can experience a unique range of psychological symptoms not seen in young female victims, namely a pervasive and entrenched uncertainty regarding their sense of masculinity (Kilmartin, 2000; Lisak, 1997; Tremblay & Turcotte, 2005). This could frame later behaviour as an overcompensatory or maladaptive coping strategy.

The relationship between childhood victimisation and later offending is not straightforward and does not always resemble the conventional ‘cycle of violence’ seen in victims of physical abuse (Fagan, 2001; 2005; Simons et al., 2002). However, the significant majority of victims do not go on to

offend; girls are more commonly victimised yet men dominate offending statistics. Moreover, many offenders will not have experienced abuse themselves. Lievore et al. (2007) concluded that 'the victim-offender cycle is a popular explanation for why some boys and men sexually abuse children, although a history of abuse is neither a necessary nor a sufficient predictor of sex offending' (p. 9). Having said this, research has found boys sexually abused as children show a greater propensity towards later sexual offending than young girls similarly abused (Jespersen et al., 2009; Simons et al., 2002). Some studies have supported this correlation regardless of whether boys were violated by adult men or women (Hunter et al., 2010; Simons et al., 2002); others claimed later offending was significantly more likely for boys abused by adult women, and even more likely again for boys abused by both men *and* women (Seto, 2008). These findings suggest feminine gender constructs are comparably more secure, less rigidly enforced and more flexible than masculine equivalents. Overall, it seems sexually victimised boys experience greater consequences with respect to gender identity and expression than similarly victimised girls (Bosson et al., 2009).

Elsewhere, studies have found that boys victimised by adult men tended to express greater levels of masculine hostility, which was perhaps an overcompensatory reaction to victimisation generally (Hunter et al., 2010; Seto, 2008). Seto (2008) explained that while 12% of sexually abused boys went on to become offenders themselves, most of their offending took place within three years of their own victimisation. Other literature found childhood maltreatment increased rates of alcohol and drug abuse that in turn facilitated offending behaviour (Fagan, 2001). It is extremely difficult to ascertain whether victimisation is the trigger per se, and the directional and specific nature of victim-to-offender progression is yet to be fully understood. Kia-Keating et al. (2005) studied patterns of resilience among male survivors of sexual abuse. They found that men engaged in active and ongoing renegotiation of their masculine identities, and this often mirrored the process of healing from their own abuse. Jespersen et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between prior victimisation and later offending. They concluded that 'sexual abuse history is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for adult sexual offending' (p. 190).

Of the limited work that explicitly relates masculinity to child sexual abuse, one notable study was by Allen and Pothast (1994). They hypothesised that men who molested children would demonstrate greater levels of masculinity in comparison to the general population. They also suggested

that female offenders would score higher on scales of femininity. Intriguingly, their data did not confirm either premise — a result which has interesting implications for this thesis. If child sex offenders do not possess overtly masculine attributes, they could be using sexual violence as a means of overcompensating for a perceived lack of masculinity. Critical to this is whether such perceptions are based in reality or subjective insecurity.

Building upon this was Lancaster and Lumb's (1999) investigation into therapeutic approaches used by practitioners working with child sex offenders. Their study revealed that while most were aware of gender systems and constructions of masculinity, such theories were absent from all treatment modalities used. Boyd (2007) confirmed this absence and recommended rehabilitation programmes should urgently incorporate an analysis of social and gendered relations. These factors were said to support a continuum of masculine dominance over children, and for this reason needed to be unravelled and critiqued. However, part of this must happen, too, at an individual level. In this respect, Purvis and Ward (2006) queried whether feminist theories were even relevant in clinical settings, citing their failure to account for individual differences. They suggested: 'theorists are ultimately concerned with maintaining depth and complexity in their arguments, so much so that we find they are unable to articulate concisely what their theoretical position on child sexual offending is' (Purvis & Ward, 2006, p. 305). It is hoped this thesis will resolve some of their criticisms by adjusting sociological theories to reflect the diversity of individual gender practices.

Overall, the most significant contribution to the discourse of masculinity and child sexual abuse has been made by Cossins (2000). Her theory of powerlessness helped explain the ways in which masculinity was implicated in sexual offending against children. She reasoned that 'gender is the strongest predictor of who will engage in sexual behaviour with children' (p. 91). Cossins (2000) amalgamated and extended arguments of previous academics, chiefly Collier (1993; 1995; 1998), Connell (1983; 1987; 1995), Fuller (1993); Hearn (1987; 1996), Kimmel (1994; 1995) and Messerschmidt (1993; 1999). She did not refer to Allen and Pothast (1994), Hearn (1990) Lancaster and Lumb (1999) or Lisak (1991; 1997), and doing so could have broadened her scope.

Principally, Cossins (2000) proposed a new framework for understanding sexual violence committed by men against children — one which elaborated on the notion of 'doing gender':

Sexual behaviour with a child may be a key experience through which power is derived and masculinity is accomplished. In fact, a child sex offender's chronic experiences of powerlessness may then explain chronic instances of sex offending against children. Despite any structural power that a man may be able to draw on, because of the dynamic and changing characteristics of gender practices (...) most men will experience a combination of experiences of power and powerlessness. Thus it is proposed that offenders sexually abuse children in circumstances where there are real or perceived challenges to their masculine power, such as a direct experience of lack of sexual potency or an experience which constitutes a lack of power as a man in other arenas of life. (...) Further, the choice of a child as a sexual 'partner' may also be a function of a lack of congruence with, or inability to conform to, some aspects of the masculine sexual ideal. (...) Similarly, child sexual abuse can also be said to be an expression of men's public power — in the sense of a man being able to gain access to a child, being able to manipulate a child sexually, silencing the child or colluding with other men in covering up the abuse — and an expression of men's lack of personal power.

(Cossins, 2000, pp. 126-127).

This salient observation resolved some problems with previous theories, namely by explaining how men could be simultaneously powerful and powerless. Cossins' (2000) work showed that a unique confluence of circumstances motivated men to seek affirmation by sexually abusing children. This affirmation did not have to be outwardly reinforced to be relevant. The power gained through the perpetration of sexual abuse was said to be as much about self-identity as it was about peer approval. A case study from Messerschmidt (2000) illustrated this point. 'Sam' grew up in a nonviolent home and believed that masculinity entailed 'success at work, power, strong [and] being like dad' (p. 25). Unfortunately for Sam, this was unattainable due to his diminutive stature; he suffered in silence from schoolyard bullying and was helpless to fight back. Subsequently, he developed depressed cognitive states and felt he was not able to attract sexual partners — a sentiment that precluded achievement of masculine expectations. He adapted by abusing younger girls, and articulated this in strongly gendered terms:

I wanted to have some kind of sexual experience. And that didn't happen at school. (...) I looked at how my life was, how I feared the people at school, so I figured I could get a girl I was babysitting. (...) With people my own age I felt like I was a wimp, the person that wasn't worth anything. But when I did this to the girls, I felt like I was big, I was in control of everything. (...) I felt like I should be able to have sexual contact with anybody that I wanted to. And I couldn't do that with girls my own age. (...) I'm a guy. I'm supposed to have sex. And so I'm like them [popular boys], but I'm even better than them because I can manipulate.

(Messerschmidt, 2000, pp. 29-31).

These comments highlighted how Sam's offending gave him power and excitement and provided an opportunity to compensate for his perceived masculine inadequacy. To Sam, it was immaterial that no one knew what was happening; his newfound secret confidence was sufficient consolation and, in some respects, actually piqued his excitement level. Also noted was Sam's repetition of 'should' and 'supposed to' which indicated the importance he placed on societal ideology and acceptance.

Messerschmidt (1994, p. 85) suggested analysing how offenders 'construct different personifications of masculinity' (p. 85). In Sam's case, his sense of masculinity could be understood as an extension of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation refers to how individuals perceive and respond to inequality within society (Walters & Bradley, 2005). This phrase is commonly used in reference to the growing chasm between wealthy and impoverished people, and has been said to motivate criminal behaviour when individuals are prevented from legitimately meeting social goals (Merton, 1957; Runciman, 1966; Walters & Bradley, 2005; Young, 1999). Young (1999) stated that 'relative deprivation breeds discontent, which can manifest itself in many ways; crime is only one of them' (p. 48). It is, therefore, possible that men who have bought into rules of hegemonic masculinity may perceive their own inadequacy as a form of relative deprivation.

Wetherell and Edley (1999) focused on how individual men move through social spheres with differing hegemonic dictates. It is possible such movement invokes tensions and conflicts that necessitate new strategies for doing gender — including deviant ones. Messerschmidt (2005) explained that men's bodies served as tools for 'doing gender' and exerting masculine agency. But it also seems that encultured gendered norms have a profound impact on how this occurs; for instance, how women are socialised to suppress anger whereas men are encouraged to release hostility outwards. Herbert (2002) suggested this was because contemporary Western scripts encourage men to project inner turmoil onto external audiences — namely, women and male peers (as cited in Kilmartin, 2004).

Cossins (2000) also explored how adult-oriented sexual attraction might become misdirected towards children. She argued that feminine attractiveness has been constructed to evoke child-related themes of passivity, tenderness, naïvety and virginity. It may also be that sexualisation of children reflects other societal phenomena: earlier onset of puberty, the eroticism of unattainability, evolutionary association between fertility and youthfulness, or a beauty industry undermining adult women's self-esteem for its own ends. Cossins (2000) contended that differing age-of-consent laws

prove normative masculinity once included sexual contact with children. However, it is important to realise the notion of childhood has similarly changed; historically, young teenagers were not perceived differently from older teenagers insofar as their sexual maturity was concerned (Davidson, 2008; Jackson, 2000). In recent decades there has been mounting concern over the sexualisation of young girls and that children are being forced to 'grow up too quickly' (Coughlan, 2013, p. 1). One survey reported 54% of parents were concerned about provocative clothing being marketed to tween⁶² girls. Such matters will be explored in this thesis, specifically whether these narratives play a role in participants' offending.

There has been one exploratory study conducted in New Zealand which made a compelling argument for further research in the area. Mowat (2012) examined masculinity as a possible site of pre-emptive intervention, hoping to engage men in treatment before they had sexually offended against children. His background is in clinical psychology, and perhaps for this reason his analysis did not draw from many sociological or criminological sources; for example, he did not acknowledge Cossins' (1999; 2000; 2007; in press) significant contribution. Mowat (2012) identified several possible areas for early intervention. Firstly, he recommended challenging and rewriting dominant media messages that have portrayed child sex offenders as irreversibly deviant and monstrous. Secondly, he identified the need for institutions — he used the military as an example — to mandate support services and counselling. He suggested this would help men bypass 'the manly discourse that forbids helpseeking behaviour for men' (p. 178). Thirdly, he argued for the need to 'transform adherence to hegemonic masculinity among men who sexually abuse or are at risk of sexually abusing' (p. 179). While his thesis acknowledged how sociocultural factors shape individual behaviour, his recommendations were predominantly person-level not society-level — although they did focus specifically on masculinity. Despite this, he commented:

It is not enough to expect all individuals to be able to resist constructions of masculinity that are associated with child sexual abuse. In order for prevention to happen, there must be meaningful changes in the institutions where hegemonic masculinity and manly discourses are pervasive.

(Mowat, 2012, p. 184).

⁶² The transitional ages between childhood and early teens.

Overall, his research provided several promising areas for further exploration: narratives of the ‘distant dad’, early representations of masculinity, sexual objectification of women, fragile identities and feelings of worthlessness, and insecure relationships. Unfortunately, his sample size was limited to four men, and he did not examine any issues of unique relevance to New Zealand men. His conclusion — that ‘certain hegemonic masculine discourses can permit sexually harmful behaviour including child sexual abuse’ — supports the need for further research in a local context (p. 184).

Masculinities in Aotearoa

Pākehā and Māori masculinities are distinct in many ways from other Western gender identities, but share similarities too. Unfortunately, neither have been written about extensively. This section will review existing literature and its potential relevance to this thesis.

Many Kiwi men proudly recall an incident involving All Black Wayne ‘Buck’ Shelford during a 1986 rugby match against France:

[He] managed to tear his scrotum, leaving one testicle hanging out. This alone would leave most men screaming in agony and heading for the nearest hospital. But not Shelford. He calmly instructed the physio to stitch him up (...) [then] returned to the field and carried on playing.

(Soneji, 2002, p. 1)

Shelford sustained other injuries during this match — he lost four teeth and was concussed — but continued to play. He has been described as ‘a warrior of uncompromising toughness’ for this display of ‘brutish courage’ (Penfold & Bingham, 2013, p. 1). Others described him as a demi-God within New Zealand (Soneji, 2002). This demi-God status has been ascribed to a select few Kiwis, almost all of them men (Hood, 1997). Famous women have rarely been afforded the same reverence as their male counterparts, and there are no female equivalents for existing aspirational male stereotypes. For example, ‘Sheila’ has never invoked connotations of authority or legitimacy in the same way as ‘Kiwi bloke’ (Law et al., 1999, p. 14). In addition, the Shelford legend is not an isolated example⁶³. Norm Hewitt’s decision to play the National Provincial Championship final with a broken arm has also become part of rugby folklore. A prominent rugby league captain, Mark Graham, later declared: ‘it is

⁶³ Until the 1970s rules actually stipulated that injured players were not allowed to be substituted off the field (Phillips, 1987).

the mark of a man to carry on playing while injured', and then labelled ACC Minister Ruth Dyson an 'idiot' for suggesting Hewitt take a rest from playing (Independent Radio News, 2000, p. 1).

Spectator and participant sports have long been an integral facet of Kiwi men's identities (Bruce et al., 2007; Edwards, 2007; Hood, 1997; Jackson & McKenzie, 2007; Obel & Kerr, 2007; Phillips, 1987; Pringle, 2007; Thomson & Sim, 2007). Thomson and Sim (2007) explained how New Zealand's colonial history forged a national identity inextricably connected to the land. The harsh physical conditions, manual work performed by settlers, self-reliance as a means of survival, and the gender imbalance of early arrivals all helped develop a masculine identity of 'mateship'. Edwards (2007) criticised this emphasis on sport because it invalidated and obscured other factors that have shaped New Zealand men's identities — namely art and literature. Others have argued that sport transcends identity and functions almost as a religion, by nurturing social cohesion and providing idols worthy of worship (Lineham & Collins, 2007). Sport has also been said to be a powerful social leveller, where differences of ethnicity and belief hold little bearing. Certainly, rugby has been one of the few spheres where Māori and Pasifika have achieved equality with, and many times outshone, their Pākehā counterparts (Hokowhitu, 2004; 2007a). In this respect, New Zealand's national identity has come to be synonymous with masculinity; femininity has been relegated to the sidelines both metaphorically and literally (Hood, 1997).

Masculinities in New Zealand are undeniably more complex than those associated with sport, and are certainly too varied to summarise here in any meaningful way. Many academics have attempted to define or articulate gender identities in New Zealand, but these have often been stereotypical or restrictive and focused on select examples at the expense of others. For example see: beer-drinking (Campbell et al., 1999; Hardy, 2007), rural mindedness and 'Number 8 wire' entrepreneurialism (Law et al., 1999; Phillips, 1987), Māori savages (Hokowhitu, 2004), hard-working and unemotional stoicism (Phillips, 1987), Pākehā national pride (Hood, 1997), and intrepid travellers and explorers (Bell, 2002). Few of these, however, have characterised the nuances of New Zealand's multicultural population.

Hokowhitu (2007b) suggested Māori men have been 'afforded a narrow space' in the national landscape of masculinities (p. 63). He cited the colonising process that stripped Māori of perceived civility and cast them as savage or primitive — a construction that simultaneously defined

Pākehā as sophisticated and enlightened (Hokowhitu, 2007a). This, he argued, partly ‘led to the problems we see facing Māori men today — including the internalisation of an inferiority complex by some’ (Hokowhitu, 2007b, p. 64). Hokowhitu (2004; 2007a; 2007b) also observed the ways in which both Māori and Pākehā masculinities have been constructed as hypermasculine — but noted both middle- and upper-class Pākehā men have come to embrace a ‘more communicative and gentle masculinity’ (2007b, p. 65). He suggested this was not occurring equally for Māori men because their communication was often silenced in favour of physical expression. He also discussed racist stereotypes that deemed Māori to be collectively responsible⁶⁴ for violent child abuse in New Zealand; any abuse perpetrated by Māori men was deemed to constitute a ‘Māori problem’, yet the actions of Pākehā have not been similarly defined (p. 67). This construction has privileged Pākehā offenders by preserving their individual identity.

The negative associations of New Zealand masculinities must also be discussed. Compared with women, men are nearly five times as likely to commit suicide, have over twice the risk of dying in motor vehicle accidents, leave school with fewer qualifications, and experience higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse (Bray & Hutchison, 2007; Pringle, 2007). These negative statistics compound when looking specifically at Māori men (Bray & Hutchison, 2007; Hokowhitu, 2004). Some have even asserted that masculinities are ‘dangerous to men’s health’ (Sabo, 1998, p. 347, as cited in Pringle, 2007, p. 358). There is clearly truth to Connell’s (2005) observation that hegemonic masculinity normalises extremely problematic ways of enacting gender. This is not to say violence is a mandatory aspect of maleness, and sexual violence is certainly unacceptable on the surface. Grace (2008) had this to say:

Since general violence was constructed as a way of ‘getting it right as a man’, participants⁶⁵ spoke in considerable detail about their activities. However, participants were reluctant to talk about their sexual violence and silences predominated. As an alternative, they took up an ‘unknowing’ position about why they were sexually violent. *Sexual violence was constructed as irrational and therefore unknowable.* (...) Some described positive outcomes as a result of their violence, such as feeling powerful, taking revenge and gaining sexual satisfaction. Although

⁶⁴ For example, political pundit Michael Laws labelled Māori families as ‘ferals’ (Laird, 2010, p. 1) and a ‘subspecies of humanity’ (Laws, 2012a, p. 1). Elsewhere he suggested they should be sterilised (Laws, 2012b).

⁶⁵ Three Pākehā teenagers in the care of Child, Youth and Family Services, and four Pākehā youths in the custody of Department of Corrections.

a few reported feeling shameful and guilty about what they had done immediately afterwards, these negative feelings did not motivate them to confess, nor to make restitution to their victim/s nor prevent them from committing further sexual violence.

(pp. iv,4-5, [emphasis mine]).

Several academics have written about the way sport and violence overlap, and how each intensifies by the other. Some have argued that sport not only provides a healthy outlet for aggression, it also teaches men how to win and lose graciously (Edwards, 2007; Jackson & McKenzie, 2007; Thomson & Sim, 2007). Arguably, this does not apply to the All Blacks — who are deemed unbeatable even when beaten, and whose losses often trigger a national mourning period followed by apportioning of blame. For example, there were death threats against referee Wayne Barnes following New Zealand's loss to France at the 2007 World Cup quarter-final (Fairfax, 2007a). Coach Graham Henry later commented that match-fixing was the 'only logical explanation' for the loss (Kilgallon, 2012, p. 1). Such was the extent of national grief that then-prime minister Helen Clark was called on to placate fans (Fairfax, 2007b). Reactions like these surely have implications for what New Zealand men learn about competitiveness and defeat, and may go some way to explain spikes in domestic violence that have accompanied losses (Associated Press, 2007; 2012; Fox, 2010).

Pringle (2007) proposed that failing at sport amounted to a failure of masculinity, and in this respect sport was a 'litmus test of masculinity' (p. 361). He did acknowledge, though, that gender identity was formed long before one usually participates in sport. However, it is possible sport functions to reinforce and mould any existing gendered attitudes. Anderson (2009) called sport the 'indoctrination of manhood' (p. 23), and was generally critical of the connection between violence and sport. Despite this, he admitted that sport allowed men opportunities for emotional expression that were prohibited in other contexts. For example, British men sometimes kiss each other to celebrate an important football goal. Few other situations would allow heterosexual men to display similar affection without opprobrium.

Anderson (2009) commented on the exclusionary nature of violence in sport wherein certain forms of the male body were deemed unacceptable — most often for not meeting thresholds of strength or performance. He suggested that children who were rejected for not meeting physical masculine standards may feel their 'citizenry into boyhood' was being denied (p. 47). He also discussed

subtle expressions of violence in sport, namely that success could only be attained at the expense of another's loss. This is significant because it surreptitiously supports a hierarchical masculinity and reinforces a proprietary sense of entitlement⁶⁶. Anderson (2009) summarised:

Rather than viewing competitors as agents in cooperation to bring about one's best, others are viewed as obstacles in the path of obtaining cultural and economic power. (...) Violence, intentional or not, therefore becomes an acceptable tool in achieving this victory.

(p. 48).

Others have argued the commercialisation and commodification of sport have actually weakened the influence of hegemonic masculinity (Pringle, 2007). Further, not all sport is the same and many have differing masculine ideals. For example, the body of an elite weightlifter differs greatly from that of a professional basketballer. However, in both cases physical performance is prioritised. Tischler and McCaughtry (2011) explained how this created a hierarchy of masculinities where certain bodies were belittled for not meeting hegemonic standards. Their research examined the behavioural responses of teenage boys who embodied these marginalised masculinities. They found a variety of reactions: extreme displays of fear such as vomiting and 'balling up', but also resistance activities such as being uncooperative with teachers. They concluded that marginalised bodies were both the site of oppression and a method of engaging in active defiance against those who enforced such standards — in this case teachers and fellow classmates.

Smith's (1990) portrayal of New Zealand masculinity showed the ways that unattainable role models psychologically damaged men. This dysfunctionality, she said, was aggravated by distant or absent fathers who taught their boys to be emotionally distant and aloof. This was reiterated by Bray (2007), who described it as a fundamental component of the Boy Code. He claimed this eventually 'masks boys' creativity, stifles their authentic selves, represses tender emotions and legitimises the expression of anger' (Bray & Hutchison). This notion of suppressed sadness will be explored further within participant narratives, as will aspects of New Zealand culture that may nurture such attitudes.

⁶⁶ A proprietary view of women combined with a strong sense of entitlement have been said to influence men's likelihood of rape (Adams et al., 1995; Hannawa et al., 2006; Scully, 1990; Scully & Marolla, 1995).

Overall, it is inevitable for participants' identities to have been affected by home-grown views of masculinity; one cannot escape the influence of culture.

Theoretical clarification

Given the limited scope of a doctoral thesis, it has not been possible to exhaustively detail the academic debates regarding the theoretical understanding of gender. In the preceding literature review I have critically examined influential concepts and ideas, rather than present one perspective as being more correct than any another. I have discussed disparate studies, including those which may seem to have epistemological contradictions. For example, I discussed gender role theory and socialisation because they have both informed the current understanding of masculinities, and because they have informed my broader approach to analysis. However, given the perceived incompatibility between some authors — in particular the work of Judith Butler alongside that of West and Zimmerman — it is worth clarifying my own position. Their academic debate was summarised on p. 75 but extends beyond the issue of whether gender is done, undone or redone (for example see Butler, 2004; Connell, 2010; Connell, 2009; Jurik & Siemsen, 2009; Kitziinger, 2009; Messerschmidt, 2009; Ranasinghe, 2013; Smith, 2009; West & Fenstermaker, 1995a; 1995b; 2008; West & Zimmerman, 1987; 2000; 2002; 2009).

I do not agree that gender is one thing or another. Gender is many different things in many different contexts, and for this reason I favour a theory knitting approach. Gender is a process; gender is performance; gender is generated through socialisation; and gender has been understood as a list of character traits commonly associated with particular gender roles. Problematically, the notion of doing gender supposes that the way gender is *done* arises naturally from assigned biological sex — with an assumption that sex reflects an objective categorisation of reality. This is the conventional difference between sex and gender, and was outlined on p. 63. Butler (1990; 2004) argues that biological sex itself is socially constructed, as was introduced on p. 82. Herein lies the crux of these theories' epistemological incompatibility, and I think Butler (1990; 2004) may be correct on this point. However, accepting this does not undermine the theoretical validity or importance of West and Zimmerman's (1987; 2000; 2002; 2009) doing gender. The two theories can complement each other yet give rise to different points of interpretation and application. Primarily, the Foucauldian and

philosophical components of Butler's (1990; 2004) work do not fit within the scope of this thesis; it is West and Zimmerman's (1987; 2000; 2002; 2009) emphasis on socialisation and sociology that are the preferred theoretical lens for my research.

7. RESEARCH DESIGN

The previous five chapters have laid out a comprehensive review of literature relating to masculinities and child sexual offending. This review has helped to identify shortfalls in current knowledge, around which objectives and key research questions have been tailored.

Objectives

- ~ To explore the interrelationships between gender socialisation, masculinities — self-identified and idealised — and sexual violence against children.
- ~ To analyse participants' narratives using sociological, criminological, psychological, and gender and feminist theories.
- ~ To identify key themes emerging from participants' narratives and discuss the implications of these with respect to gender and masculinity.
- ~ To examine ways in which child sex offenders achieve, negotiate or defy normative gender expectations.

Key questions

- ~ Do participants display attempted or failed expressions of legitimate⁶⁷ masculinity?
- ~ Are there attitudes or behaviours that have prevented participants from achieving legitimate forms of masculinity?
- ~ Are rigid or traditional gender expectations found within offenders' family dynamics?
- ~ Do participants justify or explain their offending in gendered ways?

Methodology

Methodological perspectives are based on a set of underlying assumptions, collectively described as epistemology. An epistemological framework provides the philosophical grounding for deciding what

⁶⁷ I use the word legitimate in one of two ways. Either a) to describe the opposite of criminal behaviour, or b) to describe socially-sanctioned and socially-endorsed performances of masculinity; that is, masculinities that do not invoke censure or scorn from peers. It is difficult to explicitly define this concept, because what is deemed legitimate will differ depending on context.

sort of information is valid, what counts as knowledge, and the scope for legitimate research (Crotty, 1998). Constructivism is one such epistemology, and is based on the idea there is no objective truth, and that 'truth' — as humans interpret it — only exists within the context of meaningful social and cultural interactions. This, therefore, is an epistemology of subjective reality and dynamic experience. It focuses on the active and participatory construction of knowledge, and directly informs the theoretical framework of interpretivism used in this research.

Interpretivism functions as the theoretical structure for undertaking qualitative investigation. It embraces subjectivity and individual perspectives in order to achieve *verstehen*, the understanding acquired from putting yourself in someone else's shoes (Crotty, 1998; Noaks & Wincup, 2004). Accordingly, interpretivism facilitates a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of a given issue and is an appropriate perspective for exploring the complex relationship between masculinity and sexual violence against children. In addition, interpretivism is conducive to the flexible multimethod approach used in this research. It also determines the specific methods of analysis employed and the type of data collected.

While the use of semi-structured interviewing does involve a considerable time investment, this inconvenience pales in comparison to the rich and detailed data gathered. Intensive one-on-one interviewing also permits the researcher to develop rapport with the subject, facilitating an unencumbered and candid discussion of necessary issues. It is particularly appropriate for sensitive research topics such as this one (Jordan, 2001; 2004). Moreover, this method enables participants to articulate their experiences without being bound by the researcher's conceptual framework, and further provides a non-judgemental environment in which to express their perspective (Jordan, 2004). Their narratives can then be interpreted within existing theories — an approach that supports the aims and objectives of this research.

Methodology functions as a bridge between more tangible research activities like fieldwork and data collection, and the philosophical assumptions underpinning such activities (Crotty, 1998). This thesis utilises both narrative and thematic inquiry to interpret a variety of data sources: semi-structured and in-depth interviews, secondary sources in the form of file notes, judicial reports

and psychologists' accounts, as well as information gathered from a Q-sort task⁶⁸. By engaging child sexual offenders in reflexive dialogue, their attitudes and life experiences can be explored within the gendered framework of psychological development. Subsequent verification of these first-hand accounts from secondary sources provides an additional layer of legitimacy to any conclusions or inferences drawn. A summary of the research design used is outlined in Figure 7.a.

Thematic analysis enables common experiences across participants to be grouped together for discussion and critique. This allows a constant process of comparison and re-examination wherein overlapping categories and subtle differences in meaning can be extracted (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998). In addition, narrative analysis is favoured for use with data that describes life pathways or development. Together these methods expose the intricacies of the data while retaining a broad and flexible lens for analysis. The final analysis will seek to expose the underlying value systems implicit in gender construction, offence justification and criminality in order to understand whether child sexual abuse is enacted as part of an explicit or implicit reproduction of gender norms.

Adopting a multimethod approach by combining thematic and narrative methods across a variety of data sources permits a more thorough exploration of what is being said and how this relates to the wider theoretical discussion. Mead (1934) originally argued that all selves are products of their social environment and that all selves act with purpose and creativity (as cited in Crotty, 1998). This paved the way for the contemporary understanding of interpretivism. Its core philosophical assumptions are:

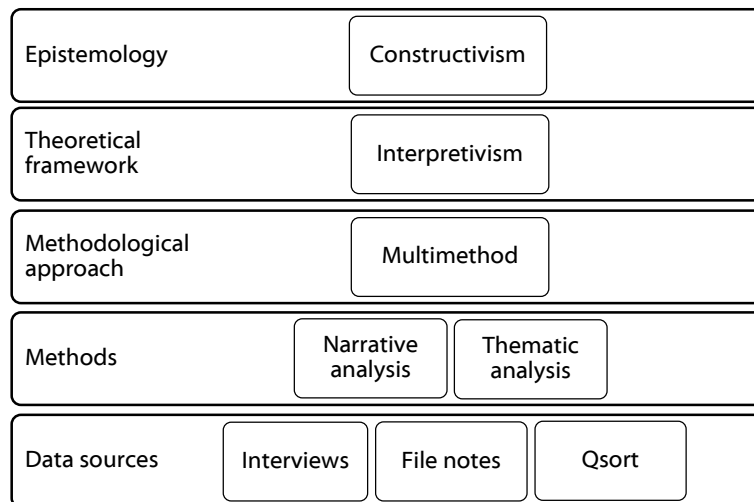
That human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them; that the meaning of such things is derived from, and arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; that these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he (sic) encounters.

(Blumer, 1969, p. 2, as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 72).

In summary, this research is grounded in constructivism and conducted under the theoretical umbrella of interpretivism. The analysis focuses on individual perception, experience and behaviour in order to infer meaning and wider significance.

⁶⁸ This tool is explained on p. 105.

Figure 7.a. Research design



(based on Crotty, 1998).

Design and method

Three community-based rehabilitation groups operate in New Zealand, providing therapy and support for men who have sexually offended against children. WellStop runs adult programmes in Wellington and Palmerston North; SAFE Network in Hamilton and Auckland; STOP Trust in Christchurch and Dunedin. Initially, my intention was to recruit clients from all three centres, but STOP Trust was unable to support the project due to pre-existing commitments. Fortunately, the remaining groups were able to provide a population from which to recruit twenty participants.

WellStop and SAFE provide a 12- to 24-month rehabilitation programme that encompasses group therapy, individual therapy, regular progress reports and reviews, as well as family and couple counselling. Their treatment modules are based upon internationally recognised and accepted methods: enhancing victim empathy, improving emotional regulation, sexual reconditioning, relapse prevention, understanding the offence process, and interpersonal skill development (Marshall et al., 1999; Marshall et al., 2006). According to Kevin Baker, SAFE Clinical Director, the men's goals are two-fold: understanding the factors that contributed to their offences, and practical planning for an offence-free future (personal communication, 25 August 2009).

Ethical approval⁶⁹ for this research was given on 26 August 2008, after which point I started recruiting participants. To do this, I followed recommendations from previous researchers (including Berg, 1998; Jordan, 2001; Moore, 1987; Sproull, 1995). In the first instance, I set parameters for eligibility; all men enrolled in the programmes, as well as those who had completed treatment within the past two years, were considered. Unfortunately, I did not have the luxury of interviewing a representative sample, but it is understandable that men in these groups would be ashamed of their behaviour and unwilling to participate in research. As a result, offence distribution, age groups, ethnic categories, and victims' gender were not typical of child sex offenders overall. However, given the lack of consensus surrounding what a 'representative' sample of child sex offenders might look like, the sample was not *not* representative either. Because this research is predominantly qualitative in nature, I did not attempt to recruit any control or comparison group. Qualitative research is characterised by its in-depth analysis of a small number of participants and does not strive to make generalisable or replicable findings.

Sampling and recruitment

Initially, I contacted primary staff at each community-based group by email. Subsequent discussions were conducted by phone, email and in person. My approach was formal and courteous. I focused on framing my research in accordance with the interests of each group and emphasised the potential for enrichment of current rehabilitation programmes. However, it was not, and is not, my view that existing treatment methods are unsuccessful.

