

THE CONCEPT OF SADISM IN THE CURRENT EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

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The present theoretical review examines contemporary empirical literature on sadism, the trait which is the newest addition to the group of subclinical 'dark personalities' – psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellianism. Having been previously studied only in penal and clinical setting, in the form of sexual sadism or sadistic personality disorder, it was only recently accepted as a dimensional construct present in the general population. With that in mind, this paper gives a brief account of its historical background, as well as previous conceptualizations. More importantly, it covers latest empirical research on sadism as a subclinical trait, its position within the Dark Tetrad, and studies on its personality and behavioral correlates. Finally, by encompassing the slowly growing field of sadism investigation, it tries to pinpoint important implications and recommendations for future research.

KEYWORDS: *sadism / individual differences / behavioral correlates / personality correlates*

THE CONCEPT OF SADISM

The historical background

Considering the quotes: "It is always by way of pain one arrives at pleasure... I've already told you: the only way to a woman's heart is along the path of torment. I know none other as sure" (from the play Oxtiern, The Misfortunes of Libertinage,

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1994), it's no wonder how sadism got its name - from the writer and philosopher Donatien Alphonse François, better known as Marquis de Sade, famous for explicit writings of sexual, pornographic and violent nature. Even though his significance lies mostly in his satire, political struggles, criticism of the Catholic Church and corruption of the elite, he is primarily remembered for promoting indulgence in pain of others and perversion in his writings, as well as his own illegal sexual activities at the time.

The first user of this term outside of French literature was Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a famous German psychiatrist, who defined it in his major work *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1939) as: "The experience of sexual pleasurable sensations (including orgasm) produced by acts of cruelty, bodily punishment afflicted on one's own person or when witnessed in others, be they animals or human beings. It may also consist of an innate desire to humiliate, hurt, wound or even destroy others in order thereby to create sexual pleasure in one's self (p. 80)". By reviewing his book, one can get an impression that his definition and illustrations are primarily related to sexual sadism. However, he claimed that the desire for humiliation and inflicting pain on others is applicable to all of the human kind, and that sadism goes beyond sole sexual pleasure. Early on, Freud (1905/1925; according to Millon, 2011) defined sadism and masochism as an active and passive pole of the aggression continuum. Furthermore, he saw it as a form of psychosexual regression. However, he later saw sadism as a manifestation of *Tanatos*, the death instinct, which intertwines with masochism (1920/1925). His concept of sadism was further developed by Wilhelm Reich (1949), who proposed different types of frustration influencing distinct types of sadistic aggression for each stage of psychosexual development (oral, anal and phallic). One of the authors who defined sadism independently of sexual development was Karen Horney (1945), and claimed that sadism is an impulse to kill the joy of other people. Continuing in the same manner, the next in line was Erich Fromm (1973), who discussed the social and individual factors that influence the development of sadistic individual, and introduced the *exploitative-sadistic* character with an active desire to exploit and tendency "...to have absolute and unrestricted control over a living being.." (p. 283), decisively searching for the context and the reason to fulfill its needs. While discussing the specifics of sadism, Shapiro (1981) pointed out the special intention of not only making the victim suffer, but degrading him/her and thus making feel helpless. Many authors continued to pursue further exploration of the concept and potential underlying factors long after these first attempts.

Threatened egotism and opponent processes

The broad definition of sadism could be: "Direct achievement of pleasure from harming others" (Baumeister & Campbell, 1999, p. 211), and sadists are "individuals who derive pleasure from the control, domination, and suffering of others" (Meloy, 1997, p. 631). In trying to explain the origins of intrinsic appeal of evil by reviewing literature at the time, Baumeister and Campbell (1999) suggested three broad sources of intrinsic pleasure or satisfaction from inflicting violence. One such

intrinsic factor is the pursuit of thrills and excitement, or so called *sneaky* (Katz, 1988) and *violent thrills* (Baumeister & Campbell, 1999) that incorporate the process of suspense and planning the mischief, carrying out and the consequent feeling of pleasure. This type of internal appeal is presumed to reduce boredom and, at the same time, enhance pleasure. The concept of *sensation seeking* has also been used to explain the intrinsic appeal of violence (Zuckerman, 1994). Namely, this desire for excitement drives certain individuals to seek new experience and makes them act impulsively.

