

FACT SHEET

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Misopaisic Attitudes as a Contributing Factor in the Discrimination and Violence against the Girl Child Specifically in Relation to Ritual Abuse-Torture Victimization

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Ritual Abuse-Torture (RAT) Defined:

Ritual abuse-torture is about pedophilic parents, families, guardians, and like-minded adults who abuse, torture, and traffic their and others children using organizing group ritualisms coded as 'rituals and ceremonies'.

How can the Human Rights Violation of RAT Occur and Remain Unacknowledged?

Children are persons of vulnerability in need of special protection, a fact recognized by the UN in the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*. But why are children so unsafe thus in need of special protection in an adult-directed world? This question challenged us to view the relational world of children from the perspective that within adult-child relationships there must be past and present socio-cultural and relational attitudes that contribute to the many forms of violence and discrimination children suffer, harmful attitudes (and beliefs) similar to those that direct harmful behaviors against a specific group – attitudes of racism, homophobia, superiority, and misogyny for example. So what is this attitude?

The Attitude of *Misopais*:

Taken from the Greek language, we coined the word *misopais* to address the reality that there must be a historical socio-cultural and relational attitude that remains invisible today that continues to contribute to all forms of violence and discrimination against the child. *Mis* meaning hatred and *pais* meaning children; and from hatred against any specific group flows attitudes and acts based on devaluation, objectification, dehumanization, animalization* and disregard for instance. Just as misogynistic attitudes underline violence and discrimination against women globally we suggest misopaisic attitudes underline all forms of violence and discrimination against the child person. The girl child however suffers exponentially because of her gender – she experiences both misopaisic and misogynistic attitudes that contribute to the socio-cultural and relational violence and discrimination she endures.

The Ritual Abuse-Torturer

Their misopaisic attitudes are profound and expressed in acts of enslaving brutality – abuse, torture, and trafficking – that for most victimized girls and boys (not all) begins in infancy or early toddlerhood. Perpetrators have extreme levels of superiority because, to date, they function with impunity.

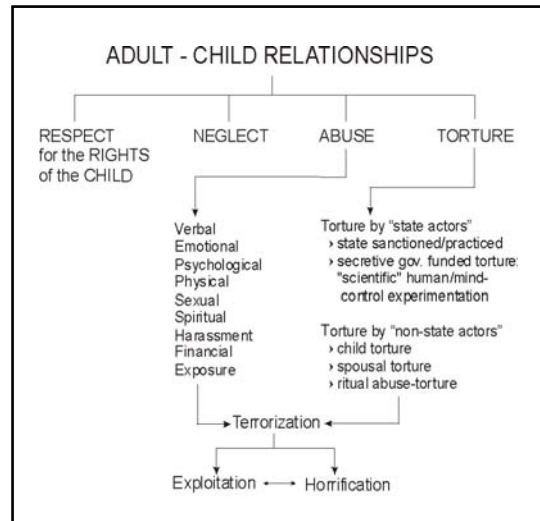
* We use this term because so many of the persons who have spoken to us about their ritual abuse-torture speak of feeling like an animal or feeling non-human.

Taking Action Taking Action

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Individuals, groups, and organizations can all foster awareness, develop educational, legal, and healing interventions about the abuse, torture, and human trafficking that occurs within the context of ritual abuse-torture victimization. Consider interventions that:

1. Develop a continuum of adult-child relationships perspective: Developing such a perspective promotes relational education that includes respect for the human rights of the child including attending to their relationship with Self while acknowledging the extensive forms of relational violence that the girl child (and boy child) can suffer including torture – ritual abuse-torture - within family/guardian/adult-child relationships. We offer this accompanying relational model as an example of a continuum perspective.



2. Recognizes emerging forms of violence including non-state actor torture: Documents must be inclusive by providing a section for emerging forms of violence that have yet to be acknowledged as a human rights violation. For example, non-state actor torture - ritual abuse-torture - was not included as an emerging form of violence in the *Report of the Expert Group Meeting*.^{*} A failure to do so could be considered discriminatory against this specific group of victimized children. And it hinders the development of healing, legal, and human rights interventions.

3. Recognizes and names abuse of power as an irreducible element associated with all or most forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child (or boy child).

4. De-sex language. Media and reports frequently refer to sexualized violence against the child as *sex-related* using descriptions such as *adults were charged with having oral sex or sexual intercourse with a child*. Adults do not have sex with a child – it is always vaginal, anal, oral, finger or object rape or assault. Educate others - write a letter to the editor in your local media.

5. Reframe misopaisic language by avoiding words or phrases such as *stop acting like a cry baby, the terrible twos, stop being so juvenile, or stop acting like a sissy girl*, these are inherently suggestive of a discrimination against and devaluation of children and children's development.

6. Challenge the parental/guardian myth that *all* parents/guardians are caring, protective, concerned, and value their child as a person with human rights.

^{*} Report of the Expert Group Meeting Organized by the Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy, 25-28 September 2006.