Once ongoing support had been promised, I met with team leaders, case managers and other staff members to arrange suitable times to speak with current clients. We decided it would be most effective to meet face-to-face with the men, so I was invited to attend their weekly group therapy sessions. This personal approach was designed to instigate a more meaningful connection and, hopefully, gain a higher response rate. To begin with, I introduced myself and explained the project. All men were presented with an introductory letter and were given an opportunity to clarify any areas of concern. From the beginning, I was aware that confidentiality would be of utmost importance to

⁶⁹ Reference number: 5743.

these men. In order to mitigate potential anxiety, I carefully explained procedures I would employ to protect participant identity. At all times, respondents were assured their participation in this project was optional and would have no negative impact on their involvement with rehabilitation. However, I did emphasise potential benefits of participation: this would be an opportunity to share their story in a meaningful way; the information gathered could help counteract and enlighten public misunderstandings about child sex offenders; it would be an opportunity to constructively contribute to society; and the final results could help inform policy or rehabilitation models. At the end of the meeting, men who expressed interest were given a more comprehensive information sheet⁷⁰. Following this, interview appointments were scheduled.

With the intention of diversifying my final sample, I also approached men who had completed the WellStop or SAFE programme within the past two years. Staff members functioned as intermediaries so a covering memo⁷¹ was posted along with my introductory letter. This contact-by-proxy ensured I was not privy to clients' addresses or personal details without consent. Ultimately, this group yielded a poorer response rate than those approached directly. This was possibly because men who had completed rehabilitation wanted to leave their offending firmly in the past and did not wish to rehash emotionally fraught issues; further, some men may have felt uncomfortable agreeing to such a personal interview without having met the researcher face-to-face (Dale Mikhaels, personal communication, 13 August 2009).

Overall, distance proved to be a major impediment to sampling and recruitment. This was particularly true for those community-groups operating outside my home city of Wellington. Despite the most efficient planning, it was not uncommon for me to travel to Palmerston North for an hour's work, or fly to Auckland just to meet with staff. While such practices were expensive and time-consuming, they were necessary to uphold the integrity of the research. It would have been unethical for staff members to recruit participants on my behalf, and equally unacceptable for me to invade clients' privacy by approaching them independently of the group. In addition, the high level of initial interest from the men did not always translate into confirmed interviews so subsequent

⁷⁰ The information sheet is reproduced in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 1.

⁷¹ The covering memo is reproduced in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 2.

recruitment attempts were necessary to obtain enough participants. This involved revisiting community groups at later dates to approach new clients who were regularly joining.

Data collection

Twenty data sets were collated, with each set drawing from three separate sources: a Q-sort task completed by participants, a semi-structured and in-depth interview, and individual client records held by WellStop or SAFE. This approach — known as triangulation — was favoured for its ability to corroborate findings from any given source. Combining quantitative information from the Q-sort with qualitative data from the interviews minimised the drawbacks if each method had stood alone. Quantitative research arguably lacks the depth and understanding characteristic of qualitative analysis. On the other hand, qualitative research has potential for bias while quantitative research can offer some objectivity. Access to WellStop and SAFE client records was to corroborate participants' claims during the interview and to explore perspectives of others involved with each case. Overall, these three sources of data were chosen for their compatibility and complementarity.

Q-sort task

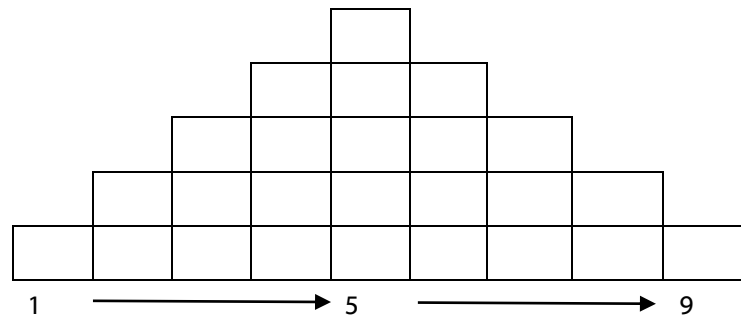
Each session involved participants completing a brief quantitative Q-sort task (adapted from: Block, 1978; Funder, 2004; Merrens & Brannigan, 1998). The Q-sort took approximately ten minutes to complete and required participants to rank pre-defined statements in order of their preference. Statements had been chosen to reflect a mixture of masculine and feminine gender norms plus three gender-neutral statements that reflected common child sex offender traits⁷². For instance, social status and leadership abilities are said to be strongly masculine characteristics so, to reflect this, one Q-sort read: 'other people turn to me for advice'.

At the beginning of each interview, respondents were given a deck of 25 cards — one statement per card — and instructed to organise them in a way that best reflected how they viewed themselves. Statements were to be arranged from most characteristic (1) to most uncharacteristic (9). Participants were also instructed to allocate a specific number of statements to each of the nine

⁷² The complete list of Q-sort statements is in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 3.

positions. The final layout is shown in Figure 7.b. Upon conclusion of the interview, participants were then asked to arrange the same statements again, but this time according to the degree they desired or idealised such attributes.

Figure 7.b. Layout of Q-sort cards



The interviews

My role as interviewer and researcher meant I was the instrument of data collection. Minichiello and Kottler (2009) outlined five fundamental attributes of a successful researcher: inductive thinking, flexibility, an inquisitive nature, reflective listening skills and insightful analysis (pp. 18-20). At all times, I focused on bringing such characteristics to the fore. In order to protect participants' confidentiality and ensure my safety, interviews were conducted in private rooms — either at WellStop or SAFE premises or on university campus. During all interviews there was at least one staff member nearby in case something untoward happened. While trust is an important part of the rapport-building process, it was also important to realise these men had been assigned varying levels of risk; my personal safety was paramount.

At the start of each interview, participants were read a prepared preamble that reiterated the contents of their information sheet. This preamble was read slowly and clearly, using accessible and friendly language. I explained the interview would cover topics, including how they viewed themselves as a person; what experiences had defined their lives; how they interacted with the world; how they viewed friendships; their attitudes to family life; and their experiences with intimate relationships. All participants were then given a chance to clarify concerns before they signed the consent form⁷³.

Following that, the main part of the interview was able to commence.

⁷³ The consent form is reproduced in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 4.

I spent time emphasising there were no right and wrong answers and each question was open for their interpretation. I also stressed they were free to elaborate on anything they felt was important or had particular significance to them. This approach ensured each interview began from a point of mutual understanding and also aided in establishing rapport. Some participants took the lead and started sharing their story without prompting; others preferred me to begin questioning in the more traditional way.

I opened each discussion with a structured background question — e.g. *could you tell me a little bit about where you grew up and your immediate family life?* — and pursued areas of interest that arose from there. Respondents were asked to elaborate and expand upon their comments as the session progressed. I prefixed most questions with ‘how’ or ‘why’ in order to facilitate more comprehensive answers and to manage unexpected responses; the phrasing did not pre-suppose certain information and was open to interpretation. By structuring questions around a core list of themes to be discussed, I made sure all interviews broached similar issues while also being able to explore topics that arose on an individual basis. Rubin and Rubin (1995) claimed a successful interview hinged on three factors: intense active listening, natural curiosity and openness. By not having prior knowledge of each participant or his offending history, I was able to ask questions without preconceived judgements, and with genuine curiosity and gentle probing.

The interview questions were structured to loosely align with life development; beginning with early memories, family and school years before progressing through pubertal development to adulthood, intimate relationships and offending. Specific questions were developed from my literature review. For example, to investigate masculine role modelling I asked participants *who are the important men in your family?* and *what sort of man is your father?* and *how do you see yourself in comparison to that?* Other questions emerged in similar ways. To explore topics like boundaries and rule-breaking I posed questions including *what sort of house rules did you have when you were growing up?* Conversely, I probed issues such as people-pleasing with *can you tell me about a time when your parents were proud of you?* Where possible I asked the men to illustrate their answer with an anecdote. For example, when delving into the topic of interpersonal conflict, I would ask *can you think of a significant fight you’ve had with a partner?* and then *how did you respond to that at the time?* followed by *with the benefit of hindsight*

would you have acted any differently? This approach allowed me to fully explore both participants' behaviour in a given situation as well as their emotional response to that situation.

Once I had assembled a preliminary list of interview questions, these were refined during practice sessions with friends and family⁷⁴. These trial-runs enabled me to establish what sort of information could be elicited and how I might react to certain responses. All interviews were tape-recorded to allow accurate playback and analysis. This also freed my attention during the interview to focus on empathic listening, and flexible and responsive questioning.

File access

I requested access to each participant's file held by SAFE or WellStop, and all were happy to give permission for this. These records were requested primarily to corroborate participants' version of events. However, they also added important background information, provided details of offences perpetrated, offered psychological and judicial perspectives, and informed about rehabilitative progress. In total I amassed nine hours of verbal notes taken from participants' client records. These proved useful for the reasons outlined above but unfortunately did add to the burden of transcription.

Sample population

The men I approached for this research shared several characteristics. They were all:

- ~ Older than 18 years of age⁷⁵.
- ~ Had committed at least one contact or non-contact sexual offence against, or in the vicinity of, a child or children younger than 16 years of age⁷⁶.
- ~ Represented diverse ethnic identities and socio-economic strata.
- ~ Had acknowledged their guilt and committed to living an offence-free life.
- ~ Had been referred to SAFE or WellStop by a court-imposed sentence or probation mandate, their own initiative, at the behest of family members, via a separate government or community agency, or through a lawyer or therapist.

⁷⁴ My interview template is reproduced in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 5.

⁷⁵ Some of the community-based groups do have specific youth divisions but these were not part of my sample population.

⁷⁶ In addition, some men had committed non-sexual offences as well as sexual offences against adults.

As previously mentioned, the men participating in these rehabilitation programmes cannot be viewed as necessarily representative of all child sex offenders in New Zealand. Those who have escaped lengthy prison terms will tend to have perpetrated less-serious crimes and are more likely to have robust family support networks.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

First and foremost, the subjective nature of this project must be recognised. The final analysis is filtered through my own bias and existing knowledge. However, by remaining mindful of this I was able to mitigate some of this influence. In addition, I am an informed observer with relatively comprehensive knowledge of the area. So, while I do remain aware of my underlying bias, I will justifiably draw from my repertoire of experience to inform my interpretation and analysis of participants' narratives.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is an effective and perceptive method for interpreting qualitative data. It involves five key stages, but can involve many iterations of the final stages (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Owen, 1984; Richards, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). First, one must become familiar with the raw data in order to extract individual phrases or ideas — called units of meaning. Each unit of meaning must contain a coherent thought or concept that can be coded. Second, each unit of meaning is allocated a specific code or label for later tracking (Boyatzis, 1998; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). For instance, if the participant says *I used to hate when my mother yelled at me in front of my friends* this could be flagged as a distinct unit of meaning and then categorised under codes for embarrassment, social status, mother and resentment. As in this example, most units of meaning require multiple tags to reflect the complex ideas contained therein.

Third, one must identify and group any recurring units of meaning within overarching themes. These broad themes should reflect a comprehensive understanding of the data. It is at this juncture the researcher usually sees patterns beginning to emerge. The fourth stage consists of revision and review to ensure all salient content is accurately reflected within specific codes or broader themes. At this point it is also important to identify the significance of each theme and how it might assist with answering key research questions (Aronson, 1994; Boyatzis, 1998; Owen, 1984; Richards, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The final stage involves re-reading the raw data with all themes and codes in mind. This process of comparison and re-examination is necessary due to the subtleties and

overlapping categories that occur as analysis is undertaken. It is common for more codes and themes to be identified even at this late stage.

Once this preliminary thematic analysis is complete, the findings can be understood within the context of existing theories. As Aronson (1994) explained, one must draw upon available literature to present a valid argument for choosing particular themes. Common experiences across all participants can be extracted for analysis, and outlying trends can be identified and explored (Minichiello & Kottler, 2009). Within my methodological framework of interpretivism, it is important to analyse the transcription literally and reflexively. This entails a mixture of thematic and narrative methods. In this way I am able to make collective inferences from the raw data and arrive at final conclusions.

Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis helps to elucidate the ‘character and contour’ of participant accounts (Berg, 1998, p. 67). Chiefly, I analysed the interviews with a view to exposing underlying subjectivities and value systems implicit in gender construction, offence justification and criminality. Denzin (2003) fittingly defined the creation of narrative as a ‘performance event’ (p. xi), which resonated with the performative understanding of gender proposed by West and colleagues (1995a; 1995b; 2002; 2008; 1987; 2000; 2002; 2009). Viewed from this perspective individuals are deemed to be active and engaged participants in their own life experiences, and in the retelling of those.

Unlike thematic analysis, there are fewer rules when it comes to interpreting narrative text (Elliott, 2005). Riessman (1993) summarised the situation: ‘the features of an informant’s narrative an investigator chooses to write about are linked to the evolving research question [and the] theoretical/epistemological positions the investigator values’ (p. 61). The only requirement is that interpretation must be persuasive and plausible (Mishler, 1991; Riessman, 2008). It is this emphasis on suggestion rather than requirement that makes narrative analysis congruent with my interpretivist methodology. As previously mentioned, interpretive analysis hinges on the notion of *verstehen* — understanding how subjects make sense of events and experiences.

Overall, narrative analysis focuses on three things: meaning, structure and interactional context (Elliott, 2005; Mishler, 1991). Herman and Vervaeck (2001) elaborated that this discussion

must connect meaningfully with the content of the narrative. It is this interrelationship between form and content that establishes a crucial area for subsequent analysis. Here, content is defined as the narrated world and form describes the way this world is represented. The connection is elucidated further: 'form always implies content, and content in turn clarifies the meaning of the form' (Herman & Vervaeck, 2001, p. 7).

There are various ways of undertaking narrative analysis, and many lack clear definition or procedural instructions. Broadly, this research employs a mixture of a structural approach — that focuses on how participants construct the retelling of their experiences, and a sociocultural-functional approach — that identifies what purpose a narrative serves to its teller, its significance and meaning, and how it is used to make sense of lived experiences (Baynham, 2011; Bruner, 1991; Elliott, 2005; Herman & Vervaeck, 2001; Josselson, 2011; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Riessman, 1993; 2008). It is also useful to frame analysis in terms of how narratives are understood by the researcher. Lieblich's (1998) four modes of reading are designed to do exactly that, and this thesis employs two of these for the purpose of narrative analysis: holistic-content and categorical-form. Holistic-content is primarily focused on content, with peripheral attention paid to context; categorical-form is largely interested in metaphors and language, with a secondary focus on discrete stylistic characteristics (Lieblich et al., 1998).

The holistic-content mode involves reading and re-reading each transcript until the narrative 'speaks' to the researcher. Any significant sections are noted, along with exceptions, unusual features, contradictions, discontinuities, omissions, and the connection to broader contextual meaning (Josselson, 2011). Mischler (1991) explained 'it is important to take note at the outset of the many forms and functions of language (...) syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, the basic issues of structure, meaning and interactional context' (pp. 67, 76-77). In contrast, the categorical-form mode focuses on metaphors and images found in the narration. This method of reading presupposes that stories are told in a way that reflects unconscious thought processes. Research has indeed established a relationship between spur-of-the-moment comments and underlying cognitive processing (Frankenstein, 1972; 1981; Gottschalk, 1994; Telock, 1991; all cited in Lieblich et al., 1998). For example, if a narrative features displays of excessive emotionality then one might infer the participant has a more broadly volatile or demonstrative personality or style. When employing the categorical-form approach,

narratives must be examined for features such as faulty thinking, a preference for concretisation over abstraction, dichotomisation, over-reliance on stereotypes or generalisations, a passive reliance on others, difficulty with authority figures, and any maladaptive psychological attributes (Josselson, 2011; Lieblich et al., 1998). This then establishes the basis for discussion and critique.

The secondary approach, known as categorical-form reading, involves an inference of significance to the teller (Josselson, 2011; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 2008). Lieblich et al. (1998) suggested this should be based on an empathic interpretation of the participant's narrative. For example, demarcations of time and place can indicate a willingness to identify or distance one's self from certain events. Similarly, linguistic intensifiers⁷⁷ and deintensifiers⁷⁸ can reflect the relative importance of certain topics. Another focus could be how passive or active verbs demonstrate an individual's sense of agency or ownership.

On the whole, narrative analysis can be a very complex and arduous undertaking. Individuals usually retell stories in a fragmented and disjointed manner, without linear structure. However, the method also has the potential to explore the intricacies of multifaceted research questions (Breakwell, 2006). Moreover, part of the focus is on how the narrator connects various aspects of the story in order to provide a lucid and continuous account. Locating participants' narratives within the wider literature of gender theory also helps to expose core assumptions underpinning the masculine value systems of each man. This multimethod approach — combining thematic and narrative methods across three separate sources of data — permits a more thorough exploration of the relationship between what is being said, which topics are avoided or discounted, and a wider understanding of gendered behaviour. As Denzin (2003) surmised, 'we live in stories and do things because of the characters we become' (p. xiii). That statement is the base from which narrative analysis is conducted.

Data limitations

Despite the many strengths of qualitative inquiry, my results will be of limited generalisability. As mentioned previously, men participating in these rehabilitation programmes cannot be viewed,

⁷⁷ Words that emphasise content, including 'very', 'heaps', 'really' and 'lots'.

⁷⁸ Words that downplay or distance the speaker from content, including 'maybe', 'somewhat', 'perhaps' and 'a bit'.

necessarily, as representative of all New Zealand men who have sexually offended against children. In particular, they may have certain attributes which made them more likely to have come to the attention of the community-based rehabilitation group, more willing to accept their guilt, less likely to have been sentenced to a long period of imprisonment, and more willing to participate in research. Having said that, it is important to remember that offending behaviour occurs on a spectrum so it would be impossible to gain complete representation of this entire range, particularly within the scope of one study. Ultimately, this thesis aims to generate transferable knowledge not generalisable statistics.

Arguably, the central issue when researching criminal populations is respondents' potential dishonesty or exaggerated claims. However, in terms of implications for data validity, Riessman (1993) explained how 'historical truth of an individual's account is not the primary issue' (p. 64). She also pointed out that the researcher's interpretation of such narratives is itself located in various subjective discourses. In the end, verification using client records did counterbalance some of the men's dishonesty and was useful to fill in gaps.

There is also the risk that participants will experience discomfort or unease, which may in turn affect their willingness to openly or honestly answer questions. This topic is naturally one that will trigger upsetting emotions like shame or embarrassment, as well as more confrontational feelings like hatred or anger. Further, participants may feel distrustful of my intentions or nervous around me because I am a woman. One of the men did disclose some uncertainty in this respect:

I couldn't make the call [to arrange the interview]. And it was weird. *Yeah well, no, it's a big step I think, particularly, obviously I'm, you don't know me so it's a big thing to bridge that gap.* Well it's the fact that · if you don't mind me saying this, it's sort of a relatively attractive young female as well. Talking to someone about that stuff rather than · guys and older women. It's, it's, it's, just a sort of thing you know. *[Laughs]. Yeah. I shoulda worn my wrinkle-suit, sorry.* Yeah, yeah, you just sort of like put a bag over your head or whatever, but you know, you know. God I mean, no it's, it's different you know and it's, it's, it's very different actually. *Yeah.* That kind of put me off for a long time.

(Scott, interview).

Fortunately, my friendly demeanour and ability to build rapport with the men made this less of a problem than it could have been; the fact Scott shared his vulnerability supports this. However, some did adopt a paternalistic concern for my ability to handle the truth of their crimes:

Um · these are dark topics. And as I said to you the other day · I think you have to be very, very careful, ah, I mean there is the young women who wrote, um, she wrote a whole book on the Rape of Nanking in 1937. (...) She committed suicide. (...) I think · getting, personalising so much of what had happened to these people, and I think it was just too much for her to take on board and, and ah · and I just. (...) It just occurred to me that · you've got to really make sure that you keep, keep your mental health well. *Yeah, no I do, I do, so.* (...) So, um, but eventually I guess, it'll just be you and the computer room.

(Nathan, interview).

In order to mitigate these potential limitations I strove to be respectful, kind, thoughtful and considerate throughout all my interactions with the men. I managed to establish common ground with most of them, and all were noticeably relaxed by some friendly banter. I think most were pleasantly surprised to find themselves in a non-judgemental environment where they could share their stories unencumbered.

Another potential limitation relates to my own abilities as an interviewer and researcher. One author identified some sources of this limitation: 'fatigue and/or sensory overload, frustration with the raw information or concepts, or confusion as to the unit of analysis and unit of coding' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 15). In 2008 I wrote in my PhD proposal that 'I have an enthusiastic and committed attitude that will propel me along the sometimes-bumpy road of data collection and analysis', which in hindsight was perhaps a tad optimistic. However, I did get there despite some significant hurdles along the way. Throughout this project I have been motivated by the potential value of my research and by a sense of responsibility to participants to tell their stories. I remain humbled by the amount of personal information they were willing to share with me.

Ethical considerations

All interviews were conducted at WellStop or SAFE premises, with the exception of two conducted on university campus. For two interviews I was given a security alarm to wear, which had been recommended for these particularly volatile men. Staff — and supervisors, in the case of the two interviews conducted on campus — were nearby in case of emergency. Fortunately, no such emergency arose.

A fundamental principle of this project is that participants' identity and data will remain confidential. To this end, WellStop and SAFE staff members and locations are mentioned only in

general terms and not in reference to particular participants. Every effort has been taken in the writing of this thesis to ensure it is not possible to identify any individual men based on quotes, attributes, demographics, dates, experiences or location. Where such details are central to my point, a generic substitution has been used for illustrative purposes. I deeply empathise with and understand the need to maintain total and enduring confidentiality regarding the identity of participants.

The information sheet clearly outlined mechanisms I would implement in order to protect privacy. These strategies involved locking filing cabinets, always having computer and document passwords, and using pseudonyms instead of actual names. Pseudonyms were randomly selected as relatively common male names, starting with each of the first twenty letters of the alphabet⁷⁹. However, the information sheet also stated the limit of confidentiality protections; I would not conceal either explicit threats to themselves or others, or an admission of ongoing offences that would give me reason to believe children are at risk. If such information had been revealed, I would have discussed the matter with the individual concerned and informed him I was obliged to pass on such details to an appropriate staff member. Thankfully, and as expected, this issue did not arise.

Finally, and because I undertook all transcription myself, there were no disclosure or consent issues in relation to this stage of the research. I did offer to arrange a further meeting where participants were able to destroy the recording themselves, but no men opted for this. Access to the research data was restricted to myself and my supervisors. However, in practice only I listened to the tape recordings and all identifying information was redacted from the transcripts. Consent forms remain the only record of participants' actual names and these remain locked securely and separately from all other research data. All transcripts, computer files, analysis, and other research documents referred to each participant only according to his pseudonym.

The other main ethical concern related to incentives offered for participation and any reimbursement for attendance. Given the emotionally demanding nature of the interview, as well as its length, it was decided that reimbursement was fair and would not unduly coerce or leverage

⁷⁹ Aaron, Bob, Casey, Dean, Eric, Flynn, Gerry, Howard, Ivan, Jason, Keith, Liam, Moe, Nathan, Oliver, Perry, Quinn, Reg, Scott and Todd.

participation. All payments were decided in accordance with the community-based groups' policies.

WellStop Manager, Hamish Dixon, agreed the following incentives were appropriate:

- a. Food and beverage provided during the interview. This typically consisted of orange juice, grapes and some sort of chocolate biscuit.
- b. Reimbursement for travel expenses when this would otherwise be a prohibitive issue for many men. A minority availed of this option, and in no case did the amount sought exceed \$10.
- c. A token of thanks to the value of \$60. This was given in the form of supermarket or petrol vouchers. Men were offered a choice in advance and New World vouchers were given if no choice was made.
- d. A koha was given to each community-based group to acknowledge their assistance with recruitment and interviews. The final \$300 value was not disclosed to staff in advance — it was a symbol of gratitude rather than a negotiated amount — and was paid upon completion of all interviews.

Process undertaken

While an abstract understanding of narrative and thematic analysis is useful, the reality is often murkier and can be difficult to procedurally define. In addition, some steps take place without full awareness and it may not always be possible to articulate the exact process involved. For example, it is difficult to accurately convey the thought process involved in grouping related content for thematic analysis. Practically speaking, this involves an ongoing process of questioning and self-doubt, followed by tentative decisions, reconsiderations, angst and more doubt — then perhaps a 'final' decision that may get changed later anyway. Others have described coding as 'head wrecking activity' due to the miserable feelings it can induce, its potential to negatively affect creative analysis, and its elusive finish line (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 91). With these pitfalls in mind, Marshall (2002) suggested implementing guidelines: prepare for unpleasant emotions, give yourself sufficient breaks to stimulate imaginative and subconscious thought, and impose a finite limit on time you spend immersed in data (as cited in Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

So, while I acknowledge the impossibility of accurately recounting the exact process I undertook, it behoves me to make a genuine attempt to do so. With that in mind, the following is a précis of how I analysed my data:

Transcription

- a. I endeavoured to create a verbatim record of each interview by noting silences, self-correction, laughter, snorts, interruptions and other audible aspects of the conversation. Some interviews proved more difficult than others due to thick accents, poor grasp of the English language, speech impediments, stuttering, rapid speaking and hushed tones.
- b. Interviews varied quite substantially in length; one particularly loquacious individual took 3h 35m to share his story whereas a far more brisk participant took only 1h 30m. From twenty interviews I ended up with over 41 hours of tape, which proved to be a nearly insurmountable quantity to transcribe. Each hour of tape took between four and eight hours to transcribe; a total effort that well exceeded 250 hours⁸⁰ and resulted in 390,000 words of data.
- c. Transcribing was my most intense engagement with the raw data due to the constant re-playing of each sentence; spending at least a minute contemplating a small handful of words definitely encouraged reflexive and considered analysis. During this stage I also noted salient ideas as they came to me, as well as specific points worth investigating further.
- d. The biggest impact of transcription was its emotional toll. While I had anticipated some distress, I was not prepared for how upsetting the interview content sometimes was. In addition, I often found myself ‘overly’ empathising with the men and then chastising myself for — what I had interpreted at the time as— excusing their behaviour. I was not doing this, but I did come to *understand* how and why these men’s lives had taken the paths they did. I also struggled to acknowledge a lot of this emotional toll, and had convinced myself I should be able to ‘handle it’. However, at other times I was equally appalled by my ability to detach. These remain ongoing issues, but I am gradually making peace with them.

⁸⁰ The enormity of this task was also exacerbated by several ongoing health problems, including the need for two operations on a broken wrist.

Coding

- a. I used two computer programmes during analysis: NVivo10 for coding my interviews and file notes, and IBM SPSS Statistics for interpreting the Q-sort data.
- b. To begin with I imported three sources of data into NVivo: the transcribed interviews and file notes, as well as observational notes I had taken during the interviews. This amounted to sixty separate sources across all participants. I then assigned demographic data to each participant.
- c. I read through each source, noting broad content categories that could be applied to each segment. These included: childhood, immediate family, school life, view of self, hobbies, employment, sexual relationships and offending.
- d. Within these content categories I created 77 a priori codes to reflect issues that had arisen during my literature review. These covered ideas like emotional dysregulation and cognitive distortions.
- e. I then began re-reading the raw data, identifying specific units of meaning and checking to see which of my existing codes it would best fit with. If the unit of meaning reflected an idea that did not already have a code, I created a new code. During this step I was constantly questioning: what code best describes this content; are there other codes this relates to; does this warrant creating a new code; should any of my codes be combined or separated; which broader theme does this fit within; does this code exist within more than one broader theme. This stage yielded 97 in vivo codes.
- f. Finally, I had coded 33,800 units of meaning and amassed a total of 174 individual codes⁸¹, which I was able to loosely group into nine distinct categories. Emerging themes covered the gamut of human emotions and psychological attributes.
- g. I then went back to re-code the raw data with any occurrences of in vivo codes. This was ultimately not an efficient use of time given codes were almost always created when I had first encountered a new unit of meaning; searching for instances before the *first* instance was logically not productive.

⁸¹ The full list of codes is in Supplementary Materials: Appendix 6.

Analysis

- a. First, I used NVivo to undertake co-occurrence, union and matrix searches. These highlighted codes which were strongly associated with each other or frequently overlapped. In terms of analysing these intersections, I had to be mindful that each code contained units of meaning that were multifaceted. For instance, the code for anger could include the participant talking about a time they felt angry, the participant recounting an experience where someone else was angry with them, a story which does not explicitly mention anger but could be interpreted as a display of anger, or even a mention of anger being suppressed or ignored. In this sense, a given code could not be seen as necessarily coherent even if its content was categorisable. While this sort of detail did become clear once each code was scrutinised and specific quotes were extracted, it remained obscured when looking at raw numbers and frequency of coding.
- b. By this point ten prominent themes were starting to emerge, each comprising between 15 and 30 codes, and with some overlap. For example, negative mood and emotional dysregulation were associated with all themes to varying extents, whereas humiliation appeared within the scope of only one.
- c. From here, two key themes were identified: powerlessness and entitlement, each of which included several sub-topics such as distorted perception, nostalgic view of childhood, previous experience of trauma or abuse, experiences of humiliation and rejection, and a tendency for resentment and blame. These themes are discussed in chapters 10 and 11.
- d. Two subsidiary themes were also identified: risk-taking and rigid thinking. These encompassed issues such as deviant sexual arousal, obsessive and compulsive behaviours, and religiosity. They are discussed in chapters 12 and 13.

Writing up results

- a. My original transcriptions were faithful to all speech mannerisms, grammatical errors and personal quirks present in the audio recording. It is these transcriptions I used during coding and analysis. However, quotes selected for use in this thesis have been edited for clarity. Some unnecessary fillers have been removed, as have identifying vocal features and

stammering; incorrect phrasing has been fixed. All edits have been minimal to ensure the speaker's intent or meaning was not lost. No words have been added, and most corrections simply involved deleting or reordering words.

- b. All quotes from participants have been attributed to the particular data source: interview, file notes or my observational comments.
- c. There are some quotes in the following chapters that can give the impression I agree with what a participant has said. Utterances like 'yeah' or 'of course' should not be interpreted as an endorsement of content. These reassurances were me attempting to create a safe space where the men could talk freely without feeling judged.
- d. In the following chapters I have avoided the use of pseudonyms when discussing potentially recognisable traits, and where I feel confidentiality could be jeopardised should a reader combine several references and relate them to a given pseudonym. I have made a concerted effort to ensure external parties would be unable to identify the men, or associate known offenders with their participation in this research. I am satisfied it is not possible to identify my sample from this final thesis.
- e. For clarity, the following notations have been used in chapters 9 to 13:

confidential	identifying information redacted
[explanation]	additional action or detail noted
inaudible	recording not decipherable
<i>italic</i>	me asking a question
<u>underline</u>	speaker emphasis
>	stress on preceding syllable
middle · dot	pause during speech
(...)	content omitted

9. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Presenting the results

In this chapter I will introduce the twenty men who participated in this research and describe their broad psychological and criminal profiles, with particular reference to gender construction and socialisation. I will also present and interpret the results of the Q-sort task described on p. 105.

Chapters 10 to 13 contain the results of my thematic and narrative analysis. Chapter 10 critically examines the first and most important theme of powerlessness. This discussion encompasses a variety of sub-themes such as distorted perception, previous experience of trauma and abuse, humiliation and rejection, as well as overcompensatory behaviours. Chapter 11 discusses the second theme of entitlement and also examines associated concepts such as resentment and blame, narratives of the 'nice guy' stuck in the 'friend zone', and hypermasculinity.

In addition to powerlessness and entitlement, my analysis identified two subsidiary themes: risk-taking and rigid thinking. These themes are important enough to warrant inclusion, but do not require the comprehensive coverage dedicated to the two primary themes. Chapter 12 will address risk-taking and thrill-seeking behaviours, as well as related issues of boredom, addiction and compulsive behaviours. Chapter 13 examines rigid thinking and inconsistent belief patterns, as well as cognitive distortions, poor boundaries and religiosity. Throughout these four discussion chapters I will draw heavily from my raw data. I will be interpreting the men's narratives using criminological, sociological and psychological research initially presented in chapters 2 to 6. Particular attention will be given to gendered analysis and potential implications of this.

Participant overview

This analysis will focus on common themes and shared experiences of participants, but it needs to be acknowledged that the men I interviewed came from diverse backgrounds. Often both ends of a spectrum were represented in the sample: school drop-outs to PhD graduates; drug users to teetotallers; those from loving and privileged homes, yet others who had experienced severe neglect

and physical abuse⁸². Some men reported a pervasive range of maladaptive behaviours yet others functioned positively in main areas of life aside from their offending. It is likely that some of these factors played a role in individual pathways to offending, but since they were not shared by the group overall they will not feature prominently within the scope of my analysis.

The men I interviewed ranged in age from 23 to 67, with an average age of 41. In contrast to most criminal populations, but in keeping with the characteristics of child sex offenders as a group, my sample was predominantly white and comparatively well educated. Additional demographic information is summarised in Table 9.a. Most of the men in my sample had been processed through the criminal justice system but some had escaped official detection and did not have convictions. The number of convictions per participant ranged from zero to 22. However, these figures do not reflect the overall extent of criminal offending since some of these were representative charges. For instance, one man who downloaded over 300,000 child abuse images⁸³ had this reduced to 25 counts of possession plus one count of distribution. Furthermore, nearly all men with formal convictions had also committed additional offences for which they had not been prosecuted. For these reasons it was not possible to accurately assess the magnitude of participants' offending.