Threatened egotism arises from the perceived threat to one's self-image (Baumeister, Bushman, & Campbell, 2000). This term contrasts previous conceptions about low self-esteem as one of the factors determining the occurrence of violence (Walker, 1980). The links between violent behavior and conditions of threatened self-image had already been observed in psychopathy (Cale & Lilienfeld, 2006) and narcissism (Konrath, Bushman, & Campbell, 2006) and recently, everyday sadism (Pfattheicher & Schindler, 2015). In the basis of the *Opponent process theory* lies the well-known concept of physical homeostasis (Solomon & Corbit, 1974). This theory presumes that every internal process in organism tends to balance itself out; more specifically, when an organism's basic condition is, for any reason, disrupted, another internal process will be triggered in order to restore the organism's primary, homeostatic state. Whereas the initial, disruptive response is stronger, the following response is weak. However, after similar repeated experiences, these responses inverse in their strength - the former becomes weaker, while the latter becomes stronger and dominant. Therefore, the first reaction to hurting other human beings doesn't have to trigger pleasant reaction at first, but an aversive one - more visceral than moral in its nature (e.g. the distress in the initial act of killing). However, this reaction gets gradually milder and, over time and with repeated experiences, the pleasure emerges - anticipation of excitement overpowers the initial distress and disgust ("...so that presumably killing one's hundredth victim is far less upsetting than killing the first", Baumeister & Campbell, 1999, p.214). Still, the majority of individuals do not experience pleasure from hurting others and even if they repeatedly hurt someone, they don't gradually become sadists. This raises a problem for the theory's explanations. For this reason, the feeling of guilt has been added (to disgust) as a moderator suppressing the potential strengthening of pleasurable reaction as a result of violent act. Considering the abovementioned, this explanation of appeal could represent true sadism, since the intrinsic enjoyment comes straight from one's own incitement of violence and consequential suffering of the victim. Even though these speculations are indeed useful for further research and potential explanations of sadism, offered arguments mostly come from anecdotes and literature reviews, with not much empirical support.

Sadism and Schadenfreude

The term *Schadenfreude* comes from German, literally translating as "harm joy" and refers to taking pleasure in the misfortune of others (Heider, 1958, as cited in van Dijk, Ouwerkerk, Goslinga, Nieweg, & Gallucci, 2006), which clearly links it to

sadism. However, there are certain differences between the two. Whereas the emotion of Schadenfreude assumes indirect enjoyment in suffering of others from psychophysical distance (without causing it), the sadism trait encompasses enjoyment in direct infliction of damage and suffering (Porter, Bhanwer, Woodworth, & Black, 2014). More precisely, the difference is in observing versus causing. One of the first who explicitly contrasted these two was Nietzsche (1967) - passive enjoyment in seeing the suffering in contrast to deriving pleasure from active infliction of suffering (as mentioned in Leach, Spears, Branscombe, & Doosje, 2003).

Despite these differences, there are some indications that sadism and Schadenfreude shouldn't be observed as completely independent constructs. Not only that all of the Dark Triad traits are associated with increased levels of subjectively expressed (James, Kavanagh, Jonason, Chonody, & Scrutton, 2014) and objectively observed Schadenfreude (Porter, Bhanwer, Woodworth, & Black, 2014), sadism moderates the link between the intensity of other people's misfortune and self-reported Schadenfreude (Schumpe & Lafrenière, 2016) - individuals with high sadism scores experience greater Schadenfreude when they observe severe misfortune in an important event (cyclist's severe injury during an important race), while the opposite stands for individuals with low sadism scores: they experience less Schadenfreude in this context. Moreover, since both sadism and Schadenfreude imply lack of empathic concern (Cikara, Bruneau, & Saxe, 2011; Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013), some propose that these constructs might be defined as parts of the same continuum, with Schadenfreude on its less intense, more context dependent part, and sadism on the less universal and more malicious end (Buckels, 2012, as cited in Porter et al., 2014). This could make sense, since Schadenfreude mostly occurs under specific conditions, for instance in the cases of perceived hypocrisy and deservingness of others - where the levels of reported Schadenfreude are greater (Powell & Smith, 2009). These situations of deserved misfortunes let the preference for symmetry and balance be satisfied without being related to one's own self-interest (Smith, Powell, Combs, & Schurtz, 2009). The similar pattern occurs in social comparisons, where the joy in failure of others is greater if the person had already experienced the same (van Dijk, Ouwerkerk, Nieweg, Van Koningsbruggen, & Wesseling, 2008; van Dijk, & Ouwerkerk, 2014). Besides that, Schadenfreude is often associated with minor, everyday misfortunes - if they become too severe, they trigger an oppositely valenced emotion (Ben-Ze'ev, 2014). For instance, Schumpe and Lafrenière (2016) offer an interesting illustration: "...we would expect people to experience more Schadenfreude if a target person were to slip on a banana peel and less if he or she were to break a leg while falling. However, this phenomenon might be reversed for individuals particularly high in sadism." (p. 33). So, even though Schadenfreude has previously been studied in the field of social psychology, where the primary interest of researchers are situational factors influencing its occurrence and intensity (Buckels, 2012), there seems to be a trace of evidence showing that it makes sense studying it in the context of individual differences. However, some authors go even further, perhaps too optimistically, to suggest it should substitute sadism within the Dark Tetrad (Porter et al., 2014), which is clearly an overstatement. Schadenfreude should definitely be investigated further - as an "emotion" that is present among

regular people, but perhaps to a greater extent among those with pronounced sadistic tendencies.

