

# Violent Youngsters Linking Experiences of Attachment and Violence

Paper in progress

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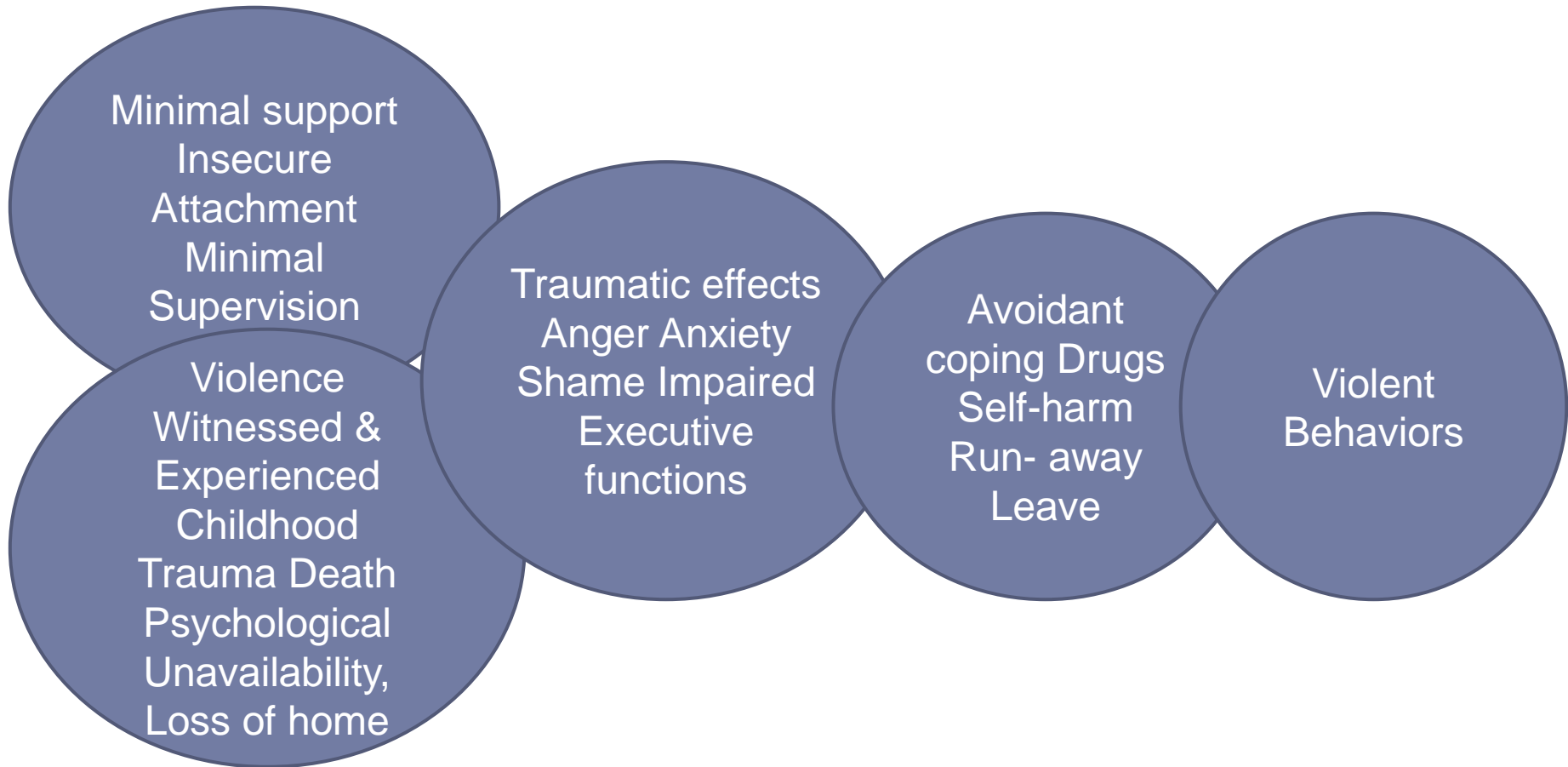
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# Theories of Linkage between Attachment and Violence

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- ▶ Ryder's theory (2014): Attachment-based Model of Female Violence:



# Youngsters out of control – Pathways to Violence – Design and Methods

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Design: **Target** and Control group, a follow-up of a small group 4 years after first T

- ▶ Retrospective Life-course qualitative deep-interview, longing from 10 to 30 hours.

## Methods /Instruments

- ▶ **Semi-structured guide**, Content analysis of Archival journals, Some observations, Interviews with some experts who have been working with the youngsters
- ▶ Evaluation instrument on aggression: SORC aggressive assessment
- ▶ Karolinska Scale of Personality

# Sample of Manifestations of Disrupted Attachment (From Ryder)

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- ▶ Primary caregivers and social bonds: Break-ups and Chaos
- ▶ Traumatic experiences
- ▶ Violent and neglecting relations with caregivers, primary and secondary others
- ▶ Disrupting social climate
- ▶ No one to go talk to with their problems
- ▶ According to Ryder's theory: Violence is a product of a cluster of disrupted attachment-bonds
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# Who are the Target group youngsters?