In terms of whom these men had abused, victims were overwhelming female; 17 men exclusively abused girls, two preferred boys, and one man offended against both. Victims were also predominantly pubescent, but children as young as two were abused. The age of victims and the number of men who had offended against them is summarised in Figure 9.a. As with the extent of offending, it is only possible to make general observations about victim attributes. Child pornography offenders, for example, often have a number of incidental victims. This happens when torrents or large downloads contain illegal material that does not match the original search term and is contrary to the offender's sexual proclivities. Strictly speaking, a victim refers to any child the participant actively seeks or desires, and I have used this definition when calculating numbers for tables and figures.

⁸² Participants' own experiences of sexual abuse are discussed in chapter 10.

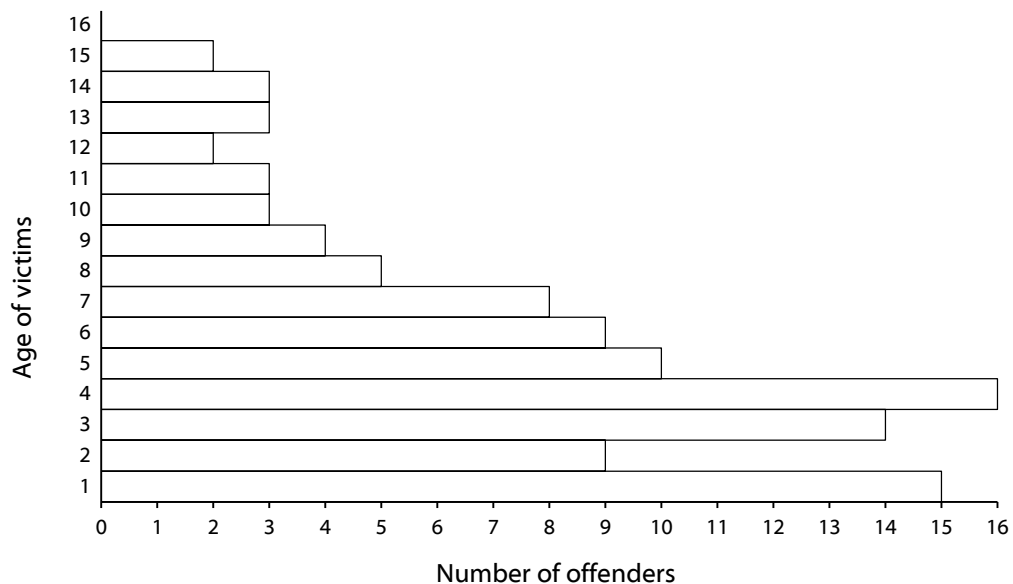
⁸³ Even this number does not indicate specific frequency of offending behaviour. This is due to the somewhat contentious interpretation of 'objectionable'. For example, a photograph of a fully clothed child posing seductively, may be deemed objectionable only in the context of a pornography collection that includes far more explicit images. If this image stood alone it would not meet the legal definition of an objectionable image. In particular, one participant accumulated numerous images of children modelling clothes. These had been taken from legitimate sources like EziBuy catalogues and were not legally objectionable, but when viewed alongside his other offending they could not be described as harmless images either.

Overall, my final group of participants included men of varying ages who came from relatively diverse backgrounds. However, their commonalities and shared experiences — aside from the offending itself — will form the basis of my discussion. I must also reiterate that the following chapters present my interpretation of what these men have said to me, and some of the men may not agree with certain comments or conclusions. If this does happen, I hope they are forgiving. I make my evaluation in good faith and I have no desire to upset or hurt them with what I have written here. I have made every effort to locate quotes within their original context and stay true to both the intent and meaning of what each man said to me.

Table 9.a. Demographics of participants

Age	Ethnicity	Offence	Referral
20-30 = 5	British = 2	Child porn = 13	Courts = 8
31-40 = 5	Asian = 1	Exhibitionism = 3	DIA = 6
41-50 = 4	European = 1	Fondling = 5	Lawyer = 1
51-60 = 4	Māori = 3	Oral sex = 1	Self = 6
61-70 = 2	Pākehā = 16	Penetration = 1	Therapist = 1

Figure 9.a. Participants and the age of their victims



Family dynamics and role modelling

Unsurprisingly, family exerted a strong influence over participants' experiences and views of self. This was true regardless of whether men reported positive or negative family relationships. Fathers were most frequently cited as their main role model in life; uncles, brothers, mothers, family friends and religious figureheads were also mentioned but to a lesser extent. One man spoke of role modelling in an ongoing sense, explaining how even as an adult he faced the 'challenge to live life the way dad would want it to be lived' (Liam, file notes). Another cited entrepreneurial skills as the reason he so admired his father. Casey said it was 'pretty cool' that his father earned money travelling the country and finding people in need of handyman work (interview). This idea of creating opportunities for success featured in other interviews too, but it was particularly those fathers deemed to be good providers who stood out as most positively influential.

The concept of provision was a multifaceted one and not limited to financial support. It was also mentioned in terms of moral support and guidance by Gerry, who praised his father for being a 'man of few words but you knew where he sort of stood on things and what the right thing to do was, what the wrong thing to do was' (interview). Elsewhere the concept of provider was more explicitly embedded in traditional notions of masculinity. For example, this from a participant who named his uncle as a role model:

He's a strong person, very friendly. He's assertive. He gets what he needs to say across, but he's not confrontational or aggressive in doing it. Yeah, just really easy to get along with, successful to a degree. (...) He provides for his family, has a loving wife and kids and is just like, cool. That's pretty much what I would like to be.

(Eric, interview).

Eric considered the characteristics of strength and assertiveness as instrumental in his uncle's success, which in turn allowed his uncle to provide for his family — at least in Eric's eyes. Eric also experienced less-than-satisfactory modelling from his own father and explained how this had shaped his own ambitions, particularly regarding the importance of emotional provision:

Being a good provider to start with. But not · being away from my home all the time like dad was. (...) He was just working all the time, and I respect that, but I also missed my dad. · So I want to be there for my kids. I want to be able to spend time with them, go out and do things fathers should do with their kids. You know,

just go have fun, help with school, involvement in their lives · rather than just being a provider. I felt my dad was just a provider half the time. (...) Actively involved in all these activities with my kids, that's what I want.

(Eric, interview).

It was interesting to note that participants who experienced violent or abusive childhoods sometimes still saw their abuser as a role model of sorts. But naturally, this triggered a degree of confusion and ambivalence:

I wanted to be a mechanic. *Yeah?* Mainly 'cause my stepdad was a mechanic and he was always doing things. I didn't inherit it [the abusive behaviour] obviously, but I've got that sort of mind. *So you did look up to him maybe in some ways?* Yeah. Well I didn't know any better. *That's true.* To me · all that was happening [the abuse] was normal.

(Perry, interview).

Despite viewing his traumatic experiences as normal, Perry was able to identify certain positive attributes of his abusive stepfather, and use these as specific points of aspiration. Along similar lines, another participant said his father served as a clear example of who he did not want to become: 'my dad did not care about me and fathers need to care' (Reg, file notes). However, these outward declarations did not always prevent participants from ultimately absorbing the negative messaging they were trying to avoid. One of the men only realised this belatedly:

Father thought mother was of little value (...) I began to imitate dad in the way he was relating to mum. When I realised just how badly I was treating her, I wrote her a card of apology, one she has kept to this day.

(Liam, file notes).

Others experienced a slightly different manifestation of internal conflict where they simultaneously loathed their parental figure yet yearned for their approval. Moe recalled his uncle was a 'severe and authoritarian man' who nonetheless created a lasting memory when he expressed rare praise: 'that was the closest I ever came to acceptance by the bastard' (Moe, file notes). Despite this resentment, it was clear his uncle's display of approval had been important and meaningful for Moe. Other participants lamented the absence of any exemplary individuals in their lives:

There was no · mentor or anyone that I could · follow, or you know anything. Everybody was a fake to me. *Yeah? What do you mean by that?* Yeah, because · it just seemed like · everyone wasn't real. Like, you know, they'd either do or say

something than what I saw. But then I saw them do something different. *So doing the opposite of?* Yeah, totally. Just wasn't into those kind of people.

(Bob, interview).

Another man indicated slight derision for the concept altogether by declaring, 'no I never had one of those of, you know, [sarcastic] amazing teachers who inspired you sort of things, no I've never had that' (Scott, interview). This response did seem to indicate a degree of self-sufficiency, although much later in the interview Scott did recall — and chastised himself for having forgotten — that his sports coach was definitely someone he had held in great esteem. Dean was another who did not strongly feel that he modelled himself on other people. He commented: 'I just sort of took each day as it came, you know, I wasn't sort of "I wanna be this guy or I wanna be this guy" or whatever' (interview). Despite having clear ambitions in life, he was still keen to emphasise his independence. In contrast, Casey really appreciated having a stable figure he could rely on. His grandmother was his primary role model and sometimes-caregiver. He described her as providing a 'sanctuary' away from his abusive mother, adding:

She set the boundaries and she sort of directed me in the right path. *Okay, yep.* As I grew older · my · vision of what I wanted to do when I was older, you know · it became clearer and she sort of helped.

(Casey, interview).

Aside from family members, it was common for participants to name sports stars as people they modelled themselves against. Ivan chose Bruce Lee because he appreciated he was a strong Asian man who dominated popular culture. This relatability based on ethnicity was not mentioned by Pākehā participants, presumably because they had not experienced exclusion based on their race. It was clear, though, that sporting passions transcended racial barriers. Participants from all ethnic groups specified sports players as men they held in great esteem or strove to emulate. Some of them also saw sport as an opportunity to impress their parents and receive praise or encouragement. This was more meaningful to some. Todd, for instance, forged a close connection with his father who used to take him to a local football stadium which had been home to a famous player. He explained the sense of belonging he felt over years of supporting a particular club through its wins and losses.

It was clear that from a young age participants had a strong sense of how gender roles should be enacted, and therefore what attributes were valuable in others and would be advantageous for themselves to adopt. Yet they also described this changing throughout their lifetimes:

When I was growing up I thought I wanted to be an adult like my father and · wear the pants and · be macho and · unfortunately · that sort of put mum in the background a wee bit. (...) Even on his death bed dad said to me something like · you know, ‘you’ve got · to stand up for yourself’. He knew me inside out. He was strong to the end and · I’d be there · not being strong. *Okay. In what ways do you mean not strong? Like emotionally or?* Yeah, emotionally. I’d be · willing to give in · with arguments with my sisters and that sort of thing. It was just the way I wanted to be passive, keep everybody happy as opposed to. (...) I’ve never been dominant or · forceful, you know. I’ve · to me it’s just not in my nature and I think · I’d just rather be helpful to a lot of people as opposed to · being forceful for myself.

(Flynn, interview).

Here Flynn expressed some disappointment in himself for not having lived up to his father’s expectations, yet at the same time acknowledged that his father’s ideals were not his own ideals. It is also worth noting that, when he recounted breaching the paternal code of masculinity, it was not only his passivity that was deemed reprehensible but his passivity in response to a female — his sister — challenging him.

Most of the men described similarly masculine ambitions during their younger years, although not all mentioned whether this changed over time. For example, Liam spoke of how he wanted to become a Navy Seal because it was exclusive and manly: ‘only the best got in, (...) the whole sort of macho thing and running around with guns’. Similarly, the police force had appealed to Oliver because he loved guns. Dean said he always knew he was going to join the army because, ever since he could remember, photographs had adorned the walls of his house depicting relatives in military uniforms or sitting in bomber planes. Keith also stressed this overt masculine ruggedness when he spoke of his uncle: ‘he just worked hard, he was a hard guy, he played the guitar, you know, he did lots of things, you know, he went fishing and diving (...) [and] taught me how to pig hunt’. These traditional notions of masculinity also featured when the men discussed religious mentors. Keith, for example, mentioned developing a friendly relationship with a local priest based on their shared love of sport.

One of the participants was a devout Catholic so strove to emulate religious figures he admired. He explained that Pope John Paul II was his greatest inspiration in life: 'I really respect that man, I mean, getting shot and then going to the cell and forgiving the man' (Jason, interview). This example emphasised a more civilised display of masculinity, where one had to rise above the supposedly-instinctive desire for vengeance and become the metaphorical bigger man. Here the two sides of hegemonic masculinity became evident. On the one hand participants admired men who displayed animalistic aggression through activities such as pig hunting, yet there were clearly marked situations where it was deemed more appropriately masculine to exercise restraint over this primal urge. Jason cited another religious mentor whom he respected for his dedication to celibacy despite being 'very handsome', and who had decreed one should always 'take the high moral ground'. Liam also said he modelled himself on Biblical figures — namely Gideon and Joseph — as well as religious people in his real life, such as his Sunday School teacher. One of the more interesting comments came during an unrecorded interaction: 'I had God and my father mixed up kind of thing' (Quinn, observational notes).

One of the men spoke of strategically associating with his older brother because of the social standing it afforded him:

I sort of followed him, doing cycling and he was I guess pretty cool. He went through a rebellious stage and listened to hard-out music and that was. *[Laughs]* Okay. That was cool. You know to have the access to that kind of thing. 'Cause that would kind of make me cool by association.

(Gerry interview).

In a similar way Quinn spoke of how he emulated his cousins because they had important life skills and were 'good with girls'. This seemed to be a recurring idea; that other men could teach them how to relate to women in their lives. In this sense, male role models were predominantly self-referential, and the specific way other men treated women in their lives did seem to influence how participants' own relationships with women were enacted. For those who were raised by two heterosexual parents this imitation was mainly of the relationship between their father and mother. Those raised by single

parents, extended family or whāngai⁸⁴ relations had internalised similar dynamics from uncles and aunts, grandparents or step-parents. For others, elder siblings were the primary source for learning these behaviours.

Some of the ways in which participants learned about the role of women were degrading or overtly sexualised. For example, Perry recalled that his ‘mother wore very short skirts and always sat with her legs apart’ and his aunt ‘also wore very short skirts with no knickers underneath’ (file notes). Perry remembered how this titillated him, yet he was aware it was not considered normal for him to experience such feelings. He described developing a habit of hiding in the garden when his aunt was hanging the washing out, just so he could peek up her skirt. This early behaviour helped to set the stage for his subsequent belief that women were chiefly objects from which to obtain taboo sexual gratification. In turn, this was replicated in his offences against children — notably the furtive peeping and exhibitionism elements.

By contrast, Scott developed a close and nurturing relationship with his mother. He praised her for teaching him respect and for providing ‘lots of affection and love’ (file notes). However, he felt she was too meek and did not ‘stand up to my father’ or help ‘solve some of the problems I had’ (file notes). This dynamic was a feature of Scott’s later relationships with women. He was drawn to comforting yet submissive women whom he felt could serve his purposes. Other participants perceived their mothers as extremely domineering and overly authoritarian, which was also echoed in their choice of partners. Nathan’s file contained a reference to his wife who, like his mother, ‘was concerned only for herself, was emotionally distant and was significantly demanding of the family to ensure that her life was to her liking’.

Most of the men interviewed — especially those over the age of thirty — experienced physical discipline in their childhoods. Prior to the 1990s, hitting children was generally considered to be an appropriate method of punishment or deterrence; these experiences would have been expected from participants over a certain age. It was also interesting to note that almost all the men were strongly against the ‘anti-smacking’ law enacted in New Zealand and all perceived being hit had not

⁸⁴ Whāngai is a customary Māori arrangement that is similar to open adoption or fostering. However, it tends to have more positive cultural connotations and is often arranged to build kinship ties (Keane, 2014).

caused them any lasting harm. However, as expected, those who were subject to severe physical abuse all spoke of the lasting negative impact. Hypervigilance was a common response:

Um · she was very difficult to monitor. *Okay*. Because she was very, very calm sometimes. Especially out in public. Like she had that ‘good mother’, sort of front on. But behind the scenes it was a very different story. *Yeah. That must have been confusing*. Yeah. Especially · the worst parts were actually when you were out in public, you might do something to upset her and not know about it until you get home and there’s nobody round. And then all of a sudden she’d snap. And by that time you wouldn’t know what it’s about.

(Casey, interview).

For Casey, this experience had a lasting result in terms of his ability to regulate his own behaviour and know where boundaries lay, as well as what was an appropriate emotional response. Some participants came to resent their mothers for other reasons:

I had to look after her while she was sick. And I really hated it, you know. Because it was a lot of responsibility. I was only still, like, thirteen or fourteen and still looking after her and going to school and all this · stuff. *Shit, that must have been tough*. It was far too much. Yeah, because she was bed-ridden in the end, towards her dying years.

(Bob, interview).

Bob felt this forced him to mature too early and step into adult responsibilities before he was ready. This may have contributed to his later fixation with youth and his desire for much younger sexual partners — perhaps an attempt to nurture his own ‘child’ self. Moe also spoke of resentment and indignation towards his mother, especially when she would demand that he do things he felt he was already doing. This sense of unfairness pervaded a lot of his other interactions as well.

Eric and Aaron both reported their mothers were extremely domineering, particularly towards their fathers. Yet Flynn stated his mother was generous and ‘all for the family and nothing for herself in a sense’ (interview). Gerry described his mother as loving and caring but said she had ‘minimal coping skills’ and always ‘wanted to be someone different’ (interview). From her he observed escapism as one way of coping, and this may have factored into his later use of internet pornography as a way of avoiding problems he was facing in his own life. Towards the end of the interview he reflected:

What's been my kind of issue is trying to understand people and, you know, figuring out boundaries (...) I'm finally starting to get a bit of the picture and how it kind of goes back to my mother and things like that [laughs].

(Gerry, interview).

Other men variously described their mothers as controlling, passive-aggressive, genuinely loving and caring, interfering, cold and emotionally distant, intelligent, and anxious. There was no clear pattern common to all participants, however, some mentioned their involvement in the rehabilitation programme had helped them understand their relationship with their mother better. Nathan spoke of learning about what he called his 'misdirected maternal connection':

It means instead of bonding with your mother, I started to bond with the females in my school classes. Um, at, at least an emotional level. And I just remember having, even from the age of five, having absolutely the most intense crushes on the prettiest girls in the class. (...) I was, you know, emotionally stunted.

(Nathan, interview).

This came from the participant who described his mother as 'fat, unattractive, unintelligent' and with 'some of the most disgusting personal habits you have ever struck in your life' (interview). On the other hand, Quinn commented he was close to his mum and saw her as 'warm and sort of cuddly', but did say he thought his sisters would have viewed her as 'quite a rigid uptight person'. He reasoned this 'was a very much a gender thing' but did not elaborate further (interview).

Overall, participants cited a number of people who had strongly influenced their lives and sense of self. Most frequently these were parental figures or extended family members who played a prominent role in their early life. Others cited a mixture of sports stars, religious figures and political leaders they admired and strove to emulate. When asked to elaborate on what particular attributes made these people admirable, participants tended to emphasise traditionally masculine attributes like assertiveness, as well as gender-neutral characteristics like patience or tolerance. Maternal role modelling seemed to most strongly influence their relationships with other women, and they often blamed this for developmental delays or emotional immaturity. Together, these factors interacted in a complex way that was often mirrored in other areas of their life. This dynamic will be addressed further during the following discussion chapters.

Affirming and articulating gender identity

In this context gender identity encompasses how participants viewed themselves as men, what being a man meant to them, and how they articulated their sexual orientation and sexual desire.

Most participants did not identify with stereotypical depictions of gender, and one reacted strongly that it was a 'load of bullshit' (Moe, interview). However, all seemed to have bought into a common concept of masculinity to varying degrees. Even Moe described himself elsewhere as 'a solid Kiwi bloke' (file notes). In addition, there were times when participants' sense of self was negatively affected because they did not conform to gendered social expectations. Cognitive dissonance was evident in this respect; individuals often held themselves to a set of standards they did not apply to others, and vice versa. For example, several of the men chastised themselves for instances of weak or wimpy behaviour, despite stating elsewhere in their interviews that they thought it perfectly acceptable for men to be wussy. This revealed that, even men who consciously claimed to reject normative masculinity, did not always do so when it came to their own behaviour and evaluation of self-worth. This resonates with psychological literature discussed earlier in this thesis.

Among participants there was some consensus about what 'being a New Zealand man' entailed, and what that meant in terms of their own lives. Aaron described the stereotypical beer-swilling rugby player, and said he was 'partly in that camp' (interview). Though, he also commented that he was 'not strongly passionate about stuff' despite elsewhere saying this was a normal characteristic of men: 'you need to know what you want, be a little bit purposeful' (interview). His perceived difference between himself and others was of great concern to him. His lack of passion also affected his relationship with his wife, and he saw this as a catalyst for his later sexual offending. He seemed to compensate for these shortcomings by taking pride in his self-sufficiency. He was clearly irritated that, as a result of his offending being discovered, he was 'forced' to rely on others for access to his children. During the Q-sort he also ranked 'I rely on others' as being very uncharacteristic of his ideal self. Throughout his interview he referred to himself as 'independent' once, 'self-sufficient' three times, and 'self-centred' once. He also explained: 'I don't have many friends · I don't feel like I need lots of friends' (Aaron, interview). For him, this was evidently an important attribute.

Dean said that since his offending had come to light he felt more defensive of his sexual appetite than he had before. He explained:

Going through group here, you know, it's quite hard · I have trouble trying to be a blokey bloke now. Because · I want to look at girls, I like girls. I'm not into guys, I'm into girls. So I wanna look at girls. And it's like, but if I look am I gonna get myself in trouble? You know? And I'm talking about girls of age. Like, women. *Yeah, yeah.* And it's like · how much trouble am I going to get myself in just by looking, you know. It's like, but there's nothing wrong with having a look. It's human nature to look at other people, you know. *Yeah, yeah.* And · often it's not in a sexual manner, you know.

(Dean, interview).

It is likely some of his offence-related guilt had permeated his adult sexual interests and led to this defensiveness. Throughout the rest of the interview Dean was eager to point out the ways in which he was, as he said, a 'blokey bloke': his obsession with cars and drinking beer, a love of women, his high sex drive, and his role in the army. Eric had a more toned-down idea of what a New Zealand man should be: 'friendly, generally responsible, reliable, a good-natured person, someone who can be counted on at most times · who · has good relationships and treats people well' (interview). This gentler side of masculinity was mentioned by several other participants who stressed the importance of traits like honesty, integrity and trustworthiness. Liam explained how gender expectations for men were not clear-cut:

I feel that New Zealand men have their manhood as they understand it, um · almost being · excluded. Um · certain, kind of sectors, where they're allowed to be men, sort of on the rugby field, you know, out with their mates or whatever. But perhaps many of them are, um · under the thumb a bit at home [laughs]. *Okay, yeah, so depending on the context, yeah.* Yeah. But at the same time I think many New Zealand men are · you know, not so plussed about it. You know about · giving their partner or their wife a fair degree of control or stake in the leadership of their house, et cetera. Um, and maybe they joke about it with their guys but at home it's kind of. *It's not such a big thing, yeah?* It is what it is.

(Liam, interview).

This comment can be interpreted in two ways. Describing men as 'under the thumb' seems to convey resentment towards women and the sense that men are oppressed. Further, the comment hinted at the performative nature of masculinity; it seems there are circumstances where it would be appropriate for men to forfeit dominance for other benefits. However, it was clear from his comment that for Liam

this was not to be shown publicly. Therein lies a possible explanation for the cognitive dissonance; differing expectations for one's self and for others *plus* differing codes of gendered conduct for public and private spheres. Interestingly, though, Liam commented that he did not believe men who aligned with stereotypical masculinity looked down on men who did not. He thought they just 'enjoy that kind of thing, um · without necessarily seeing that makes them more manly than the next guy' (Liam, interview). Other participants agreed that men were largely tolerant and respectful of others:

New Zealand guys are actually very accepting. *Yeah?* Um · like you don't see a lot of racism, you know, sexism, things like that. (...) Like, um · if you had a group there and one person sort of said something racist, you know they've basically stepped out of line.

(Casey, interview).

Those with more misogynistic conceptualisations of masculinity tended to be older and had grown up before feminism had become a mainstream concept, which may explain some of these discrepancies. In this respect, Nathan spoke of how he felt masculinity had been unfairly demonised by feminism:

We, we just grew up confident somewhat in ourselves. And then I got to university and I suddenly found out that the person I was, was unacceptable to half the university population. *Yeah?* The female half. They were openly critical and vitriolic just over what we did as a matter of course. *You mean 'we' as in men?* Men, yeah.

(Nathan, interview).

It is possible this sense of persecution was amplified because of his own lack of assertiveness. He said elsewhere in the interview that he was 'not the sort of guy who'll stand up in a crowd and say my piece about something' (interview). At another point he recounted, with much bitterness, a time when one of his close female friends had commented that any man could be a rapist. He was extremely indignant at what he perceived to be an accusation, which is interesting in light of his subsequent offending.

For many participants their gender was defined with reference to their physical abilities. Moe, for instance, emphasised his handyman skills: 'nailing and potting and that sort of stuff, you're not gonna get me bloody doing the green shit, I'll fix what's busted, 'cause I'm good at that' (interview). For many others, their employment or hobbies were a sphere in which they could reinforce their sense of masculinity. This was particularly true in terms of independence and leadership traits, as well as upskilling. Reg, for example, proudly listed many of his qualifications during the interview. Objectively

these were not particularly high-ranked qualifications but for him they functioned as external validation of his capabilities. He also took much pleasure in declaring that he planned to do ‘absolutely nothing’ with all of his credentials because he already had a job. It was clear from this comment that the benefit of his skillset was symbolic rather than practical. For the men generally, employment was a source of extreme insecurity about themselves for similar reasons. For instance, Gerry’s file notes state that prior to his offending he felt like a failure, was unsure of his employment direction, was working long hours unsupervised and felt unable to make decisions at work. The compounding sense of powerlessness was noted.

Others used hobbies as a way to prove their masculinity to others, even if they did not consider it important themselves. Flynn recounted how he ‘tried to excel at sports’ to impress his father; ‘it was just basically · competition and I was quite successful’. Howard similarly used sports as an outlet. He said he was normally very reserved but when he played hockey ‘that was one place where they had to listen · to me, rather than · ’ (interview). This sentence was left unfinished, but presumably the implication was that people did not normally listen to him, and that his time on the sports field was important for the authority it provided. Not all endeavours were similarly rewarding for participants. Moe shared a story where his youthful gung-ho attitude had got the better of him. He had been desperate to get his own gun so he could go hunting, and had pestered his mother for weeks. Eventually she relented and he went rabbit shooting, only to injure a rabbit without killing it on his first expedition. He was distraught: ‘it sounded like extreme pain and I’d never actually intended to do that (...) I didn’t want to hurt anything’ (Moe, interview).

Community involvement and charity work were other outlets where participants spoke of receiving positive reinforcement of their sense of self. One salient example was Ivan’s love of martial arts. It was a source of pride for him to teach students and help them achieve feats they had not thought possible. In particular, he appreciated the chance to demonstrate patience by trying different strategies when the first had not been successful. It was obvious he had found this to be a meaningful way to affirm his sense of self, particularly as a leader and imparter of knowledge. It became even clearer when he explained:

This is probably one of the biggest regrets I have in terms of my offending, because I do want to do a lot of things for the community. (...) I would like to,

um · do something for the, um · troubled youth, you know, because that's something that I'm passionate about, marital arts. I feel that I have learned so much I could give some back and maybe · teach them some, um · discipline and some, some self-esteem sort of thing. But now after, you know, what I have done, I feel that · I have to take a back step now.

(Ivan, interview).

One of the central aims of this thesis is to explore whether participants' offending can be explained as an expression of overcompensation for a perceived lack of masculinity. This quote indicates the process might also work in the reverse. Several other participants spoke of consequences that impeded their ability to affirm themselves as they had done before their offending became known. As earlier mentioned, Aaron resented that he had been forced to rely on other people following his victim's disclosure. He saw this as a direct infringement on his independence — a trait which had been very important in his affirmation of masculinity. In this respect, failed masculinities could be seen to both trigger offending and arise as a result of it — just through different avenues.

It can be seen that participants perceive masculinity as a set of attributes which they possess and which are immutable. But what they reveal in interviews is how particular social practices changed their perceptions of how masculine they are, that is, their concepts and experiences of success and failure changed their perceptions; this actually proves the mutability of masculinity beyond a list of attributes. These interviews confirm Connell's (2005) theory that masculinities are constituted by active social practices which establish relations of power between men. Therefore, it would be worth exploring whether rehabilitation models should work to empower men to rediscover ways of successfully affirming their gendered sense of self. This would have to be in addition to crucial initial work helping men to take full responsibility for how they have hurt other people.

Sexual orientation

For several participants their articulation of gender and sexuality was unclear. All but three men identified themselves as heterosexual; one labelled himself bisexual, one simply said he was 'not out', and the third rejected labels. Of note was that declared sexual preferences did not necessarily correlate with the gender of victims, which suggested non-sexual factors influenced this choice. For example, the participant who had sexually abused both girls and boys had 'decided he was heterosexual only

recently' (file notes). Another, who identified as bisexual and had abused only boys, reported having had sex with adult women but said he preferred same-age male partners.

Declared sexual preference did not always tally with actual sexual behaviour either. For example, one had said he was 'not homosexual', but elsewhere commented, 'I know what my father thought of gays · so I never transgressed into that sort of behaviour' (interview). It was unclear what 'that sort of behaviour' referred to exactly because he spoke of having had several sexual encounters with other men. One of the men defined himself as heterosexual and abused only girls, but had only ever had sought out sexual experiences with other men or pre-operative transgender women. He explained the confusion he experienced in this respect:

I'm quite confused. You know, there is some confusion, um · cross dressing's been quite a part of my life, um · I'm not gay, you know. I know I've used it [cross dressing] for comfort. Um, definitely used it for · arousal purposes.

(interview).

He later reflected that 'part of me that would quite happily live as woman, you know, and there's part of me that would be happy to · have the whole deal done you know, and be a woman' (interview). For him gender identity was very much fluid and not easily defined, although he did use binary gender markers to describe himself elsewhere in the interview. He also spoke of experimenting with adult cis men as partners but said he 'didn't like it much' (file notes).

A third man described his gender identity and sexuality as 'difficult', explaining that when he had played doctors and nurses as a young boy he never found vaginas interesting. He felt this was meaningful, and explained how this came to be expressed in his later relationships:

I'd fallen in love with this fa'afafine⁸⁵, which was a surprise to me. But it, you know, never bothered me. He used to introduce me to his · his friends, you know, fa'afafine friends and encourage me to have sex with them. (...) I've always been attracted to older women so that I kind of · have lots of fantasies about that, and fantasies about transsexuals. When I wasn't with them [laughs]. *Yeah. And would that be mainly pre or post op or either or?* Oh only, only pre-op. Otherwise you may as well sleep with a woman. (...) I think I feel most feel comfortable with a transsexual really. *Why do you think that is?* Dunno there's just something that · I

⁸⁵ Fa'afafine is a Samoan word that literally translates as 'in the manner of a woman'. In Samoan culture, fa'afafine are considered a third gender; they are generally assigned male at birth but chosen to fulfil traditionally feminine roles in later life; however, they are not analogous with Western conceptualisations of gay or transgender. For further discussion see Schmidt (2005).

dunno if it soothes me or. · I mean, you know · |current partner|’s a woman for all intents and purposes. But I dunno · strange enough there’s sort of something natural about it, I think. And I suppose I’ve never really gotten on with women in a relationship.

(interview).

It is also worth considering whether some of the older men who were reluctant to label their sexual orientation, may have felt this way as a result of homophobic attitudes internalised during their youth — that is, long before homosexuality law reform in 1986.

Interpreting the Q-Sort

Participants were asked to complete two Q-sort tasks. At the beginning of each interview the men were given 25 statement cards and asked to rank them according to their self-concept. At the conclusion, participants were given a second set of the same cards and asked to sort them according to their ideal sense of self. Each statement card was assigned a numeric value according to its ranked position for each participant, as shown in Table 9.b. This information was then analysed using Spearman’s bivariate correlation coefficient, the results of which are summarised in Table 9.c. In this table a congruence score of -1 indicates an individual whose sense of self is totally at odds with the personality they most desire. A congruence score of +1 reflects an individual whose ideal sense of self matches perfectly with their actual sense of self.