Sexual sadism

Some define *sexual sadism* as a more channeled variant of sadism, characterized by sexual arousal as a result of psychological or physical suffering of another (Meloy, 1997). Actually, until recently, sadism was most frequently studied as a sexual disorder, in convicted and psychiatric populations (Eher et al., 2016). The DSM-V defines it as "recurrent and intense sexual arousal from the physical or psychological suffering of another person, as manifested by fantasies, urges, or behaviors" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 695), and also includes acting on these sexual urges as part of its diagnostic criteria. The Sexual Sadism Disorder was added to the very first version of DSM (American Psychiatric Association, 1952) and placed among transvestitism and pedophilia as a form of *sexual deviation*, a category that would later be defined as *sexual paraphilia*, an intense and recurrent sexual urge and behavior (American Psychiatric Association, 1980; Beech, Miner, & Thornton, 2016). Sexual sadists are individuals who fantasize about torturing the innocent for their own sexual pleasure, and often put these fantasies into effect. As a matter of fact, it is hard to detect sexual sadists in practice, since there are several types of information to rely on: crime scene information, self-reported fantasies and phallometric measurement (Marshall, 2002); and relying on categorical approach also doesn't help the practitioners, since dimensional operationalization could actually facilitate insight into intensity of the problem. Furthermore, the prevalence of sexual sadism ranges from 3 to 5% in the clinical context, while in sexually motivated homicide offenders amounts from 37 to 75% (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), which explains why it's been mostly studied as a factor affecting the occurrence of serious sexual offenders, including the abovementioned convicted murderers, as well as rapists. Whereas in the most severe cases it is easier to diagnose it - for instance, on the basis of forensic medical examination of the victim's body - it is very hard to detect sexual sadism among less severe offences, where experts are forced to rely on self-reported fantasies (Kirsch & Becker, 2007). Yet again, the sole mutilation of the body doesn't guarantee that it comes from sexual sadistic tendencies (Beech, Miner, & Thornton, 2016). Moreover, in certain cases, behavioral indicators of sadism, such as phallometric measure and the level of violence, are superior to clinical diagnosis of sexual sadism in predicting recidivism in sexual and violent offences (Kingston, Seto, Firestone, & Bradford, 2010).

Nevertheless, to this day, the mere existence of sexual sadism diagnosis has been questioned, with some results indicating, for example, that there are no differences between sexually sadistic and non-sadistic offenders, in offense history, self-reports and phallometric data (Marshall, Kennedy, & Yates, 2002). Moreover, there are still no reliable measures that could assess sexual sadism (Marshall & Kennedy, 2003), which confirms the need for different type of operationalization. Additionally, research on sex offenders has shown a strong overlap between sexual sadism and sadistic personality disorder, with 68.4% of the SPD sample had comorbid sexual

sadism, whereas 46.4% of sexual sadists had comorbid SPD (Berger, Berner, Bolterauer, Gutierrez, & Berger, 1999).

Sadistic personality disorder

In one of the first known attempts to offer a description of personality disorders, among others, Kraepelin also covered those that correspond to sadistic and aggressive personality – unstable, excitable and impulsive (Millon, Millon, Meagher, Grossman, & Ramnath, 2004). First included in the appendix of revised edition of DSM-III (1980), the brief description of SDP was as follows: "Explosively hostile, abrasive, cruel, dogmatic. Liable to sudden outbursts of rage. Feels self-satisfied through dominating, intimidating and humiliating others. Is opinionated and close-minded." (Millon et al., 2012, p. 4). Millon and collaborators (2004) argued that sadistic traits can actually covary within a normal range; he also claimed that sadists more often use emotional rather than physical violence and tend to "normalize" their behavior by rationalizing it, and in that way enhance their inflated self-image. He proposed different types of sadistic personality: 1. *Explosive sadist* – has explosive rage outbursts, and is the only of all sadists that doesn't use aggression instrumentally, but to relieve frustration; 2. *Tyrannical sadist* – the most cruel personality disorder, has a feeling of deep satisfaction from intimidating and humiliating others, verbally or physically, and constantly seeking fragile victims; 3. *Enforcing sadist* – individual who imposes his/her power in order to punish and feel more important; 4. *Spineless sadist* – combination of sadistic and avoidant personality, deeply insecure; aggressive hostility serves as a means to overcome personal fears.