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- ▶ 35s: Adolescents, most of them living in a Childcare housing, placed by a special court for demanded treatment. 3s living at home, one placed to childcare housing during the interview period
- ▶ Sex: 22 boys, 13 girls
- ▶ Age: 13 – 20 years (average 17 years)
- ▶ Background: 1/3 (14s) from minority groups: South- and East Europe, Asia, Africa, traditional Norwegian minority groups
- ▶ Social Economic Background: A variety of social groups represented (except higher academic). Some overrepresentation of people on social security
- ▶ Most are school-drop-outs and have a problematic substance-use pattern

# Violent offending: Early-starters with a complex, high chronic pattern (i.a. Ryder)

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- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Weapon bearing: Mostly knives and bats, but also guns and pistols
- ▶ Weapon fights and threats: On streets, clubs, schools and at home.
- ▶ Gang-fights (2s have been in fights ending up with homicide)
  
- ▶ Retaliation, revenge, conflicts that get out of control (3s: consequences of threats and violence: 2 victim have died)
- ▶ Robbery: Commercial – street and home robberies
- ▶ Sexual assaults /rape
- ▶ Violent rioting (neo-nazi)
- ▶ Taking Hostages (2s: parents, police/social worker)
- ▶ Arson (2s, one of them multiple times)
- ▶ Internal violent offending: Some have been cutting themselves, a lot: self medication, run-away and leaving problematic situations. 2S left home and living “everywhere”
  
- ▶ For most: Violence are part of a broader antisocial and criminal pattern

**Conclusion: Every potential consequences of disrupting attachment-bonds described in Ryder’s model are at present in the study- sample**

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# Results

Tracing the Attachment experiences through upbringing. Do the youngsters have a disrupting attachment pattern in accordance with Ryder's model?

# Primary caregivers and social bonds: Break-ups and Chaos

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## Attachment: Primary caregivers

1. Stability: Some very few live with both biological parents who do not separate
2. Instability and chaos: The main pattern. Multiple caregivers and chaotic family relations: Mother most often main caregiver. Often experienced: 6-8 different step-fathers and step-mothers and up to 8- 10 half- and step siblings. Often not remembering them or knowing their names. Often not in touch with biological father (or mother) for years
3. Moving between multiple caregivers: Biological and step-caregivers, foster-parents, institutional caregivers

Conclusion: A.t. Ryder: T-Youngsters attachment-bonds indicate possible risk of developing later violence



# Break-up of Attachment through multiple movings

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## Attachment break-ups - Places

1. **Stability:** Some few live with both biological parents and have moved just one or two times. They have not break –up from their local-community, schools or peer-groups. Peer-group break ups happens when the youngsters start or join gangs, usually when 13-14 years of age
2. **Instability:** Most have experienced many break-ups, at the most 15 times before reaching 16 years of age. They live one year on each place. They change local community and schools and peer-groups each time

**Conclusion:** A.t. Ryder: For most the T-Youngsters: Their attachment- bonds indicate possible risk of developing later violence

# Conclusions external attachments

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- ▶ The youngsters have experienced a chaotic situation with many break-ups related to
  - ▶ Primary family
  - ▶ Foster- and institutional care
  - ▶ Local communities
  - ▶ Schools
  - ▶ Peers
- ▶ According to Ryder: This pattern will put them into a vulnerable and risky situation for later external and/or internal violent development

# Attachment quality: Healthy or disrupting bonds- Parenting Styles

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## Upbringing - styles

1. Protecting styles: Most of them report caregiving-styles not able to protect children
  1. A laissez-faire, often inconsequential upbringing-style. Caregiver are to a low degree engaged in protecting the child from harm, often because they are drugged. The child are allowed to go everywhere, be with everyone and being exposed to severe violence in the media. Some are left alone at home from early years. Some have to take care of younger siblings for longer periods
  2. A strict authoritarian /power-oriented upbringing-style that trigger off revolt. This make them seek equal kids, joining or starting gangs
  
2. Disrupting styles: About 90% report violent and harsh parenting-style
  1. They report being beaten by objects, kicked, and isolated for days in closed room or outside in the cold
  2. They report witnessing of violence towards mother, siblings and people who are visiting their home
  3. They report own violent offending towards family members

Several report the violent events have effect long-lasting traumatic internal situation that make them panic, raging or frightened, or it has create nightmares

Conclusion: T-Youngsters attachment- bond indicate risk of developing later violence



# Attachment: Someone to talk to with their problems

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- ▶ Almost none report having a biological parent to contact when in trouble for help and advice
- ▶ When they have someone to contact it is usually
  - ▶ A special social worker in an institution they have lived in
  - ▶ A special teacher they have met in school
  - ▶ A person from one of their foster-home
  - ▶ An aunt or an uncle, sometimes a grandparent
- ▶ Often they do not want to have anyone. They report not having anyone to trust and they interpret actual persons as hostile
- ▶ Only some few report that their parents are a model for them. Usually they report no one as a model

Conclusion: A.t. Ryder T-Youngsters attachment- bond indicate risk of developing later violence

# Secondary attachment- bonds: Social climate, local community and schools

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- ▶ Although local communities and schools in Norway are usually peaceful, the T-youngster experience their environment as unsafe and potentially violent
- ▶ They report fights at schools and in streets. Many bring weapons for protection, threats or attack
- ▶ They are both bullies and they get bullied at school and in local community
- ▶ Some are shut out from school and leisure-time activities, due to own violent and disrupting behavior. Most of them are truancies and school-drop-outs
- ▶ They report hostile conceptions towards groups “outside” their own group, to school authorities and specially to the Police.

Conclusion: They are not developing healthy friendship and integration with prosocial others or healthy bonds to school and community. They are not integrated into a warm and caring social climate. “ It is a barrier between me and the society. Everything outside the gang become negative and hostile”.

This may, a.t. Ryder, escalate the youngsters’ disruptive attachments and their violent patterns

Do the youngsters have a disrupting attachment pattern in accordance to Ryder's model?

- ▶ Our results are in accordance to Ryder's model. All the youngsters attachment-bond experiences may be a base for developing own violence, both external and internal
- ▶ We do not know, however, if the cluster of attachment-bond is the main explanation of violence or if it is working through other risk factors

# Samira – The Lady in the Liga





# Jamie – “The Best”