Overall, 15 participants registered positive degrees of congruence, with ten of these reaching a statistically significant level⁸⁶. It is perhaps simplistic to presume that feelings of powerlessness or inadequacy would necessarily cause discrepancy between actual and ideal self. And it is also possible the results indicate an overcompensatory or inflated self-perception amongst participants. In fact, research has supported a relationship between positive actual-ideal congruency and high scores on the narcissistic personality inventory (Rasking & Terry, 1988; Tangney & Dearing, 2003). These researchers explained that grandiosity and ego inflation were defining characteristics of narcissism. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that a congruent actual-ideal self would contribute to positive self-regard or even suggest an otherwise well-adjusted psychological profile. Rasking and Terry (1988)

⁸⁶ These are indicated with an asterisk in Table 9.c.

suggested narcissists could be separated from those who were simply well-adjusted, by examining the pathology of their idealised self. This involved establishing whether the attributes they ranked highly were ones that indicated grandeur or aggression. While not formally diagnosed, based on an assessment of their file notes, three participants in this study would have met the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder: Jason, Reg and Nathan. Two of the three had Q-sort scores that suggested high actual-ideal congruence.

Results were also analysed according to how each individual statement was ranked, specifically in terms of the discrepancy between actual and ideal. This data is presented in Table 9.d. At the top of this table are the statements with the highest average *positive* discrepancy — that is, traits where there was the biggest discrepancy between what the men desired in their ideal selves and what they felt were most characteristic of their actual selves. The top three were ‘I get upset with personal criticism’, ‘I need approval from others’ and ‘I act without thinking of the consequences’. These statements suggest that as a group these men were vulnerable to perceived negative judgements from other people. This could also explain why powerlessness may have been experienced as more distressing than it would have been for those not so negatively affected by external criticism. The statement ‘I prefer solo activities to group activities’ also had a relatively high average *positive* discrepancy value, suggesting the men were more susceptible to feelings of loneliness than others might be in similar situations. This possibility is also reflected in measures of coding frequency.

Isolation, loneliness, negative judgement from others, and self-doubt were commonly cited by the men as factors that had preceded their offending. My analysis showed that these factors contributed to participants’ depressed mood and negative self-appraisals. On the surface this might seem to conflict with the results shown in Table 9.c, but it is also possible these specific negative self-evaluations were masked by more neutral or positive attributes that featured in the list of Q-sort statements.

At the bottom of Table 9.d are statements with the highest average *negative* discrepancy — that is, traits deemed by the men to be more characteristic of their ideal selves compared to their actual selves. The top three were ‘I feel confident with who I am’, ‘I am in control of my emotions’ and ‘I have a sense of belonging in the community’. When viewed in conjunction with statements that scored the highest average *positive* discrepancy, it seemed these men were yearning for affirmation and a sense

of belonging, but felt these qualities had remained elusive in their actual lives. This alludes to what psychologists have described as fragile self-esteem:

Unstable self-esteem is thought to reflect fragile, vulnerable feelings of immediate self-worth. People with unstable self-esteem display a great deal of variability in their self-feelings and continually feel like their self-worth is 'on the line'; they also tend to adopt a defensive, self-protective orientation to forestall the aversiveness of their frequent shifts in feelings of self-worth.

(Paradise & Kernis, 2002, p. 347).

This relates to the earlier mention of narcissism, and other research has shown that people with a positive yet insecure sense of self are 'especially vulnerable to ego threats' (Stucke & Sporer, 2002, p. 530). That study also found that individuals who displayed narcissistic personality traits responded to ego threats with a mixture of aggression and hostility — in other words, they engaged in overcompensatory behaviours. I suggest that this same behavioural response could occur following perceived threats to one's gender identity, especially among those whose conceptualisation of masculinity was already fragile or insecure.

In the middle of Table 9.d are statements with the lowest average discrepancy — that is, traits where the men exhibited congruence between their actual and ideal selves. These were 'I am a gentle person', 'other people turn to me for advice' and 'I can cry easily'. It is noteworthy that two of these were defined as feminine attributes. This could suggest that the men felt the presence of feminine traits was less distressing than the absence of masculine traits. In other words, the men's motivation for masculinity was not so much a disdain for femininity as it was a fear of not being sufficiently masculine. However, further research is required before any definitive conclusions can be drawn.

As an aside, it is worth noting that several participants complained about being asked to do the Q-sort task. These complaints were made in person and on the feedback sheet⁸⁷, where one commented that it was 'irritating'. Some were annoyed because they felt it misrepresented the truth. For instance, Nathan felt his answers were 'artificial' because he was restricted by the number of statements permitted in each rank. At the end of the interview he declared the card sorting task was

⁸⁷ Following the interviews, participants were given the option of anonymously providing written feedback about their interview experience.

‘horrible’ and said: ‘if you had told me this, Laura, last week⁸⁸ I would not [have done the interview], I would have said absolutely no’ (Nathan, interview). Dean expressed some frustration that the nuance of each statement was lost in the ranking, complaining there was not a ‘sometimes’ box. He later described his choices as ‘iffy’ (Dean, interview). Having said that, there were a couple of men who actually enjoyed doing the Q-sort and said the statements prompted them to think about issues they wanted to raise during the interview. In this sense the Q-sort did function as an ice-breaker and was a good chance to build rapport with some of the men.

⁸⁸ Information about the Q-sort task, including an explanation of what it entailed, was provided on both the introductory letter and information sheet provided to participants. It was also conveyed verbally when I was attempting to recruit participants.

Table 9.b. Q-sort statement scoring

# Cards	Position	Weighting
1	Most characteristic	1.00
2	Very characteristic	2.50
3	Moderately characteristic	5.00
4	Mildly characteristic	8.50
5	Neutral	13.0
4	Mildly uncharacteristic	17.5
3	Moderately uncharacteristic	21.0
2	Very uncharacteristic	23.5
1	Most uncharacteristic	25.0

(adapted from Merrens & Brannigan, 1998).

Table 9.c. Actual and ideal self-congruence

Participant	Correlation	P-value*
Bob	0.813	0.000*
Casey	0.724	0.000*
Nathan	0.721	0.000*
Moe	0.618	0.001*
Todd	0.614	0.001*
Quinn	0.583	0.002*
Aaron	0.574	0.003*
Howard	0.509	0.009*
Keith	0.482	0.015*
Jason	0.428	0.033*
Perry	0.390	0.054
Gerry	0.355	0.082
Ivan	0.317	0.123
Dean	0.213	0.308
Oliver	0.027	0.899
Eric	-0.019	0.929
Liam	-0.040	0.848
Reg	-0.343	0.093
Scott	-0.346	0.090
Average	0.348	0.184
Std Dev.	0.347	0.324

Table 9.d. Descriptive statistics by attribute, ideal-actual discrepancy

Attribute	Attribute type	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Dev.
I get upset with personal criticism	Fem	-10.50	22.50	7.97	7.63
I need approval from others	Fem	-6.00	22.50	7.29	8.15
I act without thinking of the consequences	CSO	-4.50	24.00	6.55	8.18
I prefer solo activities to group activities	Masc	-8.00	21.00	3.08	7.78
I would get upset if my partner looked at another man	Masc	-20.00	18.50	3.05	8.27
I rely on others for help	Fem	-15.00	12.50	2.89	7.12
I get scared easily	Fem	-10.50	18.50	2.74	7.26
I am a manly man	Masc	-8.00	12.50	2.47	6.14
I will shout or intimidate others to get my own way	Masc	-12.50	21.00	2.37	7.85
I am resourceful when solving problems	Masc	-10.50	10.50	2.34	5.35
In a relationship I think the man should take control	Masc	-10.50	18.50	0.76	6.80
I am a gentle person	Fem	-16.00	12.50	0.03	7.08
Other people turn to me for advice	Masc	-10.50	6.00	-0.32	4.78
I can cry easily	Fem	-12.00	8.00	-0.34	6.17
I can understand another person's point of view	CSO	-12.50	8.00	-0.55	6.24
I am willing to take risks	Masc	-18.50	12.50	-0.58	8.04
I need to win	Masc	-10.50	12.00	-0.95	5.45
I do things that I say I will do	Masc	-16.50	8.00	-2.26	7.04
I am calm in a crisis	Masc	-16.00	6.00	-2.92	7.01
I have important and useful skills for life	Masc	-18.50	7.50	-3.79	6.93
I make decisions easily	Masc	-16.00	8.00	-3.89	7.16

I am assertive	Masc	-21.00	8.00	-5.42	9.50
I have a sense of belonging in the community	CSO	-18.50	4.50	-5.47	5.81
I am in control of my emotions	Masc	-22.50	9.00	-6.53	8.27
I feel confident with who I am	Masc	-24.00	6.00	-8.53	8.09

10. POWERLESSNESS

Defining power and powerlessness

Power, powerlessness and empowerment are terms frequently used in sociological and feminist literature. Tew (2006), however, has observed ‘there is relatively little consensus as to what power actually is or how it comes to operate in the ways that it does’ (p. 33). To this end he proposed a matrix of power relations that encompassed protective, cooperative, oppressive and collusive forms of power, and how these related to personal and social goals. Within this framework, power describes an individual or structural relationship in which certain people are privileged in specific ways over other people or groups.

Hearn (1990) was the first sociologist who commented that ‘child sexual abuse has its roots in male power and a male-dominated sexuality’ (p. 55). Cossins (2000) later hypothesised that men’s sexual abuse of children could be understood as an extension of normative masculine practices and structured power relations. She argued that men’s sexual abuse of children could be understood as a compensatory behaviour following chronic experiences of powerlessness, which were said to be triggered by a failure to achieve gendered goals using socially-sanctioned means. In this sense, sexual behaviour itself involved enacting power:

Like violence, some sexual practices are a way of aggregating power to an individual, however fleeting or illusory, by enabling the displacement of feelings of powerlessness through sexual acts with a partner who can be dominated or controlled. Such feelings may be related to a man’s distinct position of power/powerlessness within the ‘socially structured circumstances’ in which he lives.

(Messerschmidt, 1993, p. 83).

General findings

During my analysis, powerlessness was examined from two different perspectives. Firstly, one of the units of meaning was ‘self as victim and powerlessness’. Secondly, there were thirty other units of meaning which fell within a broader understanding of powerlessness. These included codes such as failure, humiliation, rejection, vulnerability and shyness, reliance on others, and poverty. When measured by its single code, powerlessness was a prominent feature of 19

interviews. This occurred in spite of participants not being explicitly questioned about this issue. Once all sub-codes were included within the scope of powerlessness, all interviews contained reference to this theme.

Despite emerging as a strong theme in the data, powerlessness had a different level of importance for each participant. For example, 11.9% of Nathan's interview was coded with the specific unit of meaning for 'self as victim and powerlessness', which translated to approximately 2,800 words and worked out to 16.5 minutes of recorded tape. By contrast, only 1.1% of Keith's interview fell within this theme, which worked out to a mere 200 words or 2 minutes of audio recording. In total, ten interviews reached at least 5% saturation for this specific unit of meaning. When combined with the more broadly related concepts, there were 14 interviews that reached coding coverage of at least 30%. It is, however, important to note that these were not the same individuals in both situations. Considering this was not actively pursued as a topic for conversation, I would argue this is a substantial amount of time for these men to speak about the issue.

Powerlessness was experienced by the men on both individual and structural levels; it also encompassed situations where they incorrectly assessed themselves to be powerless, as well as externally-verifiable situations of powerlessness. Individual powerlessness was most frequently associated with distorted cognitive processing and schemata wherein the men externalised responsibility for action and change in their lives. This distinction has been elaborated on by Kimmel (2007):

Men do not feel as though we are in power. Individual men *feel* powerless. I think the voices of men tell us something important. Their sense of powerlessness is *real*, as in they experience it; but it may not be *true* — that is, an accurate analysis of their situation. Men, as a group, may be in power; individually, men don't feel so powerful. (...) Masculinity is not, however, the experience of power; it is the experience of entitlement to power.
(p. 101, [emphasis in original]).

As indicated in this quote, there is some overlap between powerlessness and the second theme that emerged during analysis: entitlement. In the interest of presenting a coherent discussion, these shall be treated separately, with some overlap inevitable.

Types of powerlessness

The concept of power is firmly embedded in the social construction of masculinity, and this relationship has been analysed at length within general sociological and feminist literature (Collier, 1998; Connell, 2002a; 2002b; 2005; Hearn, 1996b; Hearn & Morgan, 1990; hooks, 2004; Kimmel, 2004; Messerschmidt, 1993; 2005; Seidler, 1994; 1997; Walklate, 1995; 2001; West & Zimmerman, 1987; 2000; 2002). Other researchers have explored how this dynamic of power — and powerlessness — informs the behaviour of men who sexually abuse children (Fuller, 1993; Hearn, 1990; Messerschmidt, 1993; 2005; Pothast & Allen, 1994; Willer, 2005). It is Cossins (1999; 2000; 2007; in press) who has written most extensively on the particular intersection between powerlessness, masculinity and child sexual abuse. She argued that men who engage in sexual behaviour with children have experienced some degree of powerlessness in their own relationships, and offend to overcompensate for this perceived failing. More recently she said that ‘to test the validity of this hypothesis, it is necessary to determine whether the social construction of gender is central to the sexual behaviour of offenders and what role child sex offending plays in offenders’ lives as men’ (Cossins, in press, p. 8).

My analysis found powerlessness manifested in low self-esteem and a perceived sense of unfairness. This perception of unfairness was somewhat reminiscent of the ‘dangerous world’ implicit theory described by Ward and Keenan (1999) but did not share the same persecution element and seemed to be more passive in focus. Both low self-esteem and perceived unfairness were, in turn, compounded by participants’ experiences of humiliation, failure, rejection and social inadequacy. The complex interaction between participants’ predisposed characteristics, life experiences, and the narratives they employed to explain these events, were possibly necessary precursors to their sexual offending, and specifically their choice to offend against children.

It was hard to clearly distinguish between the offender blaming his victim and ‘self-as-victim’ narratives since the latter were often expressed using tropes associated with the former. These sentiments were expressed frequently throughout both interviews and file notes. For example, Aaron described how he started abusing his three-year-old daughter: ‘what had tended to happen, um · [victim], I think, worked out that she liked it, and I was · I didn’t dislike

it, and I was crap at saying no' (Aaron, interview). Many others felt children — both in general and their victims specifically — had actively seduced them. Bob, for instance, introduced himself at group therapy by claiming his story 'was different to that of other group members in that his victim was leading him on' (file notes). Howard agreed that children sometimes sexually teased him 'by the way they dress and present themselves' (file notes). He gave the example of young girls wearing bikinis as proof of their sexuality. Several participants expressed these views, suggesting an implicit theory of children as sexual objects (Ward & Keenan, 1999). This implicit theory arises from a belief that all humans are driven by a desire for sexual pleasure — including children — and allows an offender to interpret innocuous behaviour as if it were sexually motivated.

It is possible some participants genuinely believed their offending was acceptable because of this implicit theory. However, many also expressed guilt and shame which suggests they recognised on some level their actions had been inappropriate. It is not easy to distinguish here between a genuine perception of powerlessness and post hoc explanations created to minimise or justify abusive behaviour. In either case, however, there is clearly a pattern for such ideas to be couched in the language of powerlessness; the overwhelming narrative was that, not only were these men *not* abusers, they were in fact the *true* victims because their victims had manipulated and taken advantage of their sexual needs.

Some men used the consequences of their offending to reinforce their narrative of self-as-victim. Keith, for example, felt he was being treated unjustly by the family court:

He felt put upon by the courts. He also felt that [rehabilitation] should be able to provide a modified programme for him, certainly one that does not take a year to complete. He also felt that [rehabilitation] treated some of the men in group differently. In his view, we allowed some men to have access to their children but we would not allow this for him.

(Keith, file notes).

This comment reveals egocentrism and a sense of entitlement, specifically the expectation staff would redesign a whole programme just for him. He also misdirected anger at the staff and was unable to see that his own behaviour was preventing him from seeing his children, not anyone else's actions. If these narratives had become ingrained early in life, and certainly prior to any

offending, then it is easy to understand why these men would choose the comfort of self-pity and defensiveness, rather than confront the reality of what they have done.

Others explained their offending as some sort of internal force that prevailed over free will. Nathan commented on ‘the power this was having over me, I hated it, couldn’t control myself like normal people’ (file notes). This comment suggests an implicit theory of uncontrollability and involves an offender externalising responsibility for his behaviour (Ward & Keenan, 1999). Some participants expressed powerlessness in the form of avoidance and passivity. Todd found interactions with women too intimidating so he ‘always left women to make the first move’ (file notes). Similarly, Scott described how the offline world became too difficult for him because he ‘didn’t feel like I fitted in’ and seemed unable to obtain a romantic partner. Escapism was his response: ‘I’d go into my room, turn my computer on and there was a whole world that I was in control of’ (Scott, interview). This was a common sentiment and most participants reported feeling emasculated and powerless in their relationships — or attempts to establish them — with women. Almost all participants expressed this social powerlessness by developing a strong fear of rejection, ruminating on previous incidents where they had been rejected, and feeling paralysed by the lack of control they had over this. For instance, Scott explained how he felt when his last relationship ended 15 years previously:

It was more a case of a sort of reinforcing the inferiority complex I have, you know, God nobody really wants you and all you’re getting is a sort of, you know, troubled stuff. (...) And that was it, that’s the last relationship I’ve had.

(Scott, interview).

This captures what Kimmel (2007) referred to when he said men as group experience power yet individual men do not feel so powerful. Hegemonic masculinity dictates that men should be suave and charming, with an innate ability to woo whomever they so desire. However, the men in my sample expressed frustration and resentment when they discovered this was not the reality for them. In this respect they developed a comparative feeling of powerlessness as individual men. They were displeased to learn women were not passive objects waiting to be chosen; not only that, but women were capable of expressing their own minds, and sometimes did this by declining romantic propositions. Again, avoidance was common: ‘I couldn’t really face, the,

um · having the girls there every day and · face my social awkwardness in that situation (...), I think pretty much withdrew from almost any situation which involved girls' (Liam, interview). For others the internal conflict this produced was more volatile. A psychological report for Perry described his 'general pattern of anxious ambivalence in close relationships, marked by bitterness and resentment on one hand and dependency and anxiety about possible rejection on the other' (Perry, file notes). Resentment of this type was prevalent amongst participants and will be explored more fully in chapter 11.

Casey was one who expressed a combination of both personal and institutional powerlessness in response to being sexually and physically abused by his mother:

The only thing I could do was just, sort of, walk off and cry about it. *And did you do that quite a lot, I guess?* [Nods] Pretty much every day. (...) *Did you talk to your grandma much about it?* Um · she knew about it. Um · she couldn't really do much about it. She, sort of, called the authorities on · a lot of times. Um · but · you know, without actual evidence there's nothing they can do. (...) *And in terms of the physical abuse would your school friends notice bruises, you know, things like that?* Yeah, um · teachers quite often said something about it. But it's [laughs] · it's basically a whole debate on how much you can punish a child before it becomes abuse. And it's · the law used to be very lenient.

(Casey, interview).

In this scenario Casey's experience was not only *experienced* as powerlessness, he was objectively powerless. In a very real sense he was at the mercy of a flawed social system and his mother's abuse. He also blamed himself for not being able to protect his younger brother, explaining: 'you just feel helpless' (interview). This gradually morphed into a belief that he would grow up to perpetuate the same cycle of behaviour:

I remember when I was little (5-7) mum would rub my penis on a regular basis and cause me to have an orgasm, telling me that this is what men are for and that men do similar things to girls' genitals, but not until we were a lot older.

(Casey, file notes)

This later turned to bitterness, before being resolved in a stand of defiance: 'I felt resentment that mum had made me feel like it was all I was good for (...) I didn't want to hurt anybody else, I made that decision up right there on the spot' (Casey, file notes). The way these feelings

evolved over time shows one of the ways powerlessness overlaps with other themes — in this case with resentment. One participant described the shock of learning that his father had died, specifically in terms of the implications this had for his role within the family:

My skin felt strange for days, cold and clammy and my stomach hurt each time the loss hit. Looking back I was probably in shock. Another helpful aunt or family friend reminded me I was the man of the house now and I must help my mother. This after I'd been in a flurry of activity doing just that. It was just another grating piece of aggravation to me. I wondered why no one gave a fuck how I felt. Emphasis on I.

(Moe, file notes).

This particular quote conveys a profound sense of powerlessness and isolation, culminating in resentment towards those who had not noticed his efforts. The resentment is expressed somewhat aggressively and with a tone of self-pity towards the end.

One of the other men found powerlessness to be more a product of unfortunate circumstances. Eric described a lifetime of events where he felt victimised and lacking control: schoolyard bullying, unemployment as a young adult, and subsequent relationship breakdowns. Things reached a crescendo following the birth of his son because he 'felt like the responsibilities they were faced with were at times insurmountable' (file notes). He had been using child pornography since he himself was young, mostly as a means of escapism, but this escalated to hands-on abuse three months after his child was born. He elaborated on how this had happened:

We'd just had [child], everything was stressed out, we had no money, none of us was working, we were in a gang filled neighbourhood, there were fights going on all around us, we were arguing about finances, arguing about our families. Her family was trying to get all up in our shit. My family think that because they helped financially here and there, they helped with the baby, they have a right to say 'things like what we should do and stuff. It was pissing us all off. So, so much stress. *It must've been tough, yeah.* And the internet offending was 'to tell you the truth, I mean it was such a depressing time that the internet offending almost, like it was, wasn't enough.

(Eric, interview).

For Flynn, the perception of powerlessness related to his own lack of assertiveness. Often he felt unable to express his needs to other people and this eroded his self-esteem. He described one example:

Um · we wanted to go on a trip at one stage and I had a · new car. |Sam| and |Dave| and they both wanted to come with me. And um · Sam said to Dave, ‘no you’re not’ and he got really upset. But, um · I was just meat in a sandwich. *What did you do?* I couldn’t · I had to pacify both. *Were you in a relationship with one or both of them at the time or?* Both, I think, yeah. It was difficult. *How did you sort of · resolve it?* I didn’t, um · no, I, I was just basically, let, let, letting them, um, try and um · settle it. And I felt really inadequate.

(Flynn, interview).

Overall, the men in my sample experienced powerlessness in a variety of ways. Situational powerlessness arose when they felt life had been unfair and that circumstances beyond their control were actively working against them. Interpersonal powerlessness was also prevalent; this involved instances where they were victimised or abused in some way, as well as less extreme instances of being refused opportunities or excluded from making decisions in their own lives. Personal powerlessness was quite similar, but more internally focused. It manifested in maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance, escapism, passivity, learned helplessness, cognitive distortions and general lack of assertiveness. It also seemed to be exacerbated by — as well as contributing to — negative moods, depression and self-esteem problems. Social powerlessness resulted when men perceived themselves unacceptable in the eyes of society, or believed they did not have traits necessary to be a success in life. Finally, institutional powerlessness occurred when men did not receive state help or assistance, or were actively discriminated against by structural oppressions such as racism.

Distorted perception

Social powerlessness related most directly to masculinity and gender identity. However, to varying degrees all experiences of powerlessness exposed some sort of personal failing or vulnerability that — at least for the men in this study — was a source of profound and significant loss of confidence, doubt, withdrawal, self-hatred and feelings of failure. These

feelings often arose from an underlying belief they were not active agents, and their life path was outside their own control and direction. This was possibly why the men so consistently reframed events after they had happened.

This sense of powerlessness was sometimes externally verifiable — such as sexual abuse they experienced as children — but more often was a false perception due to their unwillingness to examine other possibilities and challenge rigid dichotomous thinking. This generalised and emotional reasoning was very common. For example, when Scott spoke about the one time in his life he had felt truly happy:

The sense of fun we had, it was incredible. And, and such a contrast to my life before that and after that. You know and unfortunately it came to an end and I, and I · I never really · I never found anything to replace it ‘cause I think a lot, a part of me was sort of saying, ‘well you’ll never have it that good again, why, you know, why even try something new’.

(Scott, interview).

There are two beliefs operating here, both of which served to reinforce his sense of powerlessness. Firstly, he attributed this period of happiness to chance rather than his own actions and choices. And secondly, he erroneously reasoned that future attempts to find happiness would be futile simply because some attempts had been unsuccessful. In this sense perhaps it was the pain of experiencing ongoing and constant failure that was deemed more unbearable than resigning one’s self to a perpetual state of powerlessness. This fits with Maruna’s (2001) observation that ‘deviance has its own internal logic’ even when it appears inconsistent and contradictory (p. 138).

I also found it interesting the men were so willing to portray themselves as victims, given this narrative is at odds with hegemonic masculinity. This could have been for several reasons; perhaps they had come to accept their own weaknesses as inescapable, or perhaps they were worried I would judge them more negatively for their offending and figured this was the better of two negative impressions they could make.

Integral to one’s conception of powerlessness is psychological resilience and self-esteem. Cossins (in press) explained how this could become damaged by a gendered process of comparison: ‘the masculine ideal represents a dominant form of manhood against which

other forms are measured and evaluated, creating a hierarchy of masculinities' (p. 12). This hierarchy has been explored elsewhere in the context of intimate partner abuse. Murphy (2009) suggested that hegemonic masculinity exerts two distinct pressures on men: to eschew weakness in themselves and command authority over others — particularly women and romantic partners; and, secondly, to comply with the rule that physical violence is unacceptable. This is somewhat similar to the question of why men would be so willing to present themselves as vulnerable and powerless during their interviews with me when this is the antithesis of social masculine ideology. This would appear to contradict my suggestion that their offending was possibly a strategy of overcompensation to *avoid* being perceived as powerless or weak. Again, the answer might be explained by the different social contexts. It is possible participants felt safe divulging weaknesses to a woman interviewer, especially given my neutral presence in their life as well as my repeated assurances of confidentiality. Or perhaps their rehabilitation has nurtured a sense of self-awareness and acceptance.

In the context of intimate partner violence — although it may similarly apply to men who have sexually abused children — Murphy (2009) claimed 'the motivation to control women and win symbolic capital sometimes becomes more important than adhering to the message that it is weak to hit women' (p. 309). Crucially, though, these might not be mutually exclusive positions. Cossins (2000; in press) argued that the sexual abuse of children was an extension of normative masculine practices rather than a deviation from them. Many masculinities are fundamentally exploitative and coercive, so directing these feelings towards children would not necessarily be an insurmountable step to make — particularly given such abuse can involve a prolonged grooming process. She explained further: 'for some men, coercive sexual practices with partners may provide experiences of potency or power, however fleeting, with those who are able to be dominated, controlled or manipulated to meet the sexual needs of the man in question' (in press, p. 12). It remains unclear whether my participants were fully cognisant of the fundamentally coercive and exploitative nature of their behaviour.

Idealising childhood

Nostalgia was another response to powerlessness, and several participants explained that puberty through to late teens was the period when life started to take a turn for the worse. Some experienced trauma such as bullying during this time and responded by seeking refuge in their happier memories from childhood. Others, due to self-imposed isolation, became emotionally stunted and stuck in the fantasy of their past. Timing was crucial here. Men who were victims of abuse during childhood were understandably less likely to fondly recall these early years compared with those who found their later teenage years more psychologically fraught. In particular, it was internet offenders who most strongly idealised their own childhood. Liam explained how it was for him:

Primary school up through intermediate I was generally a fairly popular kid and I was good at sport and I was good at, um, school work too. (...) Um, but, you know, when puberty hit and girls came into the picture, um, I felt completely out of my depth. Um · and I · you know it was hard for me and, um, I didn't have much success, and, um · kind of withdrew from there, I think. (...) I was vulnerable about it and so I didn't want to talk to anyone about it.

(Liam, interview).

In an autobiographical assignment, he explained subsequent events:

By 5th form my lot was with the nerds and the outcasts. Even there, my ability to command the group was slipping. My effort was also slipping. For the first time, that year I did not come first overall. There were highlights and I still took home some silverware, but I was disillusioned. (...) I felt everything in my life up until that point was meaningless and anything I had achieved amounted to nothing.

(Liam, file notes).

In both of these quotes he directly comments on feeling powerless and an increasing awareness of his own vulnerabilities, especially in the matter of sexual relations. In addition, he simultaneously elevates his childhood and derides it as 'meaningless'. When he explained his later offending, he described it in terms of pubescent sexual experiences he felt had been denied to him:

I came across a photo set of a girl that I thought was · more about my age then. (...) Um · and I found that quite arousing because of my, I guess, um, failures in that area, and, um · you know, had never · ah, seen a girl who, you know, a girl's body of a similar age to mine. (...) So possibly because I then went looking for similar things, somewhere along the way, I, um · I came across, um, sort of nude art of little children. (...) At first I was quite shocked at what I saw, but eventually, um, would go back and I, you know, eventually I was looking for it. Um, as opposed to being shocked at what I saw. I think I went back in · out of curiosity or interest or what have you.

(Liam, interview).

It was clear that child pornography allowed Liam to explore his sexual desires in a 'safe' forum where he was not constantly forced to confront his vulnerabilities and perceived social failings. Liam was one of several men who utilised this narrative to explain their offending, but his quotes are the most illustrative. Although Flynn did explain quite clearly: 'I never considered myself an abuser and only fantasised, (...) I was not into anything except for memories of my youth' (file notes). However, it is possible this was simply the way he preferred to interpret his behaviour. Later he explained:

Well a lot of the pictures just didn't turn me on · I don't know what I was looking for, but um · maybe it was memories of, um · happier times. That's what I · try to make myself believe that it was, um · trying to see the happiness in their faces too and not the fear. I was never into, um. *Sort of abuse images and things like that?* Yeah.

(Flynn, interview, [emphasis mine]).

However, even if it was not the primary factor here, nostalgic escapism was likely one of a wider constellation of issues that culminated in offending behaviour. It is also possible that this escapism permitted individuals to regain a sense of power and control in their lives. The men I interviewed seemed to have an unstable perception of the world and a belief that change happens without warning. This was suggestive of what Ward and Keenan (1999) described as an implicit theory of uncontrollability. The men tended to generalise and catastrophise the present and future based on negative experiences in their past. These behavioural patterns also reflected Rotter's (1966) external locus of control concept, which has been studied exhaustively with the domain of attribution theory and personality studies (Leone & Burns, 2000). From a

criminological perspective, though, it is interesting to observe how such distorted thinking processes can end up being expressed in deviant ways.

Men's own experience of trauma or abuse

All the men I interviewed were survivors to varying extents. Ten had been sexually abused themselves as youngsters; four were subject to routine physical abuse; two had suffered serious neglect; and six had endured psychological or emotional abuse from parents or caregivers⁸⁹. In addition, 15 participants (75%) reported being bullied extensively during their school years. This is much greater than the prevalence of bullying in the general community, which is estimated to be between 20% and 47% (Coggan et al., 2003; Marsh et al., 2010). It is also established that bullying contributes to low self-esteem, hopelessness, depression and suicidal ideation (Allison et al., 2009; Coggan et al., 2003; Marsh et al., 2010; Raskauskas et al., 2010). Eleven of the men reported they had seriously considered ending their own lives, and three had attempted to do so at least once. One man had made four suicide attempts.

Given the victimisation and trauma experienced by the men in my sample, it is easy to see where their sense of powerlessness is likely to have originated. There were two distinct groups: those who responded to bullying and trauma by withdrawing from social contact and totally isolating themselves — often using computer games or internet pornography as a way to escape; and those who responded by becoming bullies themselves — a clear demonstration of overcompensatory behaviour. The former response was the most common, but four of the men ended up becoming aggressive and domineering to others. For Dean it was simply a matter of survival: 'I needed to look after myself, I needed to get others before they got me, I became a bully myself' (file notes). Ivan explained similar logic: 'if anyone makes me angry, I can hurt them and if anyone picks on me or gets smart, I can frighten them or hurt them' (file notes). Gerry seemed ashamed that he had participated in this as well:

I · kind of took part in one horrible incident where · kind of · this kid that was always bullied and we sort of threw him on the ground and I kicked

⁸⁹ Some men have been counted more than once depending on the nature of the abuse they experienced.

him in the teeth. It was horrible. *Why did you do that?* Why did I do that? I was horrible.

(Gerry, interview).

In contrast, Moe developed a more neutral defence mechanism to deflect bullying:

I discovered humour as a more than adequate form of defence. Bloody hard to beat someone up when you're cracking up laughing. I took the piss out of myself using the theory that I could do it better than any other bugger.

(Moe, file notes).

Those with the strongest self-as-victim narratives described how they began to experience a sort of learned helplessness. It was almost as if they accepted victimisation was inevitable; perhaps they reasoned it could be attributed to some characteristic they were powerless to change. For example, Reg said 'I was closed off. I didn't talk to people and that, I didn't associate with peers my own age' (interview). Others made similar comments:

That caused my, um nature. First I withdrew. And became quieter, a little nerrier. (...) I would have loved to be more popular but that meant self-esteem. I didn't have any of that. (...) Yeah, it's it's really kinda damaged my whole development.

(Eric, interview).

I suppose I felt like a bit of a wimp, you know. I couldn't stand up to him. I mean I know I would've gotten a total hiding if I had've. (...) Yeah, I was a bit, um I felt a bit sort of diminished I suppose.

(Quinn, interview).