The concept of Sadistic personality disorder hasn't withstood the 'test of time' i.e. the fourth revision of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). The main reasons for removing it were the potential legal misuse by excusing cruel behavior and reportedly, relatively low prevalence rate (Millon et al, 2004). In clinical samples, this prevalence equals to 0.5 % of diagnosed cases, while it is much higher in forensic samples - 27.2 % (Loranger et al., 1994).

THE CONCEPT OF EVERYDAY SADISM

Whereas research on constructs such as psychopathy, narcissism, Machiavellianism is abundant (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013), sadism seems to be a fairly new addition to the "Dark" group and research on it is still scarce. For this reason, this paper will tend to focus specifically on the research involving sadism outside the forensic and clinical context - everyday sadism and it as a part of the Dark Tetrad of personality.

In their writings on sadistic personality disorder, Millon and his collaborators (2012) claimed that: "As a vampire who feeds on the suffering of others, the sadist is only rarely encountered in the course of everyday life. Nevertheless, sadistic traits and

behaviors are common" (p. 532). Similar claims can be found in the writings of Krafft-Ebing (1939) as well. Today, there is a relatively new and significant research direction that once again puts sadism in the limelight by studying *everyday sadism*, i.e. its subclinical form in the general population (from now on referred to as sadism). One of the first attempts of establishing the concept of sadism outside of clinical context has resulted in defining a *sadistic personality* as the one who: "humiliates others, shows a longstanding pattern of cruel or demeaning behavior to others, or intentionally inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological pain or suffering on others in order to assert power and dominance or for pleasure and enjoyment." (O'Meara, Davies, & Hammond, 2011, p. 523), thus allowing for the dimensionality of the measured construct, and sparking further development and validation of its measures. However, authors now especially emphasize underlying appetitive motivation and directly reinforced cruelty (Buckels, 2012), unlike previous concepts which put emphasis on instrumental motivation (Chabrol, van Leeuwen, & Rodgers, 2011; as cited in Buckels, 2012), meaning that for a sadist, inducing other's suffering is not a means to an end, but the end itself.

The measures of sadism

Until recently, not much research has been done with the intention of developing proper instruments for measurement of sadism. Besides previously observing its measurement in forensic setting (Hollin & Howells, 1994), earlier attempts included assessing it as a form of aggressive-sadistic personality, via Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III (Millon, Millon, Davis, & Grossman, 2009) which might had represented the precursor of sadism measurement, by assessing its more pronounced occurrences (Buckels, 2012). However, lately there has been a step forward towards establishing measures of sadism as an independent personality-assessing construct (for thorough details see Paulhus & Jones, 2014).

Short Sadistic Impulse Scale – SSIS (O'Meara, Davies, & Hammond, 2011). This measure of sadistic personality was developed as a derived version of *SABS, The Sadistic Attitudes and Behaviors Scale* (O'Meara, Davies & Barnes-Holmes, 2004), first constructed to identify features covered by the DSM-III-R criteria and several additional measures. Besides the scale's good reliability and validity, the scores correlate negatively with scores on empathy (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004), specifically with emphatic Insensitivity and Social Skill, respectively. Additionally, scores on sadism are associated with dysfunctional i.e. dominant and abusive interpersonal relations, as well as lack of parental warmth (O'Meara, Davies, & Hammond, 2011).

However, Buckels (2012) gives several arguments on the limitations of this scale: firstly, it incorporates provoked aggression and hurting with the purpose of establishing dominance, which is psychopathic rather than sadistic feature (Jones & Paulhus, 2010); so, excluding items that cover aggression without measuring intrinsic enjoyment should represent an enhancement; secondly, although this scale measures the "core" or *true sadism*, it overlooks the so called *vicarious sadism*, the

more indirect type of sadism, where the enjoyment is attained by the means other than direct torture - e.g. by watching gory horror movies.

Varieties of Sadistic Tendencies – VAST (Paulhus, Jones, Dutton, & Klonsky, 2011). The scale, which is currently being developed, positively correlates with the enjoyment in sadistic content (video games, movies, sports). Its subscales, *core* and *vicarious* sadism correlate positively; both correlate positively with political sadism, while only the core relates to SSIS. Additionally, core sadism correlates more intensely with antisocial behaviors (arson and domestic violence).

