

ANALYSIS OF THE (MAL)ADAPTIVE ASPECTS OF SADISM THROUGH ITS ROLE IN THE PACE OF LIFE SYNDROME (PoLS)

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Sadism is a part of the dark tetrad personality traits and describes a person who humiliates others, enjoying inflicting physical, psychological and sexual pain. Considering the detrimental social outcomes of sadism, it is important to understand its personal and behavioral correlates. We analyzed sadism within The Pace of Life Syndrome (PoLS) framework, which represents associations between behavior, physiology, and reproductive fitness outcomes in different environments. The hypothesis was that sadism is a part of a fast PoLS described through higher reproductive success, lower age of first reproduction, earlier onset of sexual activity, short-term mating behavior, higher body mass index (BMI), and harsher childhood environment. We assessed PoLS via the measures of reproductive success, age of first reproduction, mating behavior, partner value, jealousy, BMI, and childhood environment; sadism is measured via the scale of direct sadism from VAST inventory. The sample consisted of 475 participants and the data was collected online. Network analysis showed that sadism has direct edges with four nodes, and all associations are in line with the fast PoLS hypothesis: positive connections with jealousy and short-term mating, and the negative edges with the stability of childhood environment and the age of first reproduction. The latter edge suggests that sadism may have some adaptive benefits via earlier reproduction. Nevertheless, the positive association with short-term mating indicates its maladaptive properties, because the number of partners, further in the network, is linked with a lower number of offspring, and delayed reproduction. We can conclude that sadism may be a fast PoLS behavioral trait that shows both adaptive and maladaptive potentials, but the latter ones are more highly expressed. This is in line with the data suggesting that sadism is a construct with brutal aggressiveness at its core, closely linked to psychopathology.

Key words: sadism, Pace of Life Syndrome, fitness, mating, network analysis