I didn't feel there was anything I could do about it. I mean I felt like I couldn't talk to my parents about it because we didn't talk about stuff and they were having their own issues anyway. I mean I just bottled it up and, um locked myself away. You know, I was incredibly isolated.

(Scott, interview).

Eric was not always sure how to distinguish friends from bullies, but reasoned that some negative attention was better than being overlooked:

I'd play along, um if even if the tricks would, would sometimes be against me. But we'd all poke fun at each other, as boys do. But I'd just take it and think that that's how it's supposed to be.

(Eric, interview).

For others the experience was dismissed as normal, even when it had considerably affected their lives. Howard said: 'I thought it was just the usual college thing' (interview). Perry described himself as a 'natural target' (interview). This sort of passive acceptance hinted at an underlying belief that their lot in life was that of the victim. Perry's file notes also support this resignation to fate: 'eventually he gave up trying because his schoolmates teased him so mercilessly'. There were other comments which supported this, especially from men who came to believe they deserved to be treated badly:

Just verbal [bullying] which I took pretty hard, as I do. (...) Yeah, I mean more than anything · it was because I believed it. And, you know, I told myself, well · that he actually has a point because, you know, here I was, as I saw it · failing across all fronts [laughs].

(Liam, interview).

Taken together, it can be seen how these men became trapped in a cycle of victimisation, feeling — or actually *being* — powerless to stop it, then experiencing further victimisation which served to reinforce initial feelings of powerlessness and 'prove' their lack of self-worth. In terms of gender, this process has unique repercussions because society positions 'manhood' and 'victim' as mutually exclusive categories. This sense of gendered failing was reflected in some of the reasons these men were singled out to be bullied: too weak, not athletic, too fat, unsuccessful with girls and women, too short — and so on. In other words, they were attacked verbally and physically for not conforming to a prototype of masculinity. In addition, some physical bullying was both a literal and metaphorical blow to their manhood; two men recounted humiliating incidents where they were kicked in the balls in front of their peers. Oliver commented that it was not simply the bullying that was difficult to endure, but the social embarrassment of friends seeing him shamed. He said, 'it makes you still feel pretty small, smaller than normal' (interview). This public and social humiliation was perhaps of greater consequence, depending on how disempowered these men felt about what was happening to them. In this respect, the powerlessness they experienced was both individual and social.

There were some participants who had gone through specific traumas not shared by the rest of the group, and these events did create conditions conducive to offending and are worth discussing. Dean experienced posttraumatic stress disorder following an overseas posting

with the army, Ivan was in a car crash that killed his mother, and Bob and Perry were both affected by childhood brain injuries from physical abuse. Given severe trauma is known to change neurobehavioural and cognitive patterns (Silver et al., 2011), this might explain why some of the men were more susceptible to cognitive distortions, attribution errors, learned helplessness, depression and low self-worth. Dean recalled how his posttraumatic stress began to erode his marriage:

I ended up being a volunteer to help clean up some mass graves. *Oh wow.* Yeah, and that's pretty messy, 'cause some of the bodies were women and children. *Oh, that must have been horrific.* Because of the length of time they'd been there they would · you'd pick up a body and it would fall apart in your arms. *Fuck, that's almost · how do you deal with that?* I didn't. I locked it away and that's where it started to go wrong. Um, the army offered counselling and I was like, 'don't need it'. Um, I came back and |wife| was saying 'something happened, what's gone on?' and I was like 'nothing, it's sweet as'. Other guys had told their partners about stuff over there, and they'd told her and she'd gone back 'oh these people are saying this and this and this' and I was like, 'bullshit, it's all lies, they're making it up'. *And was that a deliberate choice do you think, to hide that? Or was it more like you thought you were dealing with it well?* I thought I was dealing with it well. But with that as well · I think I was trying to protect her from that sort of thing. *Yeah.* But, um · |wife| definitely thinks that I was protecting myself. Which I suppose is · probably part of it as well. You know, not wanting to deal with it, not wanting to face it. (...) I'd become very passive. *Okay.* Quite closed up.

(Dean, interview).

It is interesting that he specifies the corpses were also women and children, as if to imply that male bodies would not have been quite so upsetting. It is also clear how deeply conditioned he was to reject offers of assistance. This matches with what research has shown: men with posttraumatic stress are much less likely to seek or accept emotional support than women, which has been specifically attributed to masculine gender role stress (Christiansen & Elklit, 2012; Jakupcak et al., 2006). Counterintuitively, other research has shown that while men are exposed to a higher frequency of traumatic events than women, they have lower rates of posttraumatic stress (Christiansen & Elklit, 2012). This possibly reflects a social expectation that men should

be unaffected by pain and suffering, and should simply ‘harden up’⁹⁰. For this reason the men in my sample who developed posttraumatic stress may have felt this transgressed socially acceptable gender expectations, and perceived it as a failing of their masculinity. When combined with New Zealanders’ propensity towards stoicism and self-sufficiency, this could have created significant feelings of inadequacy among these men. There does seem to be a culture within New Zealand of self-reliance in spite of everything — underpinned by a belief that help should only be accepted as an absolute last resort rather than as a preventive or protective measure. This echoes what Christiansen and Elklit (2012) described as the ‘masculine minimisation of emotional reactivity’ (p. 117).

It is also likely that undiagnosed posttraumatic stress disorder could explain some of the learned helplessness experienced by men who had been sexually abused themselves. Posttraumatic stress disorder is a common sequela of sexual abuse, and can manifest in feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness and helplessness. This is especially relevant for boys abused by adult women who were found to be more likely to perpetuate the cycle of abuse (Glasser et al., 2001; Shapiro, 1995). Other writers have commented that posttraumatic stress among male survivors of childhood abuse is often experienced as a ‘loss of masculinity’ with a corresponding devaluing of their heterosexuality (Krause et al., 2002, p. 361). These authors explained that ‘the lack of agency and the abject helplessness inherent in the experience of being sexually violated is especially threatening to masculine identity’ (Krause et al., 2002, p. 361). Moreover:

Two tenets of masculinity seem to be violated by the experience of sexual abuse: 1) societal beliefs that a man is expected to be able to defend himself against assault, and 2) the male ethic of self-reliance. The extent to which the male survivor’s explanation of his abuse contradicts these cultural messages seems to be associated with self-blame, self-hatred and posttraumatic stress disorder symptomology.

(Krause et al., 2002, p. 364).

The theory was that boys grow into men who exhibit hypermasculine displays of overcompensation in an attempt ‘to convince themselves and others that they embody all of the

⁹⁰ There is a considerable body of research on gender differences in posttraumatic stress, although it beyond the scope of this thesis to cover. For further discussion see Christiansen and Elklit (2012), Jakupcak et al. (2006), Krause et al. (2002), Morrison (2012) and Whitworth (2008).

highly stereotyped masculine characteristics' (Krause et al., 2002, pp. 361-362). The authors suggested such efforts would be doomed to failure due to the unattainable nature of stereotypical masculinity. This argument also relates to Cossins' (2000; in press) theory of powerlessness, and seemed to hold true for a number of the men in this study. Shapiro (1995) found that those with learned helplessness following abuse were unlikely to be those who blamed themselves for the abuse they experienced. In other words, learned helplessness was consistent with attributing events to an external locus of control. Again, this held true for the men in my sample.

Although less likely, there is a chance some of the men developed posttraumatic symptoms as a result of perpetrating abuse. Since posttraumatic symptoms can also be cumulative, ongoing flashbacks of being abused in childhood could make a person more prone to developing flashbacks of abusing others. Although not asked about this in the interviews, Moe's file notes record how he was struggling with 'unbidden flashbacks' of what he had done. Others reported feeling sickened every time they thought about their behaviour, and two commented they had become hypervigilant around children and teenagers since their offending became known. On the surface at least, it seems more plausible these behaviours could be attributed to guilt and shame rather than any genuine experience of posttraumatic stress. In addition, this suggestion would likely be offensive to many of these men's victims. Further research will need to be conducted on this point before any more definitive statements can be made.

Inability to seek help

The inability to seek help — and accept help offered — was common to almost all participants, although it manifested in different ways. For some the problem was a total absence of a safety net. For instance, while Bob had some extended family who provided him with temporary accommodation from time to time, they were not able to provide the emotional support he required. Alcohol became a source of comfort, and his primary method of self-regulation, since he felt no constructive alternatives were available to him. This was true for both his own sexual

victimisation and his later offending against others. In respect of the former, he spoke of how it was still difficult to ask for help — even once he recognised there was an issue that needed help:

I didn't know it was illegal or wrong, you know. Until they started saying that thing in [decade]: 'break the cycle'. When those were first coming out. *A TV campaign?* Yeah, it was an ad around then · [decade], I believe it was. That's when it started coming out: 'break the cycle', 'tell somebody', you know. 'Tell somebody what's happening'. *Yeah, and you did?* I think it must have been running for five to six months, and 'cause I was sniffing [glue] at the same time · it affected me a lot. And that kept running through my head, 'go and tell someone'. But where do I start? Where do I start and where do I begin and what do I do? You know · even for them telling us, 'tell somebody'. Who? Which one? *You need more information!* Yeah, æ. And my thought was, I want to tell someone. I don't want anything to happen as such · but I don't want to go to the CYFS⁹¹ or the police. So it took me a while to act on it.

(Bob, interview).

This quote highlights three key barriers to asking for help: recognising the problem, knowing who to speak to, and feeling able to act accordingly. Later in the interview Bob also spoke of trying to address his own behaviour, saying that it took him some time to find services that catered to offenders instead of victims. Many of the men commented on difficulties in this respect. For example, Keith said:

I mean you see John Kirwan on the TV saying 'I suffer from depression, I've got a mental illness' (...). But you don't see anybody out there saying 'hey · if you're really having problems with sex[ual offending], you have to give us a call, man'.

(Keith, interview).

Based on these men's experiences, I would suggest this issue needs to be addressed in future governments' policies to reduce sexual abuse in the community.

Many participants said they were not able to recognise their behaviour had become problematic until it was too late. They explained how their moral perspective eroded over time and they claimed there was not always a definitive line between 'not offending' and 'starting to offend'. This was particularly true for internet offenders who all described going through a

⁹¹ Child, Youth and Family Services is a government agency that provides support and fostering services to young offenders and children at-risk.

transition period where they used ‘barely legal’ pornography featuring women who were — at least insofar as the site promoted them — of technically-legal age, but who had petite or youthful-looking characteristics. It also seemed this phase primed them for sexualising younger and younger images. It is unclear how many of these comments were attempts to justify or minimise their behaviour, but it is certainly true that legal adult pornography often makes use of baby-faced women to titillate men with the fantasy of virginity (Jensen, 2010; Kleinhans, 2004).

Other reasons for not seeking help usually related to shame, debilitating fear of consequences, vulnerability and shyness, inept communication skills, increasing withdrawal and isolation from others, and general lack of awareness. For Scott it was a combination of factors:

I could have actively sought out alternative activities to alleviate my boredom, or sought out guidance or counselling to work through my lifestyle problems, anxiety, depression and my compulsive nature. However, for the most part I was in denial and, when I wasn’t, I was too scared to admit to anyone what I was doing or to ask for help.

(Scott, file notes).

Some men tried to help themselves, which again pointed to a masculine ideal of self-reliance. This strategy occasionally helped in some respects, but did not address the underlying problem or change the circumstances which facilitated their offending:

If I have a problem · in life · one of the first things I do is · basically I’m on my knees praying to God. *Yeah. And does that help you sort of articulate it in your mind or do you get like result, answers from that?* Um · I think. Well the first thing is that · sort of gives you a way of talking about, about your situation and sort of · analysing it, I suppose. And, um · I dunno, I think it · you clear your mind basically. It also, um · you have that personal relationship because you have somebody to talk to and, um · express your feelings with.

(Casey, interview).

While talking with God did provide an emotional outlet for Casey, it did not lead him to any practical strategies for changing his situation. This seemed to be dictated by fear, or perhaps lack of any truly trustworthy friends to confide in. He said: ‘I knew it was wrong, but I didn’t know how to talk about it, I didn’t know who to talk to, you know if I spoke to the wrong person, then they might go and call the cops or something’ (Casey, interview).

Eric was one of the few who did proactively seek help. This happened after he had been offending online for several years, but before he committed contact offences. However, given these later offences still happened it is safe to say the help he received was unsatisfactory or inappropriate for his exact situation. For Gerry the process of getting help took years, and involved several distinct phases:

It's only been the last sort of · couple of years that I've actually really dealt with it but I didn't really try very hard. Even upon sort of, probably suggestions from my mother · during university to do anything like counselling or anything · anything serious about it. Um · it was only with the start of my kind of sexual · um, pornography and that kind of thing that I, um · perhaps started · seeking help seriously and · that's only in the last couple of years that that's become actually a committed thing. And that's only in the last year that I'm starting to · understand the process. (...) In the past I was probably very stubborn in a sense and I thought 'oh I'm all right'.

(Gerry, interview).

There are some possible explanations for why the men found it so difficult to seek help. To begin with, there is a misleading simplicity conveyed in the phrase 'asking for help'. Obtaining help is not a one-off event and involves distinct phases: firstly, recognising one needs help; secondly, feeling able to verbalise and ask for that help; thirdly, implementing constructive advice in the course of daily life. The risk here is that repeated experiences of powerlessness could make an individual decide their situation is unchangeable. Again, this could be objectively true or incorrectly perceived to be the case. Furthermore, hopelessness regarding the possibility of change can itself be a symptom of depression. Another likelihood is that social expectations of masculinity caused participants to forgo help in favour of maintaining the appearance of self-sufficiency and strength. Or, that self-loathing had escalated to a point where the men genuinely discounted their own value as a human being and felt undeserving of resources. The common factor in all of these possible explanations is fundamentally flawed self-appraisal — likely due to faulty thinking — exacerbated by feelings of powerlessness.

These issues tie into the wider problem of men's mental health, and are reflected in the comparatively high rates of male suicide, alcoholism and drug abuse (Bray & Hutchison,

2007; Cleary, 2012; Pringle, 2007). There is also a body of research which indicates gender role stress is associated with higher rates of depression⁹² (Emslie et al., 2006; Feather, 1985; Good & Mintz, 1990; Li et al., 2006). In particular, men with more conventional interpretations of masculinity have been found more susceptible to the compounding effect of a higher incidence of depression and lower utilisation of counselling services (Good & Mintz, 1990). Other research has supported this, with Cleary (2012) citing men's reluctance to seek help as one reason for their higher suicide rates. She argued that social ideas about gender and emotion were able to explain why men committed suicide more frequently yet women reported higher levels of psychological distress. One of the few studies to look at depression and narratives of hegemonic masculinity did reach some rather interesting conclusions, notably, how important it was for depressed men to reconstruct their life narratives in a way that explicitly valued their masculinity (Emslie et al., 2006). Some men were said to do this in accordance with hegemonic masculinities, whereas others challenged such dictates. Emslie et al. (2006) gave the example of men who had reconceptualised their mental illness as a 'heroic struggle' over which they could eventually triumph (p. 2255). They found this helped men to speak freely about their experiences of depression — contradicting the common assumption that men are unable to discuss sensitive subjects for fear of emasculation. However, this might not be generalisable to outside the relative security of an interview environment, which is sheltered from real-life consequences regarding gendered identity. Nonetheless, it suggests rehabilitation programmes may benefit from including gender as a component of therapeutic treatment.

Humiliation, rejection and self-esteem

Cossins' (2000) power/powerlessness theory was predicated on the chronic experience of powerlessness, rather than one-off events. However, data from my interviews suggested that one-off events of extreme humiliation, failure or embarrassment served to compound an underlying lack of self-esteem and predisposition towards self-pity. Some men had never

⁹² Although women overall experience higher rates of depression than men (Borooah, 2010; Savoie et al., 2004).

developed positive self-esteem in the first place; for those who had, it eroded over time. The overwhelming majority of participants experienced sexual humiliation, relationship break ups or rejection very painfully:

She was 13 and cute and had been around. I was probably two or three years older, nervous and shy of girls. I was not only inept but totally powerless. They knew exactly what they were doing and I didn't. (...) *Was that helpful for them to have more experience or was that embarrassing?* No, yeah that was dreadful. Because I remember · my hand crawling down and wondering where the hell · what was I going to find, and having got to a particular point she says 'don't go too low, boy, you'll get the wrong hole'. *Oh no!* And that's where my memory stops. I don't know whether I ran or whether I sat there, and, I dunno, I can't remember. Oh shit.

(Moe, file notes; interview).

Dean's feelings of frustration and hurt due to his perception of being rejected by his wife sexually, led to an increase in his use of pornography and masturbation, rather than attempting to address the difficulties within his relationship.

(Dean, file notes).

She took off to · |country| about four years into the relationship. And before she went off we had sort of said that, um · when she comes back we were going to get married. (...) But when she was over there, um · she met somebody else. (...) I think · I didn't really know how to react or anything and it was sort of · just saying, 'yeah, okay, I accept that'. *Yeah. And after you got off the phone?* I was in pieces. I was in absolute pieces. *Yeah. Were you sort of angry or were you sort of hurt or was it?* I was very hurt. Um · I was pretty much constantly crying for · probably a good week. (...) I basically lost my faith in the world. You know, I didn't trust anybody, I didn't like anyone.

(Casey, interview).

One of my first girlfriends went out with another guy so there was this sort of · she dumped me for another guy at intermediate. *Oh that's awful.* Um · and then from there they've [relationships] all had · sort of relatively traumatic aspects.

(Gerry, interview).

Just the same as they had done when being bullied, the men tended to respond to experiences of rejection with passivity and hopelessness. For example, it was recorded that 'Howard has not approached a female in his entire life for a date because he is afraid of rejection' (file notes).

Dean, also cited hopelessness as a precursor to his offending: 'I felt depressed, I felt like I was missing out, I wanted someone to love me, I had a low opinion of myself, I felt that people put

me down, I was feeling rejected' (file notes). Scott felt rejection was an external reminder of his already-low self-esteem:

I think in a way I was actually more disappointed with myself, you know, it was kind of, you know, once again you've accepted · something · below par. You know, that's · kind of pathetic, you know, why do you do that to yourself?

(Scott, interview, [emphasis mine]).

Interestingly, Aaron claimed this was not how things were for him: 'no, no, no, there was nothing sort of that made me feel bitter or twisted or · like I'd been · ah, rejected or anything' (interview). However, later he recounted stories that conveyed precisely these emotions. Notably, though, his early comment suggested he thought it was normal to respond to rejection with bitterness and twisted thinking.

For Jason, it was his tendency to fixate on the past that amplified his sense of rejection and feelings of powerlessness. He also faced a unique quandary following his divorce, since his religious views prevented him from accepting that his marriage was over. He felt unable to challenge his religious belief so instead chose to challenge his wife's decision to end the marriage. He had very little insight in this respect, and virtually no empathy for how his ex-wife was experiencing the break-up:

She said she needed space, and after three months she said, 'nah I don't want you back'. But, um · so I pined for her but I, I, I'd come past the property, drive past and she thought that was · harassing or something, you know. I just wanted to see the kids.

(Jason, interview).

Later during the interview he expressed some resentment to his wife, which was possibly as a consequence of his feeling powerless to change her decision to leave. This was in the context of discovering his nine-year-old daughter had been abused by a young relative:

Even to this day, I don't think what had happened was · a big deal. |Wife| made it a big deal, which then made a big impression on |daughter|. You know, 'this is really, really wrong'. |Wife| is vicious. She can be.

(Jason, interview).

This quote also shows how Jason's default belief is that sexual abuse is harmless, and that it only becomes an issue because of other people's reactions.

In some respects, and especially when viewed in isolation, experiences of rejection are not unusual — and are common experiences for men who have never sexually abused children. However, I believe these anecdotes are noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, the events were recounted with a rawness of emotion and freshness of detail that suggested they had not been internally reconciled or processed — which was true even when they had occurred several decades previously. Secondly, they were almost all presented as formative and defining experiences. Rejection is never enjoyable, but for these men it had wounded them deeply and remained close to the surface of their interpersonal relationships. Cossins (in press) surmised the 'formative experiences of powerlessness will occur in adolescence (...) where emerging sexual practices, including the use of child pornography, are likely to become entrenched' (p. 23). For most of the men in my sample, this was their reality. They sought refuge in an online world where they felt control and autonomy, and they sought it specifically with children. The reason for choosing children is likely because child represent an even more powerless and vulnerable social position — especially when viewed through the lens of the men's negative self-appraisals. In addition, children are less likely to directly reject sexual advances because they have been socialised to behave in accordance with adults' wishes.

For some participants the pervasive sense of powerlessness was exacerbated further by rejection from others when their offending was discovered. This only served to compound the pre-existing feelings of self-loathing and often justified their strategy of self-imposed isolation:

Told his neighbour, the cop, about his conviction. Went down like a lead balloon. Cop said he told his supervisor and was told not to associate with him. Said to Moe he couldn't have done much worse. Moe rejected, felt very judged, no contact now. [Wife] livid with him for disclosing it and not discussing it with her.

(Moe, file notes).

This is an important point, particularly given the increased rates of recidivism for socially ostracised child sex offenders (McAlinden, 2007). Equally, though, many of the men were surprised at how supportive people were following their disclosures. This was true at least for

those in their immediate family and friend circle, but even men who told acquaintances were often given reassurance and offers of assistance. Gerry recounted how his best friend had responded without making a bit deal, saying ‘this is pretty full on but I’ll help you’ (interview). Ivan’s brother comforted him by saying, ‘we’ve all done things in our lives · and as long as we learn from it and don’t do it again’ (interview). Liam’s dad reassured him nothing would change and he still loved him as a son. He added, ‘that was basically how he responded and we haven’t really talked about it much since’ (interview). These positive reactions were an unfortunate irony given many of the men’s offending may have been prevented if they had felt able to ask for help at the first indication of troubling behaviour. Conversely, for one of the men, this support — or lack of overt condemnation — fuelled his ability to minimise his crimes:

They just ask me, ‘but, you’ve served your time for that, though, æ cousin?’
And I go, ‘yep and that’s all I got’. I mean, if [my offence] was more serious
than that, I wouldn’t have been out [of prison] by now.

(Bob, interview).

It is also possible that disclosures were not wholly truthful, so any positive reactions from friends and family need to be understood in light of this. Overall, though, it was most common for the fear of rejection and ostracism to actually stop men from being truthful with others about what they had done. Another concern the men had in this respect was how they would tell future partners about their offending. The rehabilitation programmes had a policy of encouraging early and frank disclosure, but this was an understandable source of anxiety for several:

But if it’s not going to be a serious relationship I don’t see why I have to tell them anything, you know, if it’s just going to be casual or whatever it is. But if we get into a serious relationship where we want to, you know, move forward in the future · then I’ll mention it right at the start so she has the choice of · getting away. So she has that choice and not me taking it away from her. (...) *Yeah. That’s a bit scary too, though, isn’t it?* Yeah, well fear of rejection. So many fears, God. (...) But I mean, I reckon if I do it like early, then if they don’t want to be with me then I don’t want to be with them. So if they don’t have an open mind to say, ‘oh hey, this is in, it’s his past’ · and, you know, ‘that’s not who he is anymore’.

(Oliver, interview).

For other men, being able to tell friends and family themselves allowed them to take back some semblance of control. Nathan explained:

On Monday I went to the five or six closest people I know. And I told them. Because I thought · one of the things that's been · ah, trapping me is the, is the secrecy. I'm told my name is going to be splashed over the newspapers and everyone I've ever met will know. Um, and that is the end of my career. Um · so I thought one thing I can control is how people are told. (...) Um · one woman was absolutely shocked and I got a text from her yesterday saying · um, and she was the one I was most scared of · and she said 'I'm fully behind you, good luck to you' and all the rest. And I've spoken to her today on the telephone. She rang me up and she said, 'look, I was in shock for about two nights after that, I couldn't sleep when you told me this'. But she said, 'look, I wanna keep on working with you, you know, that's this other person · I like you, I like · the person I see'.

(Nathan, interview).

This quote also illustrates the powerlessness Nathan felt when his offending was discovered. His secret was to be revealed and he had no control over how he would be portrayed by the newspapers⁹³. He said that keeping his offending a secret had allowed it flourish but had also allowed him to fit in with society. For him, the biggest fear was social ostracism and loss of status — particularly in the context of his work. In Nathan's employment environment he spoke of being valued by others, and this was evidently a large component of his self-worth. Collinson and Hearn (1996; 2005) have discussed how work-related competence feeds into hegemonic narratives of masculinity. Therefore, Nathan's attempt to regain control — by telling his colleagues what he had done and framing it on his terms — could be interpreted as a pre-emptive strategy to minimise future consequences of his gendered failings.

Perceived masculine failings

This thesis argues that sexual offending against children can be a means of overcompensation following chronic experiences of powerlessness. However, my analysis showed there were also legal ways and non-sexual ways participants overcompensated. For the most part men used intimate sexual relationships to try and reinforce their sense of masculinity. Unfortunately, this sphere of their life also gave rise to strong feelings of humiliation and powerlessness. This was particularly true for men who experienced impotence or premature ejaculation, and those who

⁹³ At Nathan's sentencing hearing, some months after our interview, he was given permanent name suppression. However, this was subsequently breached and most people in his community eventually learned his identity and the details of what he had done.

felt sex was being denied to them. Furthermore, the lack of sex was strongly associated in their own minds with later offending, as well as feelings of emasculation. This was a significant crossover, and it also seemed to exacerbate feelings of isolation and loneliness. The following quotes illustrate these connections and interrelationships:

Never had a partner, no social self-esteem, lonely. (...) Felt like an outsider at some work [and sport] events as I don't drink and don't have a partner, lonely and different.

(Howard, file notes).

The lifestyle problems I was experiencing at the time of my offending centred around loneliness and low self-esteem. I had very few friends. I did not have very close relationships with the small number of family members that I had in NZ. I had not had a romantic/sexual relationship for around ten years. Not only did these things cause feelings of isolation, but they, along with the bullying I had experienced at school, only reinforced my low self-esteem. In fact, that is an understatement. I felt completely worthless and couldn't see any way at all to fix this.

(Scott, file notes)

Because he and his wife have had communication problems for years, they bypassed allowing themselves to seek help, both becoming afraid to discuss 'it' and keeping up appearances to their children and the outside world. Their intimacy sexually has been non-existent for over two years, and again, both experiencing inadequacy or paralysis around communication.

(Nathan, file notes).

You were using drugs then [when you started offending], yeah? Yeah, using drugs. [Wife] and I weren't getting on that well. You know, I'd been contemplating leaving for ages. I suppose · I was never happy there, you know · I thought oh I couldn't cope with this, you know, but that's as far as it ever got really.

(Quinn, interview)

His self-perception will tend to vary as a function of the current status of close relationships; apart from a sense of identity established from such relationships, he likely feels incomplete, unfulfilled and inadequate. As a result, his self-esteem is quite fragile and is likely to plummet in response to slights or oversights by other people.

(Perry, file notes).

These quotes all describe men whose feelings of powerlessness and passivity dictated their sense of wellbeing and self-worth. For most this sense of self was intricately linked to their sexual prowess, or perceived lack thereof:

As time got on, I would · come to orgasm very quickly so, um · ah, you know, if I was looking at, um, internet porn or what have you, there might be times where it would be, you know, couple of minutes and I'd be done. *Okay, and how would you sort of feel about that?* Well I'd see that, you know, I was · less of a man for that or, um · wouldn't have any, whatever, of the feelings that might come along with someone who was sexually active with someone else, I suppose. You know, just, I felt that I was less potent.

(Liam, interview).

This quote shows Liam comparing himself against how he imagines a sexually experienced man would — or should — perform. Another anecdote shows how his sense of powerlessness was chronic, and had compounded over the years:

I was in the middle of the floor when a [school group] boy came over and said hi. I said hi back and he then kneed me in the balls and possibly said something dismissive and then walked off. (...) I also saw him do it to at least one other boy. I thought at least it's not just me and took some consolation, even pleasure, in seeing it happen to someone else. (...) I felt surprised, confused and embarrassed. I felt very small and all-in-all had a terrible rest of the night. I had to pretend like nothing happened. (...) I should have done something, maybe retaliate. I re-lived the event but where I punched him in the face or something. I told myself I was a loser and he must have singled me out (and the others he did it to) for some reason or fault of ours.

(Liam, file notes).

It was also evidently important for him to emotionally re-experience an alternative ending where he was the victor. This fantasy was a source of comfort, and likely reinforced his thinking that mental escapism was a good way of achieving some semblance of control. Even those who felt socially more capable still experienced barriers to fulfilling their own gendered expectations:

Up until that stage I thought it [erectile dysfunction] was going to go away. I kinda, I kinda knew what was supposed to happen. And it didn't. And when I read this [article] I thought, it's a condition? *Was that a relief or did that make it worse?* No. It wasn't. At least I had a name for it. Which made it worse, 'cause all of a sudden it was sort of like, um, in, in neon letters. *And did you, did you talk to the doctor at the time about it at all?* No. No, no, I didn't, I don't know if I ever spoke to anybody about it. (...) I lost my virginity when I was thirty two and yet · I could've lost it when I was fourteen · because, you know, I mean, as terrified of girls as I was · I didn't do too bad. (...) But then of course my bloody secret would come out. (...) *How, okay, so what sort of · how did you deal with keeping that secret, I guess?* Most of the time I get pissed because then it could act like a bloody excuse.

(Moe, interview).

This inability to perform was a source of enduring shame for Moe and his sense of masculinity was negatively affected. Another participant used his impotence to his advantage, claiming in court that he could not possibly have committed the offence for which he was accused: 'I produced that in court saying, the doctor's letter and everything, said, 'look, it's like flogging a dead horse' (Perry, interview). Ultimately, this strategy was not a successful defence but it did prove there was at least one context where Perry deemed it appropriate to publicly acknowledge this perceived weaknesses. However, this defence also reveals Perry's view that sexual offences can only be committed by potent — read: powerful — men. It is possible these feelings also, in part, motivated his offending. Oliver's situation was different:

As Oliver entered high school he recalled feeling sexually attracted to females although felt scared about the possibility of rejection. During his middle high school years, he was approached by one female and they went out for around one week. Oliver recalled that he agreed to dating as he 'wanted to be nice', although considered that she was very 'forward' in her approach towards boys. He described their first kiss as awkward as he felt anxious. He did not know what he should be doing. Oliver reported that he broke off the relationship because of his nervousness. A second opportunity for a relationship arose when Oliver was around 16, although on this occasion he declined the offer. He described similar feelings of anxiety and nervousness. Beside these two experiences, Oliver has not had any social interaction with females with the intention of developing a relationship.

(Oliver, file notes).

Oliver chose to reinterpret his powerlessness and passivity as simple laziness, and this was how he described it to his therapist. This was possibly a strategy to avoid facing the truth of his own perceived inadequacies, but it ultimately amplified his sense of powerlessness and manifested in a total lack of self-management:

His interests appear solitary. His tendency to laziness possibly extends to allowing others to influence his thinking in some areas. Oliver at this time seems to have a limited vision or motivation as to career or work prospects, even though he has had an adequate education. Oliver lacks focus and goals for the future.

(file notes).

It is also possible that chronic experiences of powerlessness could encourage the dangerous world implicit theory discussed by Ward and Keenan (1999). This could happen to someone

who believed they were the only one whose inadequacies were being exposed, or at least felt their experiences were worse than those of others. These beliefs could cause someone to feel individually targeted — particularly someone with narcissistic tendencies — and ultimately lead them to view the world as hostile and uncaring. This might occur if someone has a distorted understanding of other people's realities, for example, the quote where Liam described what he believed were attributes of a sexually competent man. His belief was not necessarily an accurate one given sexual dysfunction has been described as 'widespread' among men (Laumann et al., 1999, p. 544). At the same time his belief was not totally baseless, especially given society's tendency to equate sex with masculine achievement. This is reflected in colloquial language used to describe heterosexual sex from a man's point of view: a conquest, scoring, trophy wife, winning her over — all words and phrases overtly associated with achievement and success (for example see AskMen, 2011). The difference here is that rather than perceiving the world as hostile, participants concluded that external forces were stacked against them. Cossins (in press) commented:

If child sex offending is a particular social practice for experiencing power for some men, it is important to analyse it in terms of the complex relations of power and powerlessness that characterise men's lives. And to recognise that child sexual abuse is likely to represent *different* issues of power for *different* men.

(p. 15 [emphasis in original]).

She elaborated that different men would compare themselves with men of similar positioning. For instance, even though a high-ranking Chief Executive might have structural power compared with the office cleaner, it would be his sense of powerlessness relative to other men in his position that would be crucial. Cossins (in press) reasoned that children's bodies could become a location 'where power dynamics are played out' because they represent a total absence of power in all contexts (p. 25). This returns to the earlier point made by Kimmel (2007) about relative and subjective powerlessness. Overall, men are afforded a significant amount of social power and prestige due to their maleness, and any other social identities they may occupy such as race, class or ability. Ultimately, though, the distinct spheres that men occupy function to insulate them from the lived reality of men positioned elsewhere in the social hierarchy. These

spheres also insulate them from seeing that other men also experience powerlessness, and that the hegemonic concept of masculinity is largely an artificial one. At the same time, structural power provides men with opportunities to offend and many use these opportunities to overcompensate for perceived weaknesses or masculine inadequacies.