Amoralism Scale - AMRL-9 (Knežević, Radović, & Peruničić, 2008). The scale measuring three aspects of amoral behavior: caused by low impulse control, by frustration and brutality. In measuring sadistic tendencies in the convicted population, it has been shown to correlate with Callous Affect, schizotypal experiences and lower negative emotional responses to violent stimuli (Međedović, 2016). Also, it seems to be the most important predictor in convicts with lower intensity and variety of criminal behavior. Amorality induced by frustration predicts the number of sentences per convict, whereas Amorality induced by brutality predicts the number of prison sanctions (Međedović, Kujačić, & Knežević, 2012).

The Assessment of Sadistic Personality – ASP (Plouffe, Saklofske, & Smith, 2017). The newest and shortest (9-item) addition to the sadistic traits measurement, which, according to its authors, encompasses a broader concept of sadism, by including items that measure subjugating characteristics of sadistic individuals.

BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SADISM

In an interesting experimental study, Buckels, Jones and Paulhus (2013) revealed several important findings. Using the bug-killing paradigm, the authors managed to show that sadistic personality traits uniquely predict the bug killing preference, i.e. the preference for a task that includes pain or damage infliction on other living beings. They also indicated that sadists actually don't have a high disgust threshold for various types of stimuli (e.g. blood or bugs): seems that, not only that there is no relation between sadism scores and dispositional proneness to disgust, this occurrence was also confirmed on the behavioral level - individuals with high sadism scores indeed chose assignments that include disgusting activities with the option of hurting other entities (i.e. killing bugs) over solely disgusting ones (toilet cleaning), even in the case of controlling the dispositional disgust sensitivity and fear of bugs. More importantly, when sadism was controlled for, other dark traits lost their predictive power. What makes this study even more interesting are the reported affective responses – sadists had less positive (although marginally significant) emotional states than non-sadists, especially the ones who chose tasks other than bug killing, indicating that they probably had regret about their decision to engage in other activities. Furthermore, the bug killing sadists reported significantly greater pleasure, and this pleasure grew with the number of killed

bugs. Sadists do seem to enjoy engaging in cruel activities, which they clearly find rewarding, and they might do this to level out their low baseline of positive affect (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013). Taken together, these results show that sadism can undoubtedly be studied in laboratory setting and that the scales used in its measurement are valid; moreover, that it is a phenomenon with a unique contribution to the prediction of behavior (independent of other "dark" traits), and as such should definitely be studied as a part of proposed Dark Tetrad of personality (Chabrol, Van Leeuwen, Rodgers, & Séjourné, 2009; Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013).

The construct of sadism was further investigated in the context of online trolling, i.e. deliberate cynical and offensive behavior (usually verbal) towards other individuals on the internet - often mentioned, albeit rarely empirically investigated occurrence (Buckels, Trapnell, & Paulhus, 2014). It appears that online trolls (detected via two measures: time spent on online commenting and trolling enjoyment and additional items addressing behavior, enjoyment and identification with trolling) have pronounced dark traits. Particularly, of all personality traits, sadism had the strongest relations with the composite "trolling score" but not with other online activities. Furthermore, sadism was the only dark trait that predicted trolling operationalized both through trolling enjoyment and averaged trolling score. The sadists' trolling primarily comes from enjoyment, because its influence halves once enjoyment is held constant. Moreover, sadism is shown to be the predictor of cyberbullying (together with marginally significant narcissism and psychopathy), and the sole predictor of traditional bullying when the Big Five and Dark Triad traits are controlled for (van Geel, Goemans, Toprak, & Vedder, 2016).

Similar idea of using certain "channels" for personal satisfaction of nefarious intentions led the research on sadism and violent gaming (Greitemeyer, 2015), which showed that sadism has the most stable associations with the amount of violent video game play, since no predictive power of Dark Triad traits was left when the sadism trait was controlled for. Considering the fact that the sadism was assessed via Comprehensive Assessment of Sadistic Tendencies (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013), the correlations were calculated for both physical and verbal sadism - while physical sadism was in correlation with the amount of violent gaming, even when verbal sadism, aggression, Dark Triad traits and the Big Five traits were held constant, the measure of verbal sadism had only marginally significant associations, and no correlation when previously mentioned measures were controlled. In accordance with these findings, it was concluded that physical sadism – enjoyment in physically hurting and tormenting people – is a predictor of violent gaming, since violent gameplays specifically focus on physical violence, and thus could serve as a means for fulfilling the sadistic tendencies of individuals with prominent physical sadism scores. This finding was confirmed longitudinally - not only that these individuals play violent video games more often, repeated exposure to violent games predicts sadism over time, thus showing bidirectional reinforcing effect between the two (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017).