It is also important to draw a distinction between men who offend in order to revel in and display their authority, and those who offend because they feel powerless and want to compensate for that. The former relates to the theory of hypermasculinity, but the latter is predicated on feelings of powerlessness. It is likely that both are important factors in men's sexual abuse of children, and that one or both may play a part in each man's pathway to offending. Moreover, they could exist at different times for the same person during the course of their life. Further research would be helpful to fully understand the complexities and contradictions of how these factors interact.

11. ENTITLEMENT

Defining entitlement

There is a body of literature which connects romantic or relational entitlement with violence against women and sexual abuse of children (Adams et al., 1995; Hannawa et al., 2006; Hanson et al., 1994; Schwartz & Tylka, 2008). In particular, masculine entitlement is said to derive from patriarchal advantage and the sexual ownership men are taught to have over women's lives and bodies (Jordan, 2004; Kimmel, 2007; Tolmacz, 2011). That is, men have been taught to expect and demand social privileges because of their collective dominance, and may use physically or sexually violent means to ensure such privileges are retained. There is historical precedent for this, which has been outlined by Jordan (2004). She explained how early rape laws defined women as 'items of exchange, commodities whose social value lay in their reputations' (p. 22). This value was considered to belong to the woman's father until he could safely bequeath it to a suitable husband. Kimmel (2007) reasoned the 'breakdown of patriarchal power' over the past forty years could explain men's violence — perpetrated against other men, as well as women and children. In doing this, he framed male violence as an aggressive response to a collective and individual loss of entitlement.

A broad understanding of entitlement encompasses three different facets of patriarchal dominance. Firstly, there is everyday male entitlement which arises from social conditioning. This is not always pathological but can become so, given the right circumstances. More often it is seen in subtle ways, like men who physically dominate public space⁹⁴. Secondly, there is more overt and individualised entitlement which is instilled from birth by indulgent parents who cater to their child's every whim. This can lead to extreme egocentrism in adulthood. Thirdly, there is entitlement that follows chronic experiences of powerlessness. This happens when men come to believe — as a result of perceived unfairness or victimisation — that society owes them recompense for injustices they believe they have faced. This arises when an individual assesses

⁹⁴ Amusingly, there are a number of websites dedicated to identifying this behaviour and photographing men who, seemingly oblivious to how cramped everyone else is, take up disproportionate space on trains and buses (Bahadur, 2013; Clifton, 2014).

his own inadequacies against the underlying assumption that men, as a collective, should exert power and dominance.

General findings

Entitlement was the second theme to emerge from my data, but given the considerable overlap with powerlessness it must be understood as an extension of the first theme. The other reason for this is that entitlement was not a specific unit of meaning in its own right; instead, 26 other units of meaning fell within the scope of this concept. These included resentment and blame, disdain for others, hostility, narcissism or egocentrism, cynicism, and using or manipulating others. Using this broad definition, entitlement was a feature of all interviews but was more prominent for some men. For instance, 38.45% of Nathan's interview was coded under this theme, which translated to approximately 9,000 words or 81 minutes of tape. This compared with Howard's interview which reached a comparatively low 6.21% saturation, yielding approximately 870 words or six minutes of recorded tape. In total, 12 interviews reached a minimum of 20% coding coverage in relation to this theme.

Resentment, blame and defeat

My data showed two ways that men responded when their sense of entitlement was threatened. Some exhibited aggressive and hypermasculine behaviours such as hostility, disdain for others, resentment and blame, and revenge fantasies. For other men, these feelings of vulnerability reinforced their sense of powerlessness and worsened their self-hatred and self-pity. In both scenarios these feelings became entwined in their subsequent sexual abuse of children. For example, Aaron demonstrated a sense of ownership over the abuse he had perpetrated, as if he somehow had exclusive rights to discuss it. He expressed irritation and employed victim-blaming strategies when talking about how his daughter had decided to discuss what he did to her:

In fact, she's a little so open about it that she'll quite happily talk with her · school kids about it at school, which is a bit worrying. Um · because the counsellor has, sort of · drummed into her that, um · it wasn't her fault and she didn't do anything wrong. *Yep*. Um · and, um, which is all good,

um · but I think it's made her, by the fact that she didn't do anything wrong, why. *Why not talk about it?* 'Why can't I talk about it?' Plus also, 'I'm going to the counsellor and talking about it every week or couple of weeks · and so it's becoming front of mind', plus 'it's not wrong, let's just talk about it'. And so, it's · um · so she's certainly in an environment where she can · um · or feels comfortable to talk about whatever feelings she has got.

(Aaron, interview).

One participant actually articulated 'entitlement revenge' as the main reason he had molested children but it was difficult to ascertain exactly what he meant by this:

When you look back do you think, what motivated you? Revenge. Yeah? And, and anger. Okay. And · do you think, was it anger at those people [you victimised]? Anger at granddad dying. But the revenge about what happened to me⁹⁵. You know, kind of an entitlement revenge. (...) It was kind of like if I had an opportunity I would take it. There was times, you know · I'd encourage mum to go away, you know, 'cause she'd be looking after these people [siblings] and she'd say she needed to go to the shops, so I'd say 'oh just go I'll look after them'.

(Reg, interview).

Entitlement also underpinned many of the men's reactions to rejection discussed in chapter 10. Both of these points resonated with Ward and Keenan's (1999) implicit theory of entitlement. The recurring narrative was that the men in my sample felt they had been denied something that was rightfully theirs. Specifically, there seemed to be a common belief among participants that men have a basic right — or *need* — for sex. As discussed earlier, this belief was an integral aspect of their masculinity and triggered overcompensatory behaviours when they felt it was threatened. Cossins (in press) reasoned that child sex offenders would filter their experiences of powerlessness through a pre-established sense of entitlement, and this would ultimately cause them to try and re-establish control and dominance. For the men in this sample this was true. In addition, certain people came to embody a constant reminder of their powerlessness. While this person was often the focus of their hostility and resentment, sometimes these feelings were transferred to others. For example, Reg felt personally aggrieved that his grandfather had died on his birthday:

⁹⁵ This is explained in the next two quotes from Reg.

I know it sounds mean but I prayed that he died the day before or the day after my birthday. Um · at two o'clock in the morning |of my birthday| we got a phone call saying he'd passed away. So mum rung one of her friends to come around and babysit us while she went to the hospital with the rest of the · of her brothers and sisters. And · mum's friend brought her grandson around and he comes in and he started laughing, telling me my grandfather had just died. (...) Yeah, so I got up and smacked him into the _inaudible_. *Yeah.* _Inaudible_ jumped on my bike and ran away for four days to the park. (Reg, interview).

Later he said:

I wasn't given any personal time. *That's hard. And I mean · what did you see as the sort of significance of him dying on your birthday?* I've never really celebrated a birthday. Generally when I was younger my birthdays fell, 'cause we were under, with |charity|, so my birthdays usually fell during the school holidays. And so they'd always had something on and then usually, quite often they were on my birthday and so I never really got my birthday for me.

(Reg, interview).

He also recounted another birthday where his little brother had thrown his cake against the wall — in his mind yet another example of his birthday being ruined. Collectively, these events produced a deep-seated resentment. He felt others were spoiling this one day that belonged to him, and attention he believed he was entitled to was being diverted elsewhere. It made him angry and bitter. Over 8% of Reg's interview — 1,200 words or eight minutes of tape — was coded with the unit of meaning for resentment. His offences were also significantly more serious than all other participants.

Other participants did not know how to react when they discovered life would not provide everything they had come to expect. One described this realisation:

I think I was living in a fantasy world really. A world where · who I was or who I was · destined to become was at odds with who I really was. *Yeah? What do you mean by that, like?* Well, I think · well at one point in particular, you know, I thought I was · um · going to be · great, and I was going to rule the world and all this · I quite seriously believed that at one point, I think. Um, I think partly, you know, people had been telling me that I was so great for so long that · it was that kind of superiority type of a thing. But at the same time · you know, my difficulties with some of the relationships and things seemed tending to going downhill. There was that reserved, sort of, inferiority thing at the same time. Um · and · I was very closeted, I think.

Yeah, I wouldn't let people in and wouldn't let anyone know what I was thinking.

(Liam, interview).

It was unclear why some men became resentful of others and directed blame outwards whereas others became self-loathing and frustrated with themselves. It is possible this related to pre-existing feelings of powerlessness but it was not possible to ascertain this from my sample size. However, this comment from Liam displayed high levels of egocentrism, and this trait did seem to exacerbate resentment and anger among several of the men. This may be because those with narcissistic tendencies are hyper-aware of their own feelings and inconsiderate of others' experiences. This could lead them to believe they are the only ones subject to negative treatment. Another example of this was recorded after an evening group therapy session:

Eric arrived late and his apology consisted of the fact that he was late because this was the only time he could get an appointment with his hairdresser. [Staff member] challenged Eric over this, asking whether he was now working and if not, what did he do with the rest of his day that meant his hair appointment impacted on his ability to attend group. Eric became disgruntled about being challenged and made an effort to sit apart from the group by moving his chair outside the confines of the circle. When he was encouraged to bring himself into the group, he refused. (...) Eric approached [other staff member] at the end of the session and requested that his individual sessions with [staff member] be rearranged as he is not happy with being challenged over his behaviours from [staff member]. (...) [Other staff member] also pointed out that the challenge over being late was not only addressed to him but, as he was the last arrival, he had missed the challenges issued to other men. Eric was adamant that he was being treated differently.

(Eric, file notes).

This incident clearly shows how Eric's egocentrism obscured his awareness of the other men's experiences. He perceived he was being unfairly scrutinised and responded by petulantly removing himself from the group. This mirrored Eric's tendency to withdraw whenever he was forced to confront difficult emotions. His internet offending in particular was an ongoing manifestation of this avoidance and withdrawal.

This narcissistic sort of self-pity was expressed by other men too, and seemed to overlap with feelings of powerlessness. One of the men spoke of feeling aggrieved they had not been chosen to inherit the family business:

We had this business, it was my · the business that I had built up for my dad. *Yeah*. And he wouldn't sell it. Well he wouldn't, for some reason or other, wouldn't sell it to me [dejected voice]. He said, 'not yet, son' and kept on, 'oh you'll get it one day'. And um · eventually · by agreement of the family · you know, we had a meeting where we all voted yes. Then straight after that I said to dad, 'I want to buy it', 'cause I wanted to be on business terms. And um · so he says 'son you haven't got the money'. I said, 'come on, dad, you know, where family's concerned there's ways'. *Yeah, of course*. But no, he had already · talked to the accountant and the marketing manager of our company · and wanted to sell it to [other party]. So, um · okay it was sold to them and they ruined [it] within, um, a few months.

(Jason interview).

There is a clear bitterness here; he felt entitled to purchase the business from his father and was further wounded when the buyer who usurped him ended up destroying it. It was also revealing that he accidentally described it as 'my' business, before correcting himself. Jason's life narrative was marked with these accounts of grievance, particularly where money and employment were concerned. It was clear these were markers of status for him and he spoke — unprompted and persistently — of how the world had conspired against him. He said, just prior to his offending, he had 'come to a stage where I was thinking, you know, um · I'm like a dog on the ground being kicked, again and again' (Jason interview). Comments like this also gave rise to the possibility that self-preoccupation for some of the men was a symptom of depression⁹⁶.

Nice guys relegated to the friend zone

The phrase 'nice guy' can be used with both negative and positive connotations. In this particular context I use it as grassroots feminists have done: to critically examine the phenomenon of men who declare themselves to be *nice*, yet lament being unable to convince prospective partners of this fact. This sentiment is captured in the common refrain that 'nice guys finish last'. There is a socially-accepted dichotomy between men who characterise themselves as a nice guy and those deemed to be the 'bad boy' or 'jerk' — the latter being ones who presumably come first. A small body of academic literature has examined this concept, but none has critiqued it from a feminist perspective (for example see Jensen-Campbell et al., 1995;

⁹⁶ Mental illness is discussed further in chapter 12.

Judge et al., 2012; McDaniel, 2005; Urbaniak & Kilmann, 2006). Most of the current research has focused on ascertaining if any truth can be found in this stereotype, but has not challenged or acknowledged its basis in masculine entitlement. Commentary that has adopted this position is largely thanks to online feminists bloggers (for example see Dasgupta, 2014; Dickson, 2013; Doyle, 2011; Fecke, 2007; Riordan, 2013; Ryan, 2012).

Within the nice guy construct there exists a space known as the ‘friend zone’. This is what so-called nice guys see as the inevitable outcome of their niceness: women do not choose them as romantic partners and decline their affections by saying *I’d rather we just be friends*. In other words, these men see themselves as having been relegated to the role of friend-not-partner, and having been forced to accept the friendship as a sort of consolation prize. Numerous advice columns have been written teaching men to avoid the pitfalls of this dreaded friend zone. One such piece explained the thought process involved:

Another reason why people end up in the friend zone is that they are too afraid, uncertain, or passive. Many people approach someone they are attracted to as just a friend because it is easier and less emotionally-risky. In other situations, they may desire a committed relationship, but begin as a hookup or friends-with-benefits because that too is easier. In any case, these individuals begin the interaction by not clearly communicating what they want — and settling for less. Sometimes this is honestly done out of insecurity. Other times, it is a bit sneaky, using friendship to work their way in the back door — rather than simply facing rejection up front.

(Nicholson, 2013).

This shows how the friend zone has been depicted in popular culture and media; the dutiful and loyal friend who waits patiently in the wings for his true love to finally recognise they are *meant to be together*. Common usage demonises the role women play in ‘friend zoning’ men. They are portrayed as ungrateful and in denial about their *true* desires — messaging that echoes the polarisation which has positioned women as either virtuous Madonnas or deceitful whores (Jordan, 2004). In several respects, the stereotypical ‘nice guy in the friend zone’ captures the essence of rape culture; men enter into relationships with women ostensibly to become friends, but with an undeclared sexual agenda. Then, if this is rejected, they respond with self-pity and derision of the woman’s decision to assert her own will. The response to being ‘friend zoned’ is where the sense of male entitlement becomes apparent. There is often anger, resentment,

self-pity, a sense of betrayal, an indignant cry of *how dare she not accept me, especially since I'm such a nice guy*. The nice guy then concludes with the embittered generalisation that *nice guys like me always finish last*.

These concepts tie together several of the ideas discussed earlier in this chapter: powerlessness, self-pity, sexual entitlement, humiliation and rejection, and resentment and blame. Above all, the woman is portrayed as devious for making decisions that are said to be at odds with her declared wishes — which furthers the rape-supportive myth that women do not know their own minds. Many men perceive this ‘contradiction’ to be unforgivable (McDaniel, 2005, p. 347). For some men it gives rise to criminal behaviour. A recent example is Elliot Rodger, who murdered six people and injured 13 others in California in May 2014. His manifesto, which he published online shortly before carrying out the murders, was riddled with misogyny, self-pity and the ‘nice guy’ trope. He summarised:

I wanted to punish them all. I imagined how sweet it would be to slaughter all of those evil, slutty bitches who rejected me. (...) All I ever wanted was to love women, and in turn to be loved by them back. Their behaviour towards me has only earned my hatred, and rightfully so! I am the true victim in all of this. I am the good guy.

(Rodger, 2014, pp. 110, 137).

The mixture of entitlement, powerlessness, resentment, and proprietary attitudes towards adult women — as well as children — were evident in some of the interviews I conducted, and often coexisted with a very loose understanding of consent. For example, Scott explained how his nice guy status meant he was powerless to compete with other men:

I guess I was just · for whatever reason I was always · the nice boy that was, they wanted to be friends with rather than anything else, you know. *Yeah*. Um · I'd be passed over, surrounded by a bunch of guy who were, sort of · phenomenally, fit and good looking and talented, and I sort of always still felt kind of the, you know, kind of the, you know, the duckling if you like amongst it all, you know.

(Scott, interview).

Conversely, Moe spoke of strategically using his role of trusted friend:

But then what they [girls] didn't realise was what · nerds could be doing. We were multi-taskers. We could talk this bullshit and still be lookin' [laughs]. *Okay. So it's all a ruse in a way [laughs]? (...)* But in those days the

girls didn't know · so we could get away with a fair bit. In fact, because we were patient, more patient than these other · than the other guys who had muscles, ah, muscles in their heads, um · we could ah, we could build up a friendship with a girl. *Yeah, that's true, that's the way in under the radar [laughs]*. Knowing that · right [laughs].

(Moe, interview).

Underpinning this comment is the assumption of entitlement, where strategic friendships were a means to his end goal. There were also many quotes from participants which demonstrated a poor understanding of consent, and acceptance of rape myths:

I was against rape and, you know, didn't, didn't like, I don't think. But then again, rape fantasy thinking that the girl actually consents to this but it just looks like she doesn't want it. (...) But, yeah, I mean you don't know what, 'cause these were in, um European sites in, like Russia and Ukraine and that sort of thing so you don't really know if it's consent or not.

(Oliver, interview).

When asked 'are there times when a woman says no and resists but really wants the man to continue, how can you tell?' he responded 'I imagine there are, maybe they are saying no as a formality, maybe a cursory attempt to maintain their virtue'.

(Liam, file notes).

I was um · possessive. (...) Thinking I was allowed to do things with [a guy at school] and I wasn't. *Yeah, okay*. (...) Like, the day after school I followed him home · and I caught up with him and I was going to beat him up and took him down to the bridge and · yeah. [Laughs]. *Yeah?* Didn't do anything, um, sexually or anything, but made him take his clothes off and, just so far, and then that's it. And took his shoes and then left. That's all I really did [laughs]. And that's _inaudible_ honest. *Yeah*. And then he turns up at school the next day and tells his mates that I had · attempted to rape him. While · he might have seen it in that manner, I didn't see it in that manner. I just got him to take his shorts off and that, and that's it. And, you know, yeah. That's all I thought it was. It wasn't attempted anything.

(Bob, interview).

Probably abuse of, from my step-father, and the fact that · um · my mother did nothing about it. And that because all women are sluts they deserve this sort of thing.

(Perry, interview).

For some, the sense of entitlement was embedded early:

Reg experienced a difficult childhood, with his parents separating when he was young, and with his mother experiencing depression and spending periods of time hospitalised. He reportedly had to take on responsibilities

from a young age. It has been noted that these demands probably contributed to a sense of entitlement and provided an opportunity for him to do as he pleased and meet his own needs before those of others.

(Reg, file notes).

Dean clearly stated in this session that he is expecting to get divorced. His wife has been very clear about what she wants to happen. Dean is hoping that this doesn't happen. He hopes that if he ignores the subject long enough that she will move past this idea and they will get back together. Dean was reluctant to discuss why he does not want to discuss divorce, and required several challenges to be honest with himself about what he is doing and why. (...) Dean found it difficult to understand why sleeping in a separate bed might facilitate improved relationships with his wife. Dean listed all the reasons why he liked sleeping in her bed. These were: I paid for the bed, it is comfortable, I don't want to sleep on the couch, it is my house, I don't touch her, and I don't like sleeping alone.

(Dean, file notes).

This excerpt shows how Dean is so focused on his proprietary entitlement — his ownership of the house and the bed — that he dismisses his wife's feelings about the marital arrangement.

Dean's comment that 'I don't touch her' can also be understood as him reframing the friend zone on his own terms and emphasising the innocuousness of his presence in the marital bed.

There are some parallels between the construction of the friend zone and Ward and Keenan's (1999) dangerous world theory. They described this implicit theory:

The core belief is that many people are untrustworthy, rejecting, and will take unfair advantage of (blameless) men. This is particularly evident with adults; children are thought to be more reliable, accepting, and able to be trusted. (...) Therefore, the expectation is that offenders' needs to be loved and cared for can be met by children and that they will never exploit or reject them.

(p. 830).

Further, they argued that men in these cases might choose children because they believe themselves 'incapable of direct retaliation or domination over other adults' — hinting that perceived masculine failings might explain their behaviour (p. 830).

In addition to these examples, there were several instances where my participants expressed annoyance that their nice behaviours had not been acknowledged or praised. They also spoke with bitterness of instances where their intentions had been misunderstood:

Sexually that [wife's gynaecological condition] actually made things worse. *Yeah, obviously a difficult situation.* So · so I didn't want to make her feel bad. Or I felt · well me feeling good by making her feel bad wasn't a · a good deal. So, I was quite · um · considerate in that regard. Well I thought, anyway.
(Aaron, interview).

There is a deep-seated sense of sexual entitlement conveyed in this quote. Aaron comments that it was 'considerate' of him not to force his wife to have sex when she was in pain. In doing so, he has constructed a narrative of self-congratulation for putting aside his own sexual needs and prioritising her physical pain and lack of consent. For many this would not be praiseworthy, but merely a minimum level of decency and respect.

Other participants expressed indignation when they felt others had misrepresented their intentions. In doing this they were able to exaggerate their naïvety of the situation:

I've always been very · caring, you know, like the love making. Like my wife · um · I'd always · I mean, a man'll come, has orgasm very quick. *Yeah.* But · I might come and then, I'd carry on because I would want her, I'm very. *Want her to be pleased and all of that sort of thing?* *Yeah.* I don't like to lead on a girl unless · she's expecting something. I don't do that. Like I mean, when I · in our courtship with me and [wife], I took her to a friend's hut in the [mountain]. And we get there and, you know · nice cosy fire at night and, you know the old lantern and · and · we both had a shower. The shower was great · we had dinner, then getting comfortable on the floor · and then, oh · I gave her a massage and then, and then I remember, I was on, there was this, you know, on top of her, she was on, on her stomach · and · I started going down here. [Imitating high pitched voice] 'You're not going to take advantage of me are you?' [Laughs]. I sort of retracted, like [innocent voice] 'no'. (...) The heat of the moment, you know, it's um · it was ah · no. I would never take advantage of, yeah.
(Jason, interview).

I mean, to have, one of my best friends, [Mary], sit down and, when we were having beers and she said, and her lesbian friend was there and, you know, they were all anti-men again. And, ah, Mary turned around and I, I think [Emma] said 'all men are rapists'. And then Mary said 'for all I know, Nathan, you're about to rape me tonight'. And of course that's the furthest, I thought we were friends [hurt]. *Wow.* And, um, it was horrible. (...) It was an awful time. Awful time. Um · and my response to that was 'well, all women are potential child beaters'.

(Nathan, interview).

Here Nathan attempted to deflect these perceived accusations with a retaliatory accusation of his own. However, in being outraged at what he perceived to be a false accusation, Nathan

pushed aside any validity to his friend's fear of victimisation and re-cast himself the victim of this anecdote. This paralleled his later post-offence minimisations and justifications.

Nine of the men explained that they started abusing children following long periods without sexual intimacy with same-age partners. This reasoning suggests entitlement may also be a manifestation of overcompensation, and it also reflects the friend zone narrative where adult women are blamed as the source of hurt and rejection. The process could be understood as follows:

- a. Chronic experiences of powerlessness accumulate, leading men to feel inadequate and insecure about their gender identity.
- b. These experiences are filtered through an underlying belief in masculine entitlement, which cause men to perceive they alone are being treated unfairly and denied the right to express their gendered sense of self.
- c. This breeds feelings of resentment and blame, which are then expressed in the form of hostility towards adult women. These are subsequently enacted through overcompensatory behaviours — one of which is sexually abusing children.
- d. Once they have begun offending, subsequent justifications and minimisations are constructed with reference to gender and masculine entitlement.

Overall, the most prominent way entitlement manifested was men's perception that breakups or rejection were unfair — as if they were experiencing an injustice by losing control of something they felt ownership over. It seems that men are 'acting in a social context that is dominated by masculine social and sexual practices', which at the same time 'condones male violence, perpetuates rape myths and turns a blind eye to sexual assault' (Cossins, in press, p. 8). What is interesting, though, is that several men were unwilling to accept responsibilities that accompanied their sense of entitlement. This was most obvious when men refused to demonstrate adult accountability or failed to assert themselves. Sometimes it was borne out in their offending as well. For example:

[Daughter] would climb into my side of the bed, grab my hand and plonk it on her fanny. So I would put it [her hand] back, and there'd be this going on for a couple of times. Then I'd get out of bed. So I was trying to get myself out of the situation.

(Aaron, interview).

This shows how Aaron reconstructed his abusive behaviour to cast himself as a passive participant. This was unlikely, given his daughter was only three years old when he started molesting her. However, despite feeling sexually entitled to use her body, he did not assert his influence as an adult and tell her to stop⁹⁷. By positioning himself as powerless, he was able to maintain an offence-supportive belief that the victim was not only willing but had instigated the abuse. The truth is he was not powerless, and it is difficult to ascertain whether he even believed his own explanation here. It is unreasonable to suggest that a man in his fifties could not set boundaries for his three-year-old daughter. Suggesting otherwise would obscure the inherent imbalance of power between these two individuals.

Some of the other men used similar narratives to shield themselves from any need to take responsibility:

He seemed to have no idea when we talked about exploitation of children that he was involved in this practice. Howard, it seems, was protecting his image of being 'the good guy' and is totally locked off and locked out of any understanding of his behaviour or responsibility for his behaviour.

(Howard, file notes).

Similar ideas have long underpinned, and sadly still do, social and legal views about sexual violence perpetrated against children. Kennedy (1993) observed how the British legal system often blamed mothers for 'failing to provide conjugal fulfilment' to their husbands (p. 98). Predicated on entitlement, this assumed that men who were denied sex would be left *with no other option but* molesting a child. More recently, children have been portrayed as seductive participants that men are unable to resist. For example, a Texas newspaper recently reported on the gang rape of an 11-year-old commented that the victim had 'dressed older than her age, wearing makeup and fashions more appropriate to a woman in her 20s'; neighbours were quoted

⁹⁷ Suspending disbelief, momentarily, as to whether or not his victim did initiate these encounters.

as having asked, ‘where was her mother, what was her mother thinking’ (McKinley & Guerrero, 2011, p. 2).

Together, the behaviours and justifications — both from the men in my sample and wider society — exemplify what Kimmel (2007) described as normative exploitative masculinity. It is possible this shared belief in masculine entitlement explains why rejection and humiliation were experienced so acutely by men in this sample. Their perceived victimisation would have been exacerbated by an underlying belief that ‘no’ is a fundamental breach of a man’s right to express his masculinity — worse, if the people saying no are women or children.

Hypermasculinity

Most of the men I interviewed expressed some hypermasculine attitudes or behaviour. However, it was not easy to always ascertain whether these traits preceded feelings of failure, or were an expression of overcompensation after they had occurred. For some of the men, indulging in overtly aggressive and stereotypical displays of masculinity was very much overcompensation for perceived inadequacies. Others defined their masculinity as the extreme opposite of femininity — which led to highly exaggerated forms of machismo. For some this meant never displaying any emotional vulnerability:

I mean it was a, a good father-son relationship. (...) Well emotionally it was · distant. *Okay?* I never saw him cry and that’s probably where I got my whole not crying type of thing. You know that’s what you gotta do to be a man, you know. You’re not meant to cry. Not meant to share your feelings.
(Oliver, interview).

Oliver rigidly adhered to this mantra, and it is possible his offending was a symptom of how unsustainable this strategy was for him. Elsewhere he spoke of yearning for emotional connectedness yet he evidently felt driven to deny and suppress these desires in order to strengthen his sense of gender identity. Unfortunately, this also taught him to have little empathy for his victims and how to disconnect from feelings of guilt. Whether this was relevant to Oliver’s initial offending is unclear, but it did seem to play a role in his escalating consumption of child pornography over time. This was also true for Howard, seen when a staff member described his intake interview:

Howard was emphatic that he was not somebody who expressed emotion. He sat in a rigid controlled position, seldom moved his body and frequently stated that he was not emotional and did not 'react to a lot of things'. He repeated this as if it was an explanation of his behaviour.

(file notes).

Elsewhere Howard's emotional presentation was described as 'defensive' and disengaged. It was also noted he had 'no reaction' when discussing upsetting events like his father's death (file notes). Moe, too, described the pressure he felt to suppress his true feelings. He described how he struggled with this following his daughter's death:

Epecially as a guy · 'cause women let it all out. (...) I've been through that shit, 'be a man'. Well, yeah, okay, but · boy, I'll tell you what, a little bit of being a girl as well mightn't hurt too much at the moment, mate, and if you don't mind I'm just going to bawl my fucking eyes out. *You have to do that in many ways, I think.* Yeah, but I'd actually start howling and then I'd · stop and I'd think to myself I don't want to stop but [I have to].

(Moe, interview).

It was quite surprising that even when facing tremendous grief — and few would negatively judge a man for crying at his own child's death — he felt the pressure to 'be a man'. It seemed he had internalised this ideal of emotional detachment in an extreme and unforgiving way.

A few of the men seemed to have an aggressive and hostile conceptualisation of gender identity from a very early age. Perry was subject to the most severe childhood abuse of all the men, and he spoke of how this affected him:

To me sex was about power and abuse. You know, I mean. *Particularly considering your own experience, yeah.* Yeah, yeah, yeah, um, like · yeah to me · sex was about being forced to do stuff. You know, and I mean and · um, all women were sluts. (...) And this man's [step-father] God, and then you believe it. And for a lot of years I believed that, you know.

(Perry, interview).

This brought clear symbolism to Perry's subsequent decision to only initiate offences once his penis was fully erect. He explained how he would keep himself hidden in shrubbery and, only when he had a full erection, would he select a passerby to confront. He said, 'my ultimate was to · be ejaculating as they saw me' (interview). Given his stated belief that sex was power, this

offending pattern is a clear expression of dominance; he found it to be one of the main ways he could affirm his sense of masculinity.

A number of the men described themselves as hypersexualised, which may have been a factor in their offending. Eric described his urge for sex as ‘higher than the average male’ (file notes) and Nathan recalled masturbating five or six times every day. Casey said he was taught by his mother that ‘the only things men were any good for was making wee or little girls feel better in their undies’ (file notes). For the most part, though, it was the absence of such hypersexualised narratives that was often cited as the reason for insecurity. Therefore, hypermasculinity was not so much a lived reality for these men but an unattainable ideal. However, it may not be helpful to distinguish participants in this respect, as their narratives would have been influenced by how far along they were in the rehabilitation programme when I interviewed them. Those with higher levels of insight into their own behaviour and their pathways to offending may have been more likely to identify chronic experiences of powerlessness as having preceded their offending. By contrast, men with comparatively less insight may have still been in the mindset of overcompensation. This could have made their behaviour seem — at least to the researcher interpreting it — more hypermasculine or aggressive. Overall, my observation is that only one or two participants exhibited hypermasculinity as a core component of their psychological makeup.

It was interesting to note how some men adopted a cynical view of adult women as manipulative, which may have meant children seemed like a safer target. The Madonna-whore dichotomy was present in several of the men’s narratives, and seemed to be a reaction to perceived masculine inadequacies:

I became increasingly cynical of women. And um, perhaps that was related to, to my own rejection. My experiences of being rejected by, um, girls. *Yeah. What sense do you mean cynical, like, you know?* Yeah, well, um, fairly dismissive of them, I suppose. Or disparaging of them in my own viewpoint. Not that I would necessarily · let me know it, or, um, treat them that way in my · relationships. *Okay, so it was more like an inside thing?* Yeah. That’s right. I mean I believe that, um · women who · who enjoy sex or, or act sexually active before marriage, or whatever, that they’re whores. Um, that really · um · I suppose I didn’t see them as people. *Okay. Um, was that something that you had always felt do you reckon or was that?* I think that it

increasingly came, ah, came as I · looked at this stuff [adult and child pornography] as well. I think one fed the other, um · and so I idolised virginity and innocence. I guess is how it, yeah, how. *Okay, so that's more where the children came in 'cause they were?* Yeah. I mean it started off, I guess, as, in that they were kind of a, a, of looking at kids that were of a similar age to me. But I got older and the kids I was looking at · got younger.

(Liam, interview).

This quote also illustrates how rape myths aimed at adult women still influenced how these men viewed children. In some ways the men seemed to be imposing their adult understanding of sexuality onto the child, while at the same time relishing the attributes that made children children. This supports an idea discussed earlier that, due to relatively high rates of crossover offending, theories of men's sexual violence against adult women could also explain or contextualise their sexual abuse of children.

What is clear, however, is that social constructs of power and masculinity must be challenged and reconstructed. Kimmel (2007) recommended society redefine masculinity 'to acknowledge a far wider range of emotions', which would leave men's identities less vulnerable to threat (p. 110). Others have supported this suggestion. Bolen (2003) similarly argued that men must be taught 'better methods of expressing their masculinity' because this would deter 'instances of abuse in which men or boys feel entitled to sexual access or are acting out extremes of socialised behaviours' (p. 181). A similar argument was made by Mowat (2012):

By having access to masculine resources that resist hegemonic masculinity, boys and men have more opportunity to resist discourses that can permit sexually harmful behaviour. Thus, by providing access to multiple and authentic forms of masculinity at an early age, social and cultural institutions can help prevent child sexual abuse from occurring.

(p. 181).

It is evident that masculine sexual entitlement not only hurts women and children, but it also harms men by trapping them in pursuit of the unattainable ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

12. RISK-TAKING AND THRILL-SEEKING

Defining risk-taking

Risk-taking behaviour is defined as that which increases one's chance of physical or emotional harm yet also increases the potential for reward or benefit. Risk-taking is generally framed as a negative pattern of behaviour, and has been studied within psychology for its potential impact on health and wellbeing (for example see Rolison & Scherman, 2002; Stanton et al., 2003; Steinberg et al., 2008; Swaim et al., 2004). In the context of criminology, risk has been most frequently studied in terms of recidivism — that is, attempting to predict an offender's risk of committing crimes in future (for example see Beggs, 2008; Looman & Abracen, 2009; McAlinden, 2007; Scoones et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2012). However, in this chapter, risk describes any behavioural gamble undertaken by offenders or nonoffenders alike — whether for reasons of self-harm, social status, adrenaline-seeking, rational choice, impulsivity, or otherwise. This highlights an important difference between 'risk factors' or 'risk assessment', and the emphasis on risk-taking as an action. It is the latter which will be discussed here.

It has been established that risk-taking behaviour is more common for men, and a propensity for risk-taking has been cited as a criminogenic factor for some male-dominated crimes (Bowleg, 2004; Wilson & Daly, 1985). A recent meta-analysis also found that sexual risk-taking is disproportionately prevalent among men who were sexually abused as children (Homma et al., 2012). These authors defined sexual risk-taking in terms of promiscuity and having unprotected sex, but it could be argued that sexual offending itself falls within the spectrum of risky sexual behaviour. When viewed in this way, it becomes a self-defining truth that child sex offenders have a tendency towards risk-taking. However, it is still important to understand how this risk-taking manifests as well as how it relates to hegemonic narratives of masculinity.

General findings

As with previous themes, risk-taking was analysed both as a specific unit of meaning and as a broader theme that encompassed 23 sub-codes. These sub-codes included impulsivity, attention

seeking, rebellion and difficulty with authority, as well as substance abuse or addiction. As a specific unit of meaning, risk-taking was mentioned during 16 interviews with five of those reaching at least 3% coding coverage. The highest was Gerry's interview at 12.70% saturation, which approximated 2,300 words or 13 minutes of tape. Once the 23 sub-codes were included, all interviewees broached this topic to a greater or lesser extent, and eight reached a coding threshold of at least 30%. Gerry's was the highest with 47.85% coded within the broad theme of risk-taking — equivalent to approximately 8,700 words or 58 minutes of audio recording.

Types of risk

The connection between masculinity and risk-taking has been cited as a contributing factor to men's lower life expectancies (Bray & Hutchison, 2007; Mast et al., 2008). The argument is that certain risky scenarios provide opportunities for men to demonstrate their masculinity (Bowleg, 2004). Examples of this include reckless driving and speeding, binge drinking and extreme sports, fighting, and substance abuse (Bowleg, 2004; Courtenay, 2000; Gullone & Moore, 2000; Mast et al., 2008; Rolison & Scherman, 2002). Other authors have suggested it is the pursuit of societal power and privilege that leads men to take risks (Courtenay, 2000). Using this logic it is easy to understand why individual men who experience ongoing powerlessness may be more inclined to take greater risks overall. That is, risk-taking could be one of the ways in which men overcompensate for perceived gender inadequacies and pervasive feelings of powerlessness. This seemed to be true for at least some of the men in my sample.

Casey explained that risk was an important component of his offending: 'I felt it was a thrill to just find the images and save them to my computer' (file notes). He claimed not to look at the pornography again since he only sought the excitement of locating new material. For Jason, his offending was motivated by attention-seeking: 'the defendant admitted to the facts (...) and in explanation told police that he did this because he was lonely and to gain attention to himself' (file notes). Jason's offences included approaching random members of the public and masturbating in their presence — a much more confrontational risk than that undertaken by those who offended online. Risks taken by participants were not always well-considered, and were often impulsive:

Reg encouraged his sister to masturbate him through to ejaculation. On this occasion, Reg stated he wasn't thinking and that it all started when he got the urge of an erection. (...) Reg acknowledged planning to isolate the victims in order to offend through offering to babysit younger children and encouraging his mother to leave the house. However, at other times his offending demonstrated a high degree of risk-taking as it occurred while other adults were present in the house.

(Reg, file notes).

These ideas seemed to be borne out in coding crossover as well. That is, the specific unit of meaning for risk-taking was frequently coded in close proximity to, or overlaid with, examples of rigid thinking, powerlessness, poor boundaries, emotional immaturity, disregard for personal safety, aggression, impulsivity, and social status. For example, Gerry spoke of how he took strategic risks that would elevate his position within his peer group:

I've kind of always been the person getting caught, as well as being quite stupid and being quite a risk taker in terms of that sort of thing. (...) *And was there a definite leader, like in your group of friends?* Um · in some senses I took that role. (...) *And in what sort ways would that be?* Um · probably just because of · generally sort of · intellect and maybe, um · a bit of a risk. *Okay, so taking more risks?* Taking more risks, prepared to go · sort of shoplifting with certain other dodgy characters or · getting into other things.

(Gerry, interview).

Evidently, despite the potential consequences of engaging in petty crime it was a worthwhile trade-off in Gerry's mind. This cost-benefit analysis was in the mind of other participants too, so risk-taking was not always an indication of recklessness. Furthermore, the degree of risk was very much relative. Even behaviour that may seem destructive could have positive consequences depending on the situation. For example:

I also had been into solvents. I've been into prostitution · I've been into gangs on the streets and all that sort of stuff. I'd been doing burglaries. We accepted the police as our parents, you know, at the time when I was on the street, 'cause there was no other figurehead. *No other authority, yeah.* Yeah, no other authority, and they were the only ones out there so. You know, if they got us, they got us. Sweet, we got a bed for the night, you know, you didn't need to worry.

(Bob, interview).

Since Bob was living on the fringes of society, legal consequences were not experienced negatively like they would be by someone more invested in the social contract. In fact, for him

the consequences were primarily positive and met his basic needs for food and shelter. This example highlights the difficulty in defining risk and risk-taking, particularly among marginalised populations. Conversely, these same groups can also experience disproportionate ramifications from risk-taking behaviour given they are less likely to have support networks or social capital on which to draw. Risk must be understood in terms of what one stands to lose and the particular resources an individual has at his disposal.

Having said this, all the men I interviewed did view their sexual offences against children as having been high-risk behaviour. For many, this was also the appeal:

[Eric felt] excitement when looking for [child pornography], partly the thrill of the taboo, then disgust and embarrassment and shame after offending. (...) He stated that at times it controlled his daily thoughts and he enjoyed the 'rush' from knowing it was wrong.

(Eric, file notes).

Taboo, higher excitement, exhilarating, like a drug. Afterwards felt wretched, guilty, would erase history, worry about getting caught and convinced himself he would be.

(Gerry, file notes).

These two quotes also implied the whole cycle of risk — the suspense and build up to offending, the thrill of offending itself, and the resulting guilt and self-loathing — was appealing, even the seemingly negative moments. While this may seem contradictory, individuals with flattened affect could find appeal in exhilarating experiences even if they were otherwise upsetting or unpleasant. This was also seen in other contexts:

I think I got a bit bored. Um · we · this might sound weird, um. *No, go for it.* We · I could probably count on one hand over those years, the number of times we actually had an argument about anything. *Okay.* So we weren't · we didn't tend to argue. Probably more to the point is that I didn't argue with my wife.

(Aaron, interview).

This lack of passion was an important issue for Aaron and clearly tied in with his insecurities about masculinity. He described New Zealand men as 'being rather passionate about things' yet elsewhere lamented he did not have sufficient passion in his life: 'I don't get seriously passionate

about many things, which to some degree concerns me' (interview). To compensate for this he flirted with risk. He explained how this had sexual undertones as well:

I'm actually · a part adrenaline-junkie. *Yeah? [Laughs]. The speed and danger?* Yeah · I've just gone and bought myself a motorbike and so. *Oh, cool.* Yeah, and I drive a [high-speed car] and things. *Yeah, fair enough [laughs].* Yeah, so I'm into a bit of · acceleration and speed. And, yeah, I live life a little on the edge. *Yeah, okay, are there other sort of ways that you'd do that as well? (...)* Yeah I'm always looking for a little bit of excitement. So, even if that's, like, sort of pushing the speed limit and, so, that whole law thing; how far can you. *Yeah, how far can you push things.* Yeah, um · so · um, pushing the boundaries is probably something that, rightly or wrongly, turns me on.

(Aaron, interview).

The comment about New Zealand men indicates a belief that men should be active, combative and engaged in *something* rather than nothing. It is, therefore, unsurprising that he spoke about abusing his daughter in terms of the adrenaline rush and thrill. Other participants chased their adrenaline buzz through sport or physical exertion:

I remember going for a full hour with my heart rate up at two-o-five. *Wow.* And I felt alive, I felt good, and the adrenaline, everything was pumping. I love the adrenaline. (...) I could feel my heart was straining so much, like pumping so much blood. I could feel this vein over here that was hurting my neck. (...) It's really strange, like even the teeth themselves, like the nerves inside, they start to tingle, like fizz, like popping. (...) I was just on such a rush that that didn't matter. That didn't matter.

(Eric, interview).

Others spoke of being more vicarious thrill-seekers, but nonetheless emphasised the appeal of action and speed:

I like action and things moving. I've got photos of the · what is it, |type of boat|, whatever it was down |beach|. *Oh, yeah, yeah.* Looks, they're inflatable · speed boats that they have racing down there. And I've got some photos of them basically just going over the waves so the whole boat's out of the water and you can see their eyes and their helmets and everything. *Oh awesome [laughs].* That's the type of thing that I'm trying to get into.

(Howard, interview).

It was also interesting to observe the types of risk that participants did not feel comfortable taking. These seemed to be mainly interpersonal risks such as approaching prospective dates or initiating relationships. There was only one participant, Jason, who described himself as quite

‘daring’ in his ability to approach strangers and ask them out (interview). Interestingly, this was the same participant whose offending was more confrontational and exhibitionist in nature. However, his brazen risk-taking belied deeper insecurities and loneliness so it is possible these exaggerated risks were an attempt to overcompensate for perceived failings.

A study⁹⁸ by Gullone and Moore (2000) found that assessment of risk was significantly and inversely associated with how frequently such risks were taken. They found this was especially true for rebellious and reckless risks. This was important because it showed that people who engaged in certain activities were unlikely to have accurately assessed the risks involved. Gullone and Moore (2000) also suggested that perception of risk would be revised after the event, based on whether negative consequences were experienced. This meant that an individual’s retrospective assessment of their own risk-taking behaviours would not be necessarily reliable. This could explain why the men in my sample often explained their risky behaviour — particularly that which bore negative consequences, such as their offending — as having been impulsive or rash. Gullone and Moore (2000) also commented that, ‘protective factors against risk include a high level of self-esteem and an orientation towards an internal locus of control’ (p. 395). This is particularly fitting in light of the discussion in chapter 10, specifically with reference to how the men in this sample experienced powerlessness, and often attributed events to an external locus of control.

Boredom

Several participants employed a narrative of boredom to explain what motivated their offending. In doing so, the state of ‘being bored’ was situated as an opposite of thrill-seeking and risk-taking, and was resoundingly deemed to be negative. The men valued activity and action as important, both in defining their own sense of adventure and reassuring themselves they were achieving something tangible in their lives. The pursuit of active and participatory achievement has been described as ‘highly masculine’ (Gullone & Moore, 2000, p. 403). And, as with powerlessness, the narrative of boredom reflected an external locus of control where participants

⁹⁸ The focus was adolescent risk-taking and its relation to personality attributes.

looked outside themselves for sources of entertainment or excitement. For example, Casey directly connected boredom to his need for excitement:

Being on the internet gave me something to do and something to take my mind off the stress of working at such a horrible place. Unfortunately I couldn't chat to anyone on [messaging service] because no one else would be awake. Looking for and downloading images gave me something to do. Looking for images of girls fitting my criteria, or of women, added a little bit of excitement.

(Casey, file notes).

Evidently he felt uncomfortable being alone with his thoughts without an external distraction. In many ways this explanation is self-serving and does not explain why he chose child pornography to supplant his boredom. However, it does reveal the value he placed on being active — on doing *something*. This explicitly echoes the performative nature West and Zimmerman (1987; 2000; 2002; 2009) captured with their concept of doing gender. It could thus be argued that the men who cited boredom as having motivated their offending were not simply doing gender, but were doing gender by 'doing offending'. This also resonates with the current rehabilitative framing of sexual offending as something men have done, not a label describing who they are.

Boredom also arose when the men spoke of why their offending escalated over time. This was especially seen when discussing pornography consumption that was increasingly explicit. Many expressed that legitimate adult pornography and mainstream sexual interests were something they got bored with or desensitised to:

Um, I gradually sort of got · you get · bored with that after a while and I guess sensitised, you know, and started looking for · different stuff and · I was going through various things for whatever reason, which is something I'm still trying to work out, I haven't totally figured out, is that I ended up settling on, like, images of teenage girls. There was · it was sort of taboo. It was, um · I think there's, there's an, um · bits that related back to the · well sort of the whole teenage · missing out on girls thing. Whether that's got anything to do with it or not, it's hard to know exactly but, um, I think that's part of it.

(Scott, interview).

It is noteworthy that Scott constructs this explanation using vague descriptors: ‘gradually sort of’, ‘different stuff’, ‘various things’, ‘whatever reason’ and ‘it’s hard to know exactly’. This could reflect an underlying uncertainty about this explanation, or may simply be a distancing strategy on his part. By comparison, Liam was far more definitive when describing his behaviour in similar terms:

My tastes were more and more depraved. It would take more · you know, more to arouse me or. *Okay, so you want more?* Or sicker stuff. *Penetration rather than just undressing, like?* Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Um and · in terms of adult women, I guess, sort of abusive type things. Um, or where, the men would dominate the women. Um · till, towards the end, um · you know, I was looking at, um · I was actively searching for hardcore · stuff with children in it. And videos as well by that stage.

(Liam, interview).

When considering comments like this it is important to realise they may be post-hoc justifications and not accurate reflections of what actually caused their behaviour to escalate. It is also worth noting that this escalation was sometimes explicitly hypermasculine in nature. Liam, for instance, fantasised about ‘dominating or abusing women, destroying something beautiful, taking virginity’ (file notes). It was this desire for virginity that he claimed precipitated him to seek younger and younger children. As well as this, some of the men also admitted they were not sure how far their offending would have escalated if they had not been caught or stopped when they did:

I don’t know, maybe in ten years’ time you might attack someone. I don’t know. I would hope not. I don’t think · I never in my life have. I’m not a violent person. So I doubt very much whether I’d · get that far. (...) But a couple of years [ago] I would never have thought I’d be even doing this, so.

(Jason, interview).

A minority of participants said this escalation was not important for them, but still explained getting bored or dissatisfied:

For me personally, I wasn’t out to look for a younger one or something more explicit. I was more looking for something different. It’s like · you know, I drank this orange juice for ten days I wish, I want a different brand now, you know.

(Ivan, interview).

Making the comparison between sexual preferences and something mundane is quite a curious choice. It is possible that Ivan's offending had become such an everyday occurrence for him that it was on par with an innocuous activity like drinking juice. Alternatively, this comment may simply be an attempt to minimise the seriousness of what he had done. In both cases, it reflects a degree of objectification. Some of the other men also gave strangely blasé explanations for their offending. Todd, for example, claimed he 'had nothing else to do' and 'there was sod all on TV' (interview). Howard also commented on the lack of quality television:

I didn't · plan · or I don't think I planned on it. Basically I got bored, basically just got bored, nothing on TV type thing so I went on to the computer and went on the net, looked at things on the internet then, basically went down the lines of · adult porn then · I was going to say, I use the words 'they just popped up' which they · unfortunately they can do, every now and again, child porn and stuff like that. And · I don't · know why · exactly, but I kept on going back to those particular sites.

(Howard, interview).

When viewed collectively, these quotes confirm participants' external locus of control. They also link back to feelings of powerlessness. This was evident when they felt unable to take decisive action and entertain themselves so instead waited passively for entertainment to be provided. It also seems these men have yet to take full responsibility for their actions. Instead of owning their offending, they blamed it on external factors. Even if boredom was a legitimate problem for these men, lamenting the lack of decent television does not meaningfully explain why they could not seek other forms of distraction that did not involve sexually abusing children.

This overriding need to be active, to be doing *something*, has been supported by Blanco and Robinett (2014) who contended: 'masculinity involves getting the job done (...) and masculine leisure helps escape stress' (p. 361). While this research specifically focused on school-related stress, their comments apply to other sources of life stress. The authors argued that certain leisure activities allow men to perform hegemonic masculinity. Chiefly, such activities must foster a sense of competence and achievement. This means that — if sexual offending is one way of doing gender, as is being argued in this thesis — the men in this study were doing what Blanco and Robinett described: choosing to alleviate boredom with stereotypically masculine activities that reinforced their sense of gender identity.

Addiction and compulsion

More than half of participants used narratives of addiction or compulsion to explain why they did not stop offending despite persistent feelings of guilt or shame. When doing so, the men would acknowledge how the rehabilitation programme did not approve of them using such language, but maintained it was how they genuinely felt⁹⁹. Furthermore, they often utilised these narratives to distance themselves from other men in the group. Doing this allowed them to reject labels like paedophile or sex offender, and helped them minimise their offending more generally. For example:

We all want to say we're different from the other people in the group, but, like I didn't, I haven't had any · contact offending. I didn't involve children, it was kind of, ah, child pornography. (...) I've had a lot of help in viewing it as an addiction · 'cause it went on for such a long time in my life, viewing [it from] an addiction perspective.

(Gerry, interview).

That's where the compulsive part of me comes out again, you know · I'd save all these images even if, yeah. (...) I'd maybe go back and look at one picture out of a whole set but I'd have to have the whole set [laughs]. Um, yeah, and thousands of images I never even looked at again. And I'd worry if I wasn't online that I was missing something, you know, maybe there was something that had come up that I hadn't seen yet.

(Scott, interview).

There's all the books you can get on the net about pornography addiction, that side of things, and I've purchased three of those myself and I'm going through them now. Because there's things that this here [rehabilitation programme] doesn't teach you, which is, you know, how do you actually turn off addictive behaviour, how do you redirect that into healthy behaviour. The group doesn't help when · when you get the, um · compulsions, and the DTs [delirium tremens¹⁰⁰] come through and all the rest of it.

(Nathan, interview).

It seems that Nathan has an investment in being able to use 'compulsions and addictions' as words that make sense to him at this time for his offending. It may be that Nathan would have difficulty coping if he faced

⁹⁹ It is unclear whether this prevented them making the most of their treatment programme.

¹⁰⁰ Delirium tremens is an episode of delirium associated with alcohol withdrawal. Common symptoms include fever, extreme sweating, nightmares, confusion and disorientation, hallucinations, tachycardia, fatigue, stupor, restlessness and agitation, and rapid mood changes (Burns et al., 2014).

the prospect of there being other possible factors for his offending, such as choice. Nathan struggles with control issues and this shows in his presentation of self.

(Nathan, file notes).

I knew what I was doing was wrong. (...) But I was in a bit of a daze, I think and to me it. *How do you mean by daze?* Oh I was just trying to go from picture to picture to try and get a · a buzz off it. In a sense it was all the same to me, and I couldn't get myself away from it. (...) I just kept going back to them [child abuse websites]. (...) It just had a hold on me that, um · I couldn't shrug.

(Flynn, interview).

Several men used narratives of compulsion or addiction to simultaneously absolve personal responsibility and dehumanise those featured in the images. This was seen when they described their offending using words like 'collection' or 'categorising' — ones normally associated with inanimate items such as stamps or cars.

It goes back to the days when we had nothing. *Okay. To just hoard, almost?* Hoard is correct. I prefer the term I heard on the radio the other night, magpie. *[Laughs] Collecting shiny things.* It sounds better than hoarder *[laughs]*. (...) Initially I looked at Russian sites. I don't know how it came about. Um, but they were always beautiful women¹⁰¹. Especially blondes, and um · and I just collected. And I mean collected them. I'm not talking about one thousand, two thousand, three thousand. I'm talking about 33,000 images. (...) It was a matter of collecting something that was not easily available.

(Todd, interview).

I'm a little bit of a hoarder of things. (...) I would collect, um · you know, um · [images of] women with blond hair, women with black hair, women with red hair, ah, or coloured people and I, I start doing that and I categorised them, you know. And I start doing that and then one, when I found this bulletin site and it's got teenagers, so I start doing that as part of my, um, inventory.

(Ivan, interview).

While these explanations do make a certain amount of sense, none of them sufficiently explained why child pornography was chosen specifically. Another participant claimed it was not simply his obsessive behaviour that was to blame, but also the absence of any external barriers to his continued offending:

¹⁰¹ The 'women' he 'collected' were aged between ten and 12 years old.

I think it was just obsessive. I was already in the behaviour pattern. (...) Nobody had actually come to me and said, 'come here you' and dragged me off and said 'you need to change this'. Nobody was saying anything. My life was secret. Um · [whispered] people weren't even telling the police.
(Keith, interview).

While many participants saw their offending behaviour as an addiction or compulsion in its own right, four believed it was at least partially facilitated by dependence on drugs or alcohol. This was true for Bob, Dean, Gerry and Quinn who offended while they were intoxicated. Of note, Gerry and Quinn both stopped offending by fully embracing narratives of recovery and sobriety. Both were members of 12-step programmes and saw these affiliations as fundamental components of their new identity. Fittingly, the first step of such programmes is to admit powerlessness. It was not clear from my data how exactly this influenced both men's gender identity but this could be worth exploring in future research; in particular, the possibility that the 12-step framework somehow supplanted the 'rules' of hegemonic masculinity and provided them with an alternative behavioural code.

All but one of the men I interviewed had a diagnosable mental illness. These ranged from major depressive disorder and debilitating anxiety, through to bipolar and psychosis. More than half had seriously considered or attempted suicide. Many were medicated, most commonly with SSRI¹⁰² or tricyclic antidepressants. Several were neuroatypical, with varying diagnosed or undiagnosed conditions like obsessive-compulsive and autistic spectrum disorders. As mentioned earlier, two also had head injuries that impaired memory and cognitive functioning. Within a sample of this size it is impossible to ascertain how these factors might relate to the compulsive and addictive behavioural patterns exhibited. It is known that mental illness is disproportionately found among those who are victims of childhood sexual abuse (Fergusson, 1998; Meade et al., 2009) and those who perpetrate it (Ahlmeyer et al., 2003). The reverse is also true; those with severe mental illness in adulthood are more likely to have been abused in childhood (Meade et al., 2009).

¹⁰² Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors.

It would be misleading to imply that mental illness caused any of these men to sexually offend against children, but nonetheless it did seem to exacerbate other factors that were causative. Depression in particular lowered the men's resilience and amplified feelings of hopelessness — along with most other negative emotions. Of note, however, one individual was eventually able to seek help only as a result of his mental illness when, during a manic episode, he compulsively confessed. This set off a chain of events leading him to get psychological help for both his offending and psychosis. Further, while mental illness may have explained some of the participants' propensity for risk-taking, for others it had the reverse effect. Oliver explained how extreme anxiety and catastrophising actually made him rather risk-averse:

I had risk, ah, safety issues and trust issues, you know, bad things are going to happen to me. So I wasn't a big risk taker. Oh this bad thing might happen to me, I might get robbed or stolen or · you know, smashed or something.

(Oliver, interview).

It is, therefore, important to view the sub-themes discussed here as arising from, or at least interacting with, pre-existing mental health problems. There seemed to be a very complex interaction between mental illness, powerlessness and masculinity, and it was often difficult to ascertain where regular life anxieties ended and anxiety disorders began. Unravelling the complex connectedness in relation to offending was even more difficult. This interrelationship would benefit from specific exploration in future research.

13. RIGID THINKING

Defining rigid thinking

Rigid thinking describes beliefs or thought processes that are strictly enforced and inflexibly held. This includes a tendency to adopt extreme all-or-nothing positions. Cognitive flexibility — that is, the opposite of rigid thinking — is one of the self-regulatory functions that govern the ability to adapt and react appropriately to changing social environments (Hamtiaux & Houssemand, 2012; Hofmann et al., 2012). It has also been cited as important for self-control and the pursuit of long-term goals (Hofmann et al., 2012).

Rigid thinking has been studied extensively as it manifests in several psychiatric conditions, including borderline personality, obsessive-compulsive and autistic spectrum disorders (for example see Grandin, 1995; Meiran et al., 2011; Napolitano & McKay, 2007; Veen & Arntz, 2000). In addition, it has been deemed characteristic of depressive rumination (Meiran et al., 2011). This is important, and I have argued in chapter 10 that depression likely exacerbated some men's experiences of powerlessness. Rigid thinking patterns are also likely to exacerbate cognitive distortions or emotional dysregulation, which are commonly cited factors in aetiological theories of child sexual abuse. Distorted thinking is a defining characteristic of men who sexually abuse children (Abel et al., 1989; Gannon & Polaschek, 2006; Gannon et al., 2007; Jones, 2008; Langton & Marshall, 2000; Ward, 2009; Ward et al., 1997; Wood & Riggs, 2009), and was discussed more fully in chapter 3.

General findings

When coded as a specific unit of meaning this cognitive style was included in a total of 14 interviews. Of these, three reached at least 3% saturation. Liam's was the highest, with 4.91% of the content exemplifying rigid thinking. This equated to approximately 870 words or 6.5 minutes of tape. There were 22 sub-codes within the broader theme of rigid thinking, including inconsistent or irrational thinking, perfectionism, religiosity and autistic spectrum traits. Once these were also counted, all interviews contained examples of rigid thinking and 13 reached a coding threshold of at least 30%. Again, Gerry's interview had the highest coverage, with 56.70%

coded under this theme. This involved approximately 10,300 words or 69 minutes of recorded audio.

Inconsistent beliefs

My data showed two distinct types of rigid and inconsistent thinking. First, there were examples of internally inconsistent beliefs; that is, when individuals held two or more incompatible or directly contradictory beliefs. Second, were the more commonly cited cognitive distortions: conclusions arising from faulty or inaccurate presuppositions — which themselves are usually inflexible or rigid. Several examples will be discussed here, although it should be noted some of these were only obvious when different parts of an interview were compared. This means quotes in this section are not always continuous, sometimes across file notes and interviews, and others rely on my interpretation. It makes sense for examples to be divided in this way; keeping conflicting beliefs separate in their minds allowed participants to avoid examining possible contradictions.

Most frequent were offence-supportive beliefs that served to minimise the degree of harm caused. A very common justification was that the children were happy or enjoying sexual contact. For example:

Videos of · these · young · I'm just using words for the benefit of the time period · in my mind I was thinking of, you know · it was videos of young, lithe · nubile, young females, um · pretty much getting it on and stuff like that. I never watched anything like rape. I never watched forced sex. Um · or anything where they aren't enjoying it, um · [or anything] that makes me feel really disturbed. Um · but apart from that, anything was fair game. (...) But sometimes, you know · the descriptions will be, like, um · thirteen-year-old sucking off sixteen- or eighteen-year-old male. Um, and you'd download, I'd download it · and, um · view it. And it's actually an eight- or nine-year-old. That's how I got introduced to the younger ones. It would happen like that. *So misleading type?* Yeah. There was even · this is horrible, there was even videos of five- or six-year-old · on there, and those I would stumble on by accident because of the misleading titles. And · I felt uncomfortable with five-, six-, seven- · year-olds like that. It was just like 'mm, too young'¹⁰³ and I'd turn that, I would turn that off and delete it.

(Eric, interview).

¹⁰³ Eric's subsequent contact offences were committed against a six-year-old victim.

He makes a reference to ‘forced sex’ with children, ignoring that all sex with children is at the very least coercive and *by definition* involves some type of force. He also erroneously assumed that external cues would reveal which children had been ‘forced’ — as opposed to those appearing to cooperate for fear of repercussion. Such beliefs allowed him to retain a fantasy where issues of consent could be put aside. Similarly, Aaron argued that ‘in the case of my victim¹⁰⁴ she knew what she liked and wanted’ (file notes). Others practised more active denial:

All of the images I couldn’t see the girls’ face. Seeing their face always put me off, even if they appeared to be fine you could see in their eyes that they weren’t.

(Casey, file notes).

Rehabilitation had helped participants develop insight, so some reflected on this themselves:

They’re supposedly legitimate modelling sites and the girls all look very happy and stuff. And I, it sort of enabled me to tell myself that this was okay, you know. *That it’s not, yeah, sure.* Um · not thinking that maybe later on they might regret it whether they may have been coerced in some way into doing it.

(Scott, interview).

Most men claimed to have been duped into offending — claiming they were visiting legitimate sites and merely *stumbled across* illegal material, or that it *just popped up* on their screen. Even extending some latitude here, this may explain one or two images but not several thousand. Others chose to redefine abuse so their behaviour was not included within the definition. Nathan, for instance, maintained ‘I have no conviction so when you say offending behaviour, I actually have no offence’ (interview). It was technically correct to say he had not been convicted, but he had most certainly *committed* an offence.

Several participants reconciled their deep-seated hatred of men who hurt children, while at the same time understanding the effects of their own behaviour. Some were disingenuous in this respect, whereas others acknowledged the contradiction:

That’s why when people say about um · hurting kids or touching kids, I mean when · I heard about that little girl, [girl’s name], the one that was

¹⁰⁴ She was three years old.

burned 58 times with a cigarette. *Oh yeah that rings a bell, yeah.* Oh. I bloody cried. Poor little kid. Why, how people can do that I just don't know.

(Todd, interview).

I have ve>ry bad names for people who do what I've done. Yeah, um · in fact I have a fair hatred for it. Well had, I should say. Um · because now coming through the treatment programme again I can see that there's a definite build-up of, of shitty things happening, you know. *Yeah, like you say _inaudible_ bad things happen.* Yeah, and · I mean unless you're actually a predator that actually goes out and looks for it and does it. Then there's actually quite a large build-up of possibly two years. Um · you know, so it's changed my views slightly. Although I'm still not happy with what I've done, what other people do · you know, um · but it's certainly changed the way I think about it.

(Dean, interview).

Even though Dean acknowledges his thinking has changed, he still maintains a false dichotomy between a 'predator' — who presumably lurks in the shadows and fulfils stereotypes of an unknown offender — and his own sexual abuse of his step-daughter. In his mind, anyone who actively seeks out their victim is worthy of judgement, whereas he could separate his own behaviour as being in a different league. However, his offending did have preparatory or grooming elements to it — specifically that he plied his 13-year-old victim with alcohol before he abused her — so his behaviour was not manifestly different from someone who 'goes out and looks for it'.

In another apparent contradiction, some of the men expressed extreme adherence to certain laws and ethics while flouting others. Reg, for instance, said 'well, my thing is one drink and I won't even drive, if I know I'm going to have a drink I just take a bus' (Reg, interview). It is difficult to understand why someone who attempted to rape a toddler would so rigidly adhere to drink driving laws, and it reveals a high degree of compartmentalising. In a similar display of cognitive dissonance, Eric expressed indignation when his girlfriend accused him of cheating on her at a party. He protested that he never gave her reason to doubt his commitment to their relationship. Later he reflected:

I was really upset because she thought I could cheat on her. I am very strict when it comes to that sort of thing even though · technically, yes, you could call what I did to |victim| cheating on her. 'Cause technically, you know, |therapist| pointed that out and I was like 'ah fuck'. I guess it's not traditional cheating. That's how my mind worked around it · at the time.

Um · I could, I, yeah, I'm not a cheater. I don't like people who cheat. It really pisses me off. *So it's like a strict rule, yeah?* Very. Yeah. One of my strict moral · code things. And, um · so I was really upset. I was, I was starting to get really upset and I was almost in tears, and then she started · it escalated. Um, 'I don't know what you're on about, babe, I was not.' (...) I was feeling really, really bad and · really hurt. Really, really hurt.

(Eric, interview).

Once again it is a curious moral code that forbids cheating on your partner but allows you to abuse a six-year-old child, and again reveals a high level of compartmentalising.

Three men alluded to themselves as having multiple personalities, setting aside their offending as an entirely separate part of who they are. For example:

There's a Jekyll and Hyde side of me. You know, like there's a side of me that's really gentle and caring et cetera, you know. And, and · like I'm one of these guys that will, if I see you broken down on the road I'll stop and see how you are, you know. *Yeah, so quite helpful and thoughtful?* But · the other side of it is · not now, but · if the opportunity came then I would · probably sexually · you know.