SADISM, AGGRESSION AND COSTLY PUNISHMENT

Psychopathy has already been positively linked to aggression in forensic and psychiatric samples in numerous occasions (Porter & Woodworth, 2006). These findings suggest that individuals high in self-rated psychopathy tend to aggress more intensely when provoked and are more likely to aggress without previously being provoked (Reidy, Zeichner, & Martinez, 2008). It is these findings that prompted the assumption of mediating role of pleasure in inflicting pain, and that the positive affect it generates could serve as initial trigger for aggression. This idea was previously proposed by Porter and Woodworth (2006), who concluded that psychopaths are more likely to enjoy inflicting pain and suffering on other individuals after reviewing the vast body of literature.

This idea was additionally developed in the first-of-its-kind study that dealt with the effects of sadism and psychopathy on unprovoked aggression experimentally. The main question of Reidy, Zeichner and Seibert (2011) was whether there is a factor underlying the relation between Emotional detachment (Factor 1 of PCL-R) of psychopathy and unprovoked aggression. The implicit sadism measure was operationalized via faster reaction time to happiness words following violent images in a Lexical Decision Task. The results supported the previous findings on psychopathy indicating that Factor 1 predicts the likelihood of unprovoked aggression. Additionally, individuals prone to unprovoked aggression expressed more intense aggressive reactions as opposed to the ones prone only to provoked aggression. More importantly, sadism increased the likelihood of unprovoked aggression, yet its relation to psychopathy hasn't been found - the Factor 1 and sadism both predict unprovoked aggression, but independently of each other; hence, sadism measured in this manner, couldn't possibly be the mediator of psychopathy's relationship with unprovoked aggression. However, it was once more confirmed that sadism is related to engaging in costly activities in order to harm others.

This topic was also covered in the aforementioned study by Buckels and colleagues (2013), who tried to expand their operationalization of sadism using the white-noise-aggression paradigm (Bushman & Baumeister, 1998). Results indicated that sadism is positively correlated with the strength of noncostly aggression (operationalized via white noise blast intensity) toward an innocent opponent, besides being associated with reactive aggression without provocation (*no-work condition*: being able to inflict damage without having to go through the boring task) - which is in line with the previously listed study (Reidy, Zeichner & Seibert, 2011); it was significant predictor of noncostly aggression even when Dark Triad traits were controlled for. Also, when there was no additional work needed to hurt the opponent, individuals with narcissistic and psychopathic personalities chose to aggress, as well as individuals with low scores on empathic concern. In the *work condition* (the number of boring task completions in order to damage an innocent victim), sadism scores correlated with the boring task completions. Among all measures, only sadism was (marginally) significant predictor of investment of personal resources (time and

energy) with the intent to hurt, and sadists are only ones of all "Dark personalities" that invest additional effort to hurt the victim when there is no real reason to retaliate (by default, the opponent would have never "chosen" to punish). Sadism was once more proven to have a quality that distinguishes it from other dark traits: an intrinsic tendency to hurt innocent others, appetitive in its nature and rather independent of external stimuli. More importantly, it has shown that sadists are more than willing to work for pleasure.

Research that builds on these findings addressed sadism in the context of costly punishment and existential threats to self (Pfattheicher & Schindler, 2015). After being existentially threatened (by being explicitly primed with questions about death), only individuals with pronounced sadistic disposition engaged in antisocial punishment in a public goods game; these results were assumed to be in line with Baumeister's concept of threatened egotism and the notion of maintaining self-image by harming and dominating others (Baumeister, Bushman, & Campbell, 2000). Interestingly, this study didn't show the impact of sadism on antisocial punishment in the absence of existential threat, which authors explain by the presence of contextual factors influencing the expression of sadistic traits.

SADISM, DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR AND SUICIDALITY

The subject which is also rarely investigated is the relationship between delinquency and sadistic traits in non-clinical adolescent samples. The knowledge that self-proclaimed sadism approximates to 6.9% of undergraduate sample of 407 individuals (O'Meara, Davies, & Barnes-Holmes, 2004) and the 5.7% prevalence of sadistic personality disorder in non-offending college students (Coolidge, Moor, Yamazaki, Stewart, & Segal, 2001) pushed authors to consider the importance of further research in this context.

Determining sadism's relations with 'Dark Triad' traits, as well as their association with delinquent behavior, was the aim of the study of Chabrol and colleagues (2009). They managed to investigate the contributions of these traits to self-reported delinquent behaviors, from which the most frequently mentioned were: starting a fight, drunkenness in school, threat and beating, carrying a blade etc. When other dark traits were kept constant, sadism appeared as an independent predictor of delinquent behavior in boys, which was explained by more pronounced impulsivity and aggression in comparison with the girls. The same pattern occurred in the case of psychopathy. Because of moderate correlation of sadism (from .27 to .37) with psychopathy, narcissism and Machiavellism, and the independent contributions of both sadism and psychopathy to juvenile delinquency, authors came to the conclusion that these are independent constructs with slight overlapping, and proposed the concept of Dark Tetrad for the very first time.