(Perry, interview).

Others found different ways to compartmentalise their offending:

I just, um · ignored it and got drunk and · smoked marijuana and. Sure. Wondered why I was depressed all the time [laughs]. (...) I forgot about it, I suppose in that in between times. I guess it wasn't. *So sort of block it out?* Block, block it out and then, um, you know, get · have fun with my friends and · um · sort of live that life, you know, yeah.

(Gerry, interview).

This rigidity allowed the men to cordon off this area of life that was deviant and a source of guilt and shame, yet continue living seemingly quite happily. Some participants seemed more skilled at this than others but possible reasons for this were not immediately obvious. This ability to compartmentalise may seem as if it would negate any supposed masculinity affirmation derived from offending. However, just because someone has managed to detach or separate certain parts of their life does not render the split part immune from social influence and the dictates of hegemonic masculinity.

Reinterpreting past behaviour was a common narrative technique, and was a strategy the men used to reconcile inconsistent beliefs and distance themselves from what they had done.

Most commonly participants adopted passive phrasing when talking about offences they committed. There were numerous examples of this: ‘and that’s when the offence started to take place’ (Bob, interview); ‘[that] started me sexually assaulting’ (Perry, interview); ‘it then sort of repeated itself over’ and ‘this touching carried on’ (Aaron, interview). Reg simply sidestepped all requests for details about his offending. What he did say was in depersonalised legal language:

I was charged with 22 charges of sexual offending against four victims. A male aged eleven. Female 11. Female two. And female 15. Charges from rape, attempted rape, sodomy, indecent assault, permitting an act, inducing an act. *A lot of legal terms. And what did that mean in terms of what you’d done or?* How do you mean?

(Reg, interview).

Further attempts to probe this issue were unsuccessful; he only described events of the days before and during the days after he committed his offences. Only one other participant was evasive to this same extent and this meant all details were obtained from file notes, underpinning the importance of having this extra source of data. Some men completely reframed what had happened and obscured the truth by blaming others. For example:

I · mainly didn’t download it ‘cause I knew what I was doing was wrong. (...) Nobody ever found out · except when I, um · shifted from · |suburb| and I gave my · computer to my brother who · whose, um · girlfriend · must’ve found out somehow what I was doing and, ah · I think she downloaded, um, things off a site that I’d · kept on my favourites. And, um · but it was still in my name. And that’s when Internal Affairs rung. (...) And so she’d downloaded it all. And, um · ‘cause like I say, I just surfed.

(Flynn, interview).

It is a bit unclear, but he seems to be making a distinction between what he claims to have done — look at content via a browser — and what someone else supposedly did — download copies of these images to his computer. On the other hand, there were one or two men who were brutally honest about their behaviour and why. Quinn, for instance, explained how he was manipulative and devious, which none of the other men admitted:

And um · you know, I mean we’d always had a relaxed sort of attitude to nudity and stuff. We’d all been to the beach and they were hosing off under the shower, or under the hose outside. Um I just happened to notice them, you know · probably, ah, oh I mean |victim| had been maturing for years and _inaudible_ full body and, ah, the next youngest was just coming into

puberty. And I just got · I dunno · totally struck by them · you know just seemed to go into planning mode about how I could · see more of them and touch them. Well I decided that, um · ah the next youngest was, ah · she was very smart so · I thought she might tell. Ah, [victim], was a bit on · she was a bit on the slow side. *Okay, do you mean like just mentally a bit?* Yeah. So kind of, I suppose in my ruthless mind I thought that she would be better.

(Quinn, interview).

In this case he is possibly reinterpreting his past behaviour more critically than he would have closer to the time. This was an interesting contrast to all the others who tried to portray themselves in the best possible way. This may be explained because Quinn's offences had taken place more than thirty years ago, giving him significantly longer to come to terms with and take responsibility for his behaviour. Overall, the prevalence of reframing and distancing strategies may seem as if it would undermine the potential for any masculine affirmation attained while abusing children, but it is likely the men were simply reluctant to 'own' their offending given the benefit of hindsight — which would not negate any overcompensatory benefits obtained during the course of offending itself.

Scrutiny of the twenty interviews revealed hundreds of examples — including every single participant — of incongruous thinking, cognitive distortions and internally inconsistent beliefs. Given this frequency it was difficult to make inferences about how this might relate to gender identity or expression. However, it is likely the inflexible nature of hegemonic masculinity itself nurtures equally rigid cognitive styles in individual men. It was Pleck (1982) who first commented on the precariousness of masculinity. By this he referred to the narrowly-defined male gender role, any slight deviation from which threatens to undermine one's masculinity. When viewed like this, masculinity is evidently a rigidly-enforced and unattainable ideal for individual men. Some have speculated whether these sorts of expectations can escalate to feelings of powerlessness and suicidal ideation. Flett et al. (2014) examined this suggestion with particular reference to perfectionism, but it might also be a feature of obsessive personalities more generally. Flett et al. (2014) argued that perfectionism could 'contribute to rigid thinking styles' by encouraging 'cognitive preoccupation with not living up to the perfect, ideal self, thus fuelling the sense of inferiority, deficiency, and hopelessness at the root of suicide

ideation and suicide behaviours' (p. 157). While only one or two men in my sample could be deemed perfectionistic, most did tend to ruminate on their own sense of inferiority and powerlessness as described in this quote. This complex interaction may be further complicated by emotional immaturity — another common feature of participants also characterised by rigid thinking, particularly with regard to gender (Patterson, 2012).

Boundaries and appropriateness

For many of the men rigid thinking was manifested in emotional dysregulation, which in turn triggered maladaptive behavioural responses. One reason these could be classed as maladaptive was because all participants had a poor understanding of boundaries and appropriateness. This might not seem particularly remarkable given their offending was characterised by violation of interpersonal boundaries. However, very often the violation of such boundaries is endorsed by wider social messaging, primarily in the form of rape culture, so it is understandable that some adult men have little respect for consent and bodily autonomy. There are many ways in which society devalues or overrides a child's bodily autonomy. These can be subtle, such as when a child is instructed to hug or kiss a distant relative or family friend because it is considered polite (Philipson, 2014), and more overt intrusions like circumcision or physical discipline. In other words, there are socially sanctioned situations where adults are given authority to use children's bodies to meet their own needs. While these purposes are not usually sexual in nature, there are similarities to the way in which adult rape culture operates.

These matters are further compounded by the blurred point where infantilisation of adult women ends and the sexualisation of young children begins (Jensen, 2010). There are numerous examples of both in mainstream media, but child beauty pageants have received the most significant criticism for their role in such processes (NSPCC, 2011)¹⁰⁵. Given these dynamics, it would be easy to see how boundaries could be wrongly interpreted by those with very rigid thinking styles. However, using the phrase 'wrongly interpreted' implies perhaps that

¹⁰⁵ A full discussion of the media's role here is beyond the scope of this thesis. For further discussion see Durham (2009) and NSPCC (2011).

sexual offending against children is just a misunderstanding. It is not, and I wish to be clear in my meaning here; all the men I interviewed demonstrated inappropriate boundary setting, however, they all knew they were violating such boundaries when they acted. For most, this was part of the arousal. For example:

I did touch her breasts when I was showing her this magazine one time. Um. *Yeah, and did, how did she respond to that?* Oh she was shaking all over. She was really nervous. *Yeah. Ah. And how did you respond?* Well that's the thing, you know · I suppose I've got quite a nervous disposition and while I was excited I couldn't even get an erection. But I was · I was really excited in terms of, you know, all the. *Yeah, sure, yeah.* Um · I suppose, ah, it almost · the secrecy.

(Quinn, interview).

I would fantasise that I was somehow able to see them without them being able to see me (I was invisible or something). And I was usually lying on a bed, viewing the girls from a distance. I wasn't really aroused by the sexual aspect, but rather the idea of doing something naughty without anyone ever knowing (not even the subject). Viewing images of naked girls was the naughtiest thing I could handle without being put off or physically ill.

(Casey, file notes).

As quoted earlier, Aaron succinctly noted: 'pushing the boundaries is probably something that, rightly or wrongly, turns me on' (interview). Several participants demonstrated a poor respect for their own children's boundaries, and this was true as well for those who had confined their sexual abuse to children outside their family. In addition, several men made rather inappropriate comments to me during the course of the interviews. Together, these facts suggest a more generalised lack of boundaries.

When viewed in the context of earlier themes like entitlement, it could be argued there is something *inherently* violating in the enactment of masculinity — that, by its very nature and definition, hegemonic masculinity encourages men to dominate and disregard other people's boundaries. In turn, these issues were further compounded by factors like empathy and cultural differences. One participant explained how his moral perspective shifted when he was living in a country where child pornography was legal. Others simply lacked awareness of how their actions were experienced as violating by someone else. For example, Jason was absolutely mystified as to why his wife felt harassed when he repeatedly drove past her house following

their divorce. Many others demonstrated proprietary attitudes towards former partners. Dean, for instance, ‘spoke of his unwillingness to let [his ex-wife] go despite the fact that she talked about wanting a divorce and a fresh start’ (file notes). Quinn, rather inappropriately, involved himself in his victim’s recovery:

Over the years I have supported [victim] as she slowly made her way to being able to work on her abuse. I have always told her that I couldn’t decide what she should do when she was ready to work on it, but I would support any decision she made. When she started going for abuse counselling, I knew if the counsellor was any good she would disclose it to her family. I continued to support her. She then asked me to come with her to tell the family, and of course I did. Should I have told [wife] even against [victim]’s wishes? Before [rehabilitation] I didn’t want her to know any more than [victim] did, even if she accepted counselling. Although, if she accepted counselling it would have come out and I would have done nothing to try and prevent it. At [rehabilitation] I wanted to tell [wife] as part of my amends, but again [victim] was frantic that I shouldn’t. I think she couldn’t escape the belief that [wife] would blame her and not love her anymore, in spite of me saying it was the last thing she would do. I don’t use [victim] as an excuse for not telling her; it’s just that I honestly believed that I had no right to go against her wishes, that she would come to it when the time was right for her

(Quinn, file notes).

Todd was another whose anecdotes often seemed inappropriate. The following was recounted as a positive example of his popularity and social status:

Well it’s like um, over here I, I worked for a short time and [city] · and um · the, the gangs used to come in there. And in fact I’m an honorary member of the [gang]. (...) If you see a tag round the place that says ‘[tag]’, I think it is. That’s my tag apparently. It means ‘Todd plays with little girls’, which I don’t know where they got that one [laughs].

(Todd, interview).

Todd viewed this attention as positive and seemed to lack the self-awareness necessary to realise this was not actually honourable. Eric also exhibited poor boundaries, specifically with regards to overfamiliarity. While this was beneficial in terms of building rapport during our interview, he did ask me some inappropriate personal questions. Nathan did this too, and also tried to project his offending and compulsions onto me:

I'm now starting to realise that · the over-involvement with the net. I used to be a news junkie. I mean you seem to be well up with it. You've, you obviously · you obviously have a little bit of that yourself.

(Nathan, interview).

Did it · escalate over time, like did you sort of think I need more, I want more?
Not, not really, no. *Okay.* No, because that's, that's not what motivated me. I mean, I, I, I didn't sign up to sites where you see kids being raped or anally penetrated or all of that. I mean that revolts me as much as most other people · my undoing has always been · I guess, if I have to · it's a shame you don't get to have a turn at this discussion. *[Laughs]. That's all right.* 'Cause really I want to ask you some of these questions.

(Nathan, interview).

On a personal level I found the interview with Nathan to be the most uncomfortable. Aside from these attempts to turn the interview around, he also had an unnerving habit of addressing me intensely by name. He did so 23 times during the course of our interview, and it seemed to be a strategy where he could maintain control and talk to me, rather than with me. His parting comment, as he explained he was running late for a meeting, was that he could blame me for his lateness by telling his colleagues he was with an 'attractive young research assistant' so they would 'be very jealous'. However, despite feeling uncomfortable at times, participants' poor boundaries did prove beneficial in terms of rapport building and added to the ultimate richness of data gathered.

Religiosity

Ten participants identified with various Christian denominations, with the other half labelling themselves lapsed Catholics, Jewish, atheist, new age, spiritual and humanist. Religion was not a major factor in offending overall, but for five participants it profoundly shaped their views of sex and sexuality. For two men their entire identity had come to be moulded by religious doctrine, mostly interpreted with extreme rigidity. For these men, there was no middle ground where sex could be explored safely or curiously; they designated all sexual thoughts, including masturbation and general fantasies, as off limits. Once this rigid boundary was broken — and it inevitably was — the result was self-loathing and a descent into increasingly extreme sexual behaviours. For someone who views masturbation and child molestation as morally equivalent,

transgressions would unlikely be gradual or incremental. Even those men with less extreme religiosity tried to make bargains with themselves that, for the most part, were unsustainable. The following examples highlight how religious beliefs nurtured rigid thinking and exacerbated inappropriate sexual expression:

Keith said he was brought up a Catholic, went to a Catholic boys' school, was told it was wrong to masturbate, 'that was why we did things that were dark and secretive and did so many others'. (...) At [age], parents moved to [country]. Masturbation stopped. Returned two and a half years later, got back into masturbating, did crazy things, masturbating with cow shit.
(Keith, file notes).

Being gay, too. I mean, I understand that · but. *How do you, sort of*. But I find it really difficult to deal with because · I dunno. It's been like part of my life, being. *Being Christian and being gay?* Yeah. But I know it's not right. *Okay*. That's why I really find masturbation is · a better comfort for me. *Yeah?* To save all that · hassle, you know? *Of course, so it's easier to deal with*. Emotional feelings and all that. At least if I masturbated, I've released that pressure.

(Bob, interview).

Um · well I guess I obviously found it [masturbation] enjoyable. But · very guilty. I felt very guilty about it. After any time that I masturbated I was · ashamed and · ah, felt intense guilt. And wanted to stop.

(Liam, interview).

[Believes it is] sinful to have sex outside marriage, [wants] to be celibate outside marriage for the rest of his life, be a eunuch for God, a conflict between hormonal urges and wanting to be only for God.

(Liam, file notes).

Liam later described what happened when these ideals eventually crumbled:

I · withdrew from my faith. So I stopped really trying to pursue a Christian life. Um · I · tried to · ignore my obligation to God · altogether really. (...) I guess I would tell myself, for example, if I can be · sort of baptised and saved one day or, or repent and be saved then, I guess, you know · looking at what I've already done, another session isn't going to make a material difference. (...) I did not see myself as a good person. Um · but more than anything I was just thinking about, I suppose, the next time I could get online. (...) I tried to stop a couple of times. I think the longest I ever went without masturbating was, maybe, three weeks. (...) Um, the longest I went without looking at pornography was probably about three months over the ten years.

(Liam, interview).

Jason finds the experience [of visiting sex workers] very relieving, however, afterwards feels bad due to his Catholic faith. He states that he frequents parlours to meet his needs to be loved and a desire to be cared for by another. Jason has not sought a partner because he still believes he is married to his ex-wife, according to his Catholic faith. Jason stated that he feels lonely, especially when he comes home to his flat. He has been alone now for ten years and mentions that this is 'getting to me'.

(Jason file notes).

Do you find it satisfying to go and see these women? I feel regret straight after. I, I think to myself, I've failed again. I've failed. (...) *Is it like a personal thing, failing God?* Ah, like God, our Father, He's given me so much. I wouldn't be here without Him having created me, and not only that · if He for a nanosecond forgot about me, I wouldn't be here. So He sustains me. *And before you sort of make an appointment to go, what's sort of running through your mind in those sorts of times?* I'd be fighting it. I think, oh I don't want to think about it, I'll just go. And then you think · not only have you · you haven't just committed adultery, but it's like a double sin because you can't really afford that, you owe people money. *Okay, sure.* You know, it's just like a double sin. Might be a triple sin [laughs].

(Jason, interview).

There is a high degree of inconsistency in Jason's reasoning here. He claims to be unable to move on from his previous relationship because of his faith, yet he continues to visit sex workers to obtain the intimacy he yearns for. However, this too is forbidden by his religious beliefs and only serves to exacerbate the feelings of loneliness that caused him to behave this way in the first place. These quotes reveal a mixture of rigid thinking, powerlessness and an often-overlooked external locus of control: God. To an outsider it may seem prudent for Jason to commit a small sin now — that is, seek out meaningful adult relationships and accept his divorce — to avert these 'triple sins' from repeating in future. Elsewhere Jason described sex as his 'only pleasure' in life, but he eventually decided suppressing this entirely was the only answer: 'I've learned to stop my sexual thoughts' (file notes). This rigid thinking prevented him making moderate or flexible decisions, and in turn set the stage for his later offences.

Some of the participants would likely fit the criteria for 'religious addiction' laid out by Vanderheyden (1999). She defined a religious addict as someone who sought safety and comfort in the rigidity and inflexibility of religion. While her use of the term 'addiction' is questionable, the characteristics she outlined were accurate descriptors of some of the men I interviewed. For example, they often demonstrated black-and-white thinking, had a shame-based belief they

were ‘not good enough’, felt only God had the power to fix them, exhibited uncompromising or judgmental attitudes about their own and others’ actions, and — most importantly in this context — believed that sex was dirty and shameful (Vanderheyden, 1999, p. 298).

A gendered reading highlights the common ground between religion and hegemonic masculinity: unattainable ideals and rigid restrictions on behaviour. Connell (1987) commented on the similarities between Catholicism and masculinity, which both emphasise the purity ideal as well as ‘meekness and obedience for women’ (p. 108). However, religious ideals also directly conflict with some dominant expectations of masculinity, particularly those regarding sexual behaviour. For the religious men in my sample, this conflict may have added further stress to their sense of gender identity and, therefore, intensified any perceived masculine failings. With such a small number of religious participants it is impossible to make claims with any degree of confidence, but this is something that may be worthwhile exploring in future research.

14. OVERVIEW

Summary of findings

This thesis began with an overview of the literature on child sexual offending. Chapters 1 to 4 critically examined the current body of knowledge, highlighting a paucity of gendered theory and analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 reviewed feminist perspectives in the context of general offending, as well as child sexual abuse more specifically. This type of crime is overwhelmingly committed by men yet academic research remained largely gender-blind until the 1990s. Seminal work came from Allen and Pothast (1994), Connell (2002b; 2005), Cossins (2000), Fuller (1993), Hearn (1990), Lancaster and Lumb (1999), Messerschmidt (2005) and Willer (2005). This work stressed the importance of social constructions of masculinities as enabling men to justify sexually abusing children. Areas of importance were said to be men's experiences of powerlessness, perceived inadequacies, sexual violence as an overcompensatory behaviour, and narratives of hypermasculinity. A pilot study on four child sex offenders in New Zealand demonstrated the need for further local research (Mowat, 2012). Mowat (2012) argued that gender should be a site for pre-emptive intervention, and said boys needed help to challenge the narrow prescriptions of hegemonic masculinity.

My thesis set out to understand narratives of offenders using gendered theory and analysis. Twenty in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted with men around New Zealand who had perpetrated sexual offences against children. The sample included men across the offending spectrum, and questions were designed to elicit life narratives with a particular focus on masculinity and identity. Thematic and narrative methods were used to interpret the data. This process elicited four central themes: powerlessness, entitlement, risk-taking and rigid thinking. Within these broad themes several sub-themes were discussed. For the theme of powerlessness these were: distorted perception, idealistic or nostalgic views of childhood, previous experience of trauma or abuse, inability to seek help, experiences of humiliation or rejection, and perceived masculine failings. For the theme of entitlement these were: a propensity for resentment and blame, narratives of nice guys relegated to the friend zone, and values that endorsed hypermasculinity. For the theme of risk-taking these were: narratives

of boredom and addiction, and the existence of obsessive or compulsive tendencies. For the theme of rigid thinking these were: inconsistent or illogical cognitive patterns, poor or inappropriate boundary setting, and inflexible or unattainable religious ideals. Each of these factors was discussed with specific reference to criminological, sociological and psychological theories.

Overall, this discussion found support for previous theories of powerlessness by showing how these men's sexual offending could be interpreted as an example of overcompensatory behaviour occurring within the spectrum of normative masculinities. It also found ways in which theories of sexual offending against adult women could have some applicability for understanding similar crimes perpetrated against children. This thesis has allowed twenty New Zealand men to add their voices and experiences to the academic knowledge of masculinities and child sexual abuse. It is hoped this contribution will enhance existing aetiological theory and rehabilitative focus. In particular, this thesis has identified specific aspects of hegemonic masculinity that are potentially harmful — both to men themselves, as well as women and children. If society adopted flexible, forgiving and tolerant constructions of masculinities, this could redirect individual men away from seeking overcompensatory benefit through sexual offending. Men must be allowed to exhibit vulnerabilities, taught healthy ways of processing negative experiences such as rejection or failure, and should not be held to unattainable standards or ways of doing gender.

Final comments

While thematic analysis has many advantages, it can overlook issues which are important to individual cases but not the group as a whole. The aim of this thesis was to identify overarching themes, but it is still helpful to acknowledge factors that influenced offending on a case-by-case basis. With this in mind, I have summarised in Table 14.a the top four themes as ranked for each participant. This table highlights the difference between group- and individual-level thematic analyses. Group-level analysis elicited four broad themes of powerlessness, entitlement, risk-taking and rigid thinking. The alternative individual-level perspective reveals four main themes: low self-esteem, emotional dysregulation, issues relating to masculinity, and escapism as

a maladaptive coping strategy. Collectively, these eight themes interact in an important way; individual-level themes influenced and directed how the men experienced group-level themes. For example, low self-esteem and emotional dysregulation seemed to make the men less resilient in the face of negative life events. Secondly, threatened or insecure masculinity was a primary way in which experiences of powerlessness were framed. For instance, personal failures were often experienced both specifically and broadly; rejection would be negative for the rejection itself but also for the consequences on their perception of themselves *as men*. This was true even for men who claimed not to endorse or uphold stereotypical gender norms and ideals.

There is a contradiction between the façade of hegemonic masculinity as strong and indestructible, and the reality of it being vulnerable and easily threatened. Gender theory has long-acknowledged the precariousness of masculinities, but social progress has been slow to relax the rigidly-enforced codes surrounding masculinity. This is understandable given people who consciously reject gender stereotypes still find themselves profoundly influenced by them — a truth for most of my participants. Butler (1990) contended that gender is a performative project with ‘cultural survival’ as its only goal (p. 139). She said this drive for cultural survival caused many to enact gendered norms under duress; ‘indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right’ (p. 139). This environment of duress demonstrates why many find it impossible to extricate the self from the social, despite all efforts to the contrary. She expanded further:

Because there is neither an ‘essence’ that gender expresses or externalises nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions — and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction ‘compels’ our belief in its necessity and naturalness.

(Butler, 1990, p. 140).

Based on this, one could not expect individual men to always resist the pressures of hegemonic masculinities. The only solution is for hegemonic masculinity to be exposed for its illusions and held accountable for the harmful behaviours it encourages.

Examples of this often appear under the guise of social progress. Some commentators have heralded the rise of the ‘bromance’ as proof of increasing social acceptance of ‘manly affection’ (Philippot, 2008, p. 2). However, the fact that close male friendships need to be constructed to emphasise heterosexuality, suggests this precariousness survives. There should be no need to say *we are close friends* and be compelled to add the disclaimer *but we are definitely not gay*. However, this disclaimer is implicitly conveyed by the creation of the bromance concept. Martinussen (2014) described this as reflecting ‘tensions and incompatibilities between norms of orthodox masculinities and the intimacies of men’s friendships’ (p. 20). Other academics have discussed how bromances simultaneously appear to liberate men from heteronormative discourse but actually function to reinforce it (Chen, 2012). It was described by Alberti (2013) as combining ‘homosocial longing with homophobic panic’ (p. 163). This trickery¹⁰⁶ is one of the ways hegemonic narratives are maintained; behavioural codes which appear liberating actually function to reinforce the very structures they purport to challenge.

The precariousness of masculinities is highlighted when one man calls for another to forfeit his ‘man card’ following any transgression of the ‘bro code’. The implicit assumption is that men are permitted only one strike before being emasculated through the symbolic removal of their man card. This backlash occurs across social groupings, including by those most harmed by narrow definitions of masculinity. This was seen clearly when David Cunliffe, politician and leader of the opposition at the time, apologised for ‘being a man’ and was resoundingly criticised (Rutherford & Dennett, 2014). His comments were made during a speech about high rates of male-perpetrated domestic violence. However, the disproportionate reaction suggested that many deemed his transgression more outrageous than the violence against women he was trying to highlight.

I comment here on normative codes of masculinity because they contextualise the common social environment of both men who molest children and those who do not. Fuller

¹⁰⁶ Similar dynamics are present in the coining of other masculinised language: men are not said to trim their pubic hair but ‘man-scape’ it; when a man wants solitary time he retreats to his ‘man cave’; fiancés are given ‘man-gagement rings’ by their female partners. Such language supports the continuing rigidity of hegemonic masculinity.

(1993) examined sexual scripts associated with hegemonic masculinity to understand if some might enable certain men to sexually offend against children. She argued that patriarchal power dynamics permeated all interactions between men and women or children, and these were used by offenders to justify, excuse or legitimise male-perpetrated child sexual abuse. Cossins (2000) more specifically located this offending as arising from chronic experiences of powerlessness. She contended:

Offenders sexually abuse children in circumstances where there are real or perceived challenges to their masculine power, such as a direct experience of lack of sexual potency or an experience which constitutes a lack of power as a man in other arenas of life.

(p. 127).

Overall, the findings from this thesis support claims made by both Fuller and Cossins. The men in my sample overwhelmingly contextualised their abuse against a background of perceived masculine inadequacies and enduring feelings of powerlessness.

Table 14.a. Important themes ranked for each participant

Participant	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Aaron	Low self-esteem	Self as victim	Self sufficiency	Lack of passion
Bob	Alcohol & drugs	Dysregulation	Sexual abuse	Sexuality
Casey	Sexual abuse	Low self-esteem	Dysregulation	Pornography
Dean	Masculinity	Dysregulation	PTSD	Poor boundaries
Eric	Low self-esteem	Dysregulation	Bullying	Depression
Flynn	Low self-esteem	Sexuality	Nostalgia	Escapism
Gerry	Dysregulation	Addiction	Poor boundaries	Risk-taking
Howard	Dysregulation	Masculinity	Denial	Rigid thinking
Ivan	Dysregulation	Low self-esteem	Fantasies	Escapism
Jason	Religion	Narcissism	Rigid thinking	Employment
Keith	Obsessive	Masturbation	Masculinity	Religion
Liam	Religion	Low self-esteem	Misogyny	Rigid thinking
Moe	Masculinity	Escapism	Grief	Pornography
Nathan	Self as victim	Obsessive	Narcissism	Poor boundaries
Oliver	Dysregulation	Pornography	Escapism	Low self-esteem
Perry	Low self-esteem	Misogyny	Sexual abuse	Dysregulation
Quinn	Low self-esteem	Alcohol & drugs	Poor boundaries	Sobriety
Reg	Rebellion	Masculinity	Using others	Narcissism

Scott	Low self-esteem	Obsessive	Escapism	Anxiety
Todd	Nostalgia	Employment	Obsessive	Masculinity

Reflections on this research

As with any thesis, this has been a bumpy yet rewarding journey. However, there were unique challenges posed by the content. With the benefit of hindsight, I would have altered my ethical application to seek permission to outsource transcriptions. Transcribing forty hours of tape was a physical and emotional burden; it was perhaps too much for one person to reasonably manage. In retrospect I would have benefited from first reading Campbell's (2002) book, *Emotionally Involved: The Impact of Researching Rape*. Her work advocated awareness of the potential emotional toll of conducting this sort of research. Certainly, my gung-ho enthusiasm at the outset of this research was naïve, and I now definitely have a more accurate understanding of my own resilience.

Having said this, I was very humbled by the amount of personal information that participants felt willing to disclose during their interviews with me. It was a privilege to have been trusted in this way, and I hope the findings of this thesis can be used in a positive way to mitigate some of the harms caused by their offending. A lot of this thesis has focused on negative aspects of these men's lives, but I do think it is important to acknowledge how this somewhat underrepresents these men. They were and are more than their offending. They were men who had sexually offended against children; they had also achieved many things they deserved to be proud of, had families they loved and cared for, contributed positively to society through charity or volunteer work, exhibited kindness and compassion, and were funny and engaging men to speak with. Society is often unwilling to examine the humanity behind labels — and none is more all-consuming than the label of 'Child Sex Offender' — but it is a necessary part of understanding why people behave the way they do.

I approached this thesis already firmly believing in the humanity of my participants, and I do not believe this project could have been conducted by someone who vilified the men for their actions. However, there were still practical strategies I adopted in order to navigate the interviews. Foremost, I focused on micro-skills and interviewing techniques rather than the

emotional content of what the men were saying to me. I was aware of myself *am I practising active listening?* or *how do I frame this in an open-ended way?* and *what is my body language saying?*

I concentrated on building rapport and trust during the interviews so it was not until the transcription stage that I had a chance to engage with and reflect on the content of what was said. In addition, I found it helpful to conduct the literature review prior to the interviewing stage. In the 'safe' environment of my office I could become familiar with some types of upsetting content and feel more prepared for when I did eventually meet offenders in person.

Limitations, implications and suggestions for the future

This study is the largest in New Zealand to examine the relationship between masculinity and child sex offending. However, it is still a relatively small sample size of twenty men, which limits the generalisability of any findings. No absolute certainties can be inferred from my results, but the four themes highlight areas that would benefit from more specific research in the future. By their very nature, social norms are fluid and intangible so this makes effecting change extremely difficult. It is easier to acknowledge the harmful effects of hegemonic masculinity than it is to actively reframe or redirect the social construction of gender roles and norms. However, knowledge is said to be powerful so in this respect I hope my research adds weight to the argument for social change.

One of my participants asked 'why can't we get education on this at primary school, just dealing with the emotions in our heads and how we respond to them?' (Oliver, interview). He reflected that he felt totally unequipped to manage his negative feelings in a healthy way. This is evidently a problem for a large number of men, including those who have never sexually abused children. Therefore, it seems logical to have some form of emotional education in schools. I cannot conceive of any disadvantages to teaching young people how to engage in constructive coping strategies. In addition, my research suggests many people would benefit from learning more clearly about the nature of consent. That is, consent must be always be enthusiastic and ongoing; there should be no room for 'no' to be interpreted as meaning 'convince me', and neither should silence or intoxication be read as consent-by-proxy. The recent 'Roast Busters' case — involving two teenagers who gang-raped drunk and underage girls,

later bragging about it online — has highlighted how desperately such education is needed (Leask, 2014).

While prevention of sexual violence is the ultimate ideal, it is likely that treatment programmes for child sex offenders will remain necessary. In light of this, and based on the findings of this thesis, I suggest that rehabilitation include more specific modules, tailored to teach men to address perceived masculine inadequacies in healthier ways. For example, gender identity could be one of the primary ‘goods’ as set out in the good lives model (Ward et al., 2006a; Ward et al., 2012; Ward & Stewart, 2003; Willis & Ward, 2011; Willis et al., 2013). The good lives treatment model focuses on nurturing parts of men’s lives deemed to be the source of these valued outcomes — that is, areas of primary goods. Within this model, gender is mentioned in the context of ‘helping offenders to discriminate between sexual and non-sexual goals, and appreciating the role sex plays in a variety of arenas of life, for example, in the offender’s concept of his own masculinity’ (p. 101). Based on the findings from this thesis it may be worthwhile for masculine affirmation to feature more prominently in this treatment methodology. In this same way, other rehabilitation programmes may benefit from a more concerted focus on teaching offenders healthier ways to affirm their sense of gender identity.

It would be helpful to design future research to explore narratives of masculinity among nonoffending men. This would provide a useful point of comparison and could identify ways these men have responded to experiences of powerlessness without abusing children or committing other crimes. Future research could also examine how people with nontraditional gender identities engage with and negotiate hegemonic masculinities. For example, whether trans or genderqueer offenders experience powerlessness differently to heterosexual cis men. To end, I reiterate the advice of Heesaker and Snowden (2013). They stressed the importance of developing interventions to teach men and boys to prevent, reduce and respond constructively to precarious masculinities. I agree with their conclusion that hegemonic dictates are ‘neither desirable nor immutable’ constructions of gender identity (p. 123). Cossins (in press) called for empirical studies to confirm or deny her prediction:

That chronic experiences of powerlessness from childhood, adolescence and adulthood may give rise to criminal offences involving sexual or physical

violence against women or children, where that claim to power mirrors and alleviates those specific experiences of powerlessness.

(p. 25, [emphasis in original]).

The overall findings of this thesis provide evidence to support this prediction. The findings also support an argument for *re*constructing masculinities to be more forgiving of the reality of human experiences, including those which induce feelings of powerlessness.

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