The relatively high prevalence of sadistic traits within this population was confirmed in the study regarding their relations to suicidal tendencies (Chabrol et al., 2011), the question which is present since the first half of twentieth century (Freud, 1953; Harnik, 1932; Menninger, 1938). Even when controlling for other

psychopathological and familial variables (depression, substance abuse, borderline traits, attachment), sadistic traits were related to self-reported suicidality. More precisely, these traits explained unique variance in suicidal tendencies, indicating the possible exclusiveness of these relations. However, the associations between sadism and depression are of importance – sadistic traits are linked to increased suicidality among more depressive individuals.

SADISM WITHIN THE DARK TETRAD OF PERSONALITY

After years of research and the bulk of evidence available on the Dark Triad thus far (Furnham, Richards, & Paulhus, 2013), sadism had finally gained researchers' attention, who started investigating its behavioral manifestations, but at the same time its position among the existing dark personalities. Considering the past informational insight, Paulhus (2014) emphasized the role of HEXACO model traits in explaining dark personalities, particularly low scores on factor of Honesty-Humility which was already shown to correlate with all traits constituting the Dark Triad (Ashton & Lee, 2001). As it turns out, the HEXACO model does outperform others by far in explaining the dark structure (Mededović & Petrović, 2015). In the recent study by Book and colleagues (2016), the position of sadism among the fellow dark traits was also explored, and its significant correlations with other dark traits were discovered. Interestingly, sadism had larger relationships with Machiavellianism and psychopathy than narcissism, hence could be a better representative of the Dark Triad. Similar conclusions on narcissism's low correlations and different nature were drawn in previous studies as well (Mededović & Petrović, 2015; Lee & Ashton, 2005). Regarding the "core" of the Dark Tetrad, it correlates with low Honesty-Humility (with the largest overall impact), Emotionality, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The negative relationships with Honesty-Humility and Agreeableness were obtained for all dark traits, pinpointing the personality structure nested within the Dark Tetrad. The most compelling finding with regards to sadism is that it shares similar pattern of relations with HEXACO traits as psychopathy, yet its strongest predictor is low Emotionality in contrast to psychopathy's being Honesty-Humility. These findings are of great importance for further investigation of emotional processes in sadistic personalities. Among others, it was shown that sadism is negatively correlated with Extraversion which probably indicates poor social skills and social withdrawal (Mededović & Petrović, 2015), and is in line with the correlation of sadism with social skills as a subcategory of empathy (O'Meara, Davies & Barnes-Holmes, 2004). Data on moderately overlapping dark traits was confirmed in a non-clinical adolescent sample as well, and their associations with the risk of antisocial behavior (Chabrol, Melioli, Van Leeuwen, Rodgers, & Goutaudier, 2015). Furthermore, in accordance with previous findings (Chabrol et al., 2011), dark personalities have the highest level of suicidal tendencies, and sadism and psychopathy seem to predict suicidal ideation independently of depressive symptoms.

SADISM AND EMOTIONAL PROCESSES

As it has been said previously, various studies clearly indicate that there is certain overlapping between the dark traits, yet they are mostly independent constructs. Actually, there is one common feature which has been mentioned numerous times: *callousness* – the lack of empathy for others. It seems to be the core that holds the system together, although it manifests itself differently amongst different dark traits (Paulhus, 2014). This assumption is in line even with observation of Millon and collaborators (2004) that callousness is in the basis of antisocial, sadistic, and narcissistic personalities. Accordingly, dark personalities, including sadism, had been recently shown to project onto areas of the Interpersonal Circumplex representing cold and callous interpersonal style (Southard, Noser, Pollock, Mercer, & Zeigler-Hill, 2015).

Even though some of the following studies were conducted in the context of sexual sadism, there are some interesting findings that could maybe offer some insight into affective processing and emotion recognition and help in forming ideas for the future research on sadism. However, these findings must be approached with caution because of the nature of the samples and conceptualization. For instance, seems that psychopathic rapists (and potentially sadistic) differ from non-psychopathic rapists when it comes to emotional experience – individuals who don't have the ability of experiencing intense emotions probably engage in instrumental sexual violence (Brown & Forth, 1997). One of the proposed mechanisms in the basis of affective deficits in sexual sadism besides affective processing is *emotion recognition* – sadists might lack the ability to empathize with other people, but are capable of perceiving their own negative emotions (Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas, & McCormack, 1986), or just the opposite – are better at processing and perceiving emotions of others, in order to be more successful at inflicting damage (Warren, Hazelwood, & Dietz, 1996). It is an astounding fact that there are data indicating that sadism isn't associated with none of the aspects of self-reported emotional dysregulation: non-acceptance of emotional responses, impulse control difficulties, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotion regulation strategies and lack of emotional clarity (Zeigler-Hill & Vonk, 2015), since it is assumed that sadists probably have cognitive emphatic capabilities to comprehend the victim's internal state, but lack the appropriate emotional response to other people's pain and suffering (O'Meara, Davies, & Hammond, 2011). One of the authors' potential explanations is that enjoyment in other people's suffering might not come from the awareness of one's own emotions and their regulation. It might be that individuals with pronounced sadistic traits actually have specific pattern of responses to suffering and violence. Certain neurological findings are in line with this assumption: there is a greater left amygdala activation (the assumed reward system) in sexual sadists while observing images of individuals in pain, and a tendency to overestimate the pain levels of individuals in these images compared to non-sadists, indicating heightened sensitivity to pain of others (Harenski, Thornton,

Harenski, Decety, & Kiehl, 2012). However, these assumptions are yet to be investigated outside the forensic context of sexual sadism.

There are some new, very encouraging results covering the subject of *emotional processing* of violent stimuli in individuals with pronounced sadistic traits in the general population. Namely, it was shown that individuals with pronounced sadism trait indeed have a specific pattern of reacting to affective states of others and violent or non-violent imagery – when observing stimuli depicting violent interactions, they experience increased positive emotions; moreover, when observing pleasant interactions, they experience decreased positive emotions (Međedović, 2016). These results on the positive reactions to violent stimuli corroborate the previous studies on the core characteristic of sadism: enjoyment in the suffering of others (Buckels, Jones, & Paulhus, 2013). Furthermore, the authors give a new probable explanation for this occurrence, by incorporating the relations between violence and Behavioral Activation System (BAS) into sadism research. Ultimately, this study offers a new insight into an almost non-existent empirical field of emotional processes in sadism.

CONCLUSION

In all, the review of the current literature on sadism, and more precisely, its occurrence in the general population, shows that there has been a small but very important contribution to the field in the recent years. The new measurements are developing and perfecting, and evidence which confirms their validity is mounting. Slowly but steadily, sadism is becoming an irreplaceable member of the Dark Tetrad. In the future, due to relations and overlapping measures of sadism and psychopathy, it would be very useful to recheck the measurement of these constructs; more precisely, to determine the potential contamination of items measuring psychopathy by items actually assessing sadistic tendencies, in a similar manner to that being done with antisocial tendencies within psychopathy measures (Boduszek & Debowska, 2016). Also, the subject of emotional processing and emotional recognition in sadism needs to be attended to, because it offers some very important and potentially promising insights – from the nature of emotional processing and emphatic response in sadism, to potential distinctions in affective processing between psychopathy and sadism, different motivation for causing distress (goal-oriented in psychopathy versus pleasure-seeking in sadism; Trémolière & Djeriouat, 2016) which might also underlie their different behavioral manifestations (e.g. instrumental aggression), and likely the sadist's active seeking of circumstances suitable for inflicting distress and damage (Kirsch & Becker, 2007).

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KONCEPT SADIZMA U SAVREMENOJ EMPIRIJSKOJ LITERATURI

U ovom radu sagledana je savremena empirijska literatura o sadizmu, crti koja predstavlja najnoviji dodatak grupi subkliničkih "mračnih ličnosti" – psihopatiji, narcizmu i Makijavelizmu. Najpre je sadizam bio izučavan samo u penalnom i kliničkom kontekstu, i to u formi seksualnog sadizma ili sadističkog poremećaja ličnosti, a tek u skorije vreme je definisan kao dimenzionalni konstrukt koji se sreće u opštoj populaciji. U vezi sa tim, dat je kratak prikaz izučavanja sadizma u prošlosti i njegovih konceptualizacija. Posebno su obuhvaćena najnovija empirijska istraživanja subkliničkog sadizma, njegove pozicije u okviru Mračne tetrade ličnosti, kao i njegovi ličnosni korelati i bihevioralne manifestacije. U radu je najzad učinjen pokušaj da se izdvoje implikacije i preporuke za buduća istraživanja u okviru ovog sve šireg empirijskog polja.

KLJUČNE REČI: sadizam / individualne razlike / bihevioralni korelati / ličnosni korelati