# The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010

*A Report Presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team*

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In June 2002 the full body of Catholic bishops of the United States in their General Meeting in Dallas approved the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. The *Charter* created a National Review Board, which was assigned responsibility to oversee the completion of the study of the causes and context of the recent crisis. The National Review Board engaged the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York to conduct research, summarize the collected data, and issue a summary report to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops of its findings.

This report by the John Jay College is authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD
General Secretary, USCCB

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# Executive Summary

This report outlines the results of an empirically based study of the causes and context of the phenomenon of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in the United States between 1950 and 2010. It is the second of two studies produced by researchers at John Jay College of Criminal Justice about sexual abuse by Catholic priests. The first study (the *Nature and Scope* study) focused on the description and extent of the problem from 1950 to 2002 and was published in February, 2004. The *Nature and Scope* study provided information about what happened, including the number of abuse incidents, the distribution of offenses geographically and over time, the characteristics of the priests against whom allegations were made and the minors they abused, the Catholic Church's response to the allegations, and the financial impact of the abuse incidents. This second study (the *Causes and Context* study) sought to understand why the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests occurred as it did by integrating research from sociocultural, psychological, situational, and organizational perspectives.

## Methodology

The research group investigated the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests using a combination of empirical approaches, both quantitative and qualitative. This work is necessarily retrospective, with research focusing first on what initiated an increase in abuse incidents in the 1960s; what caused them to reach a peak in the 1970s; and then what led to the sharp and sustained decline in incidence in the 1980s.

The comprehensive information collected in the *Nature and Scope* study shaped the investigation of the present study and served as a resource to verify results. The primary data sources for the *Causes and Context* study are as follows: (1) longitudinal analyses of data sets of various types of social behavior (for example, crime, divorce, premarital sex) over the time period to provide a historical framework; (2) analysis of seminary attendance, the history and the development of a human formation curriculum, as well as information from seminary leaders; (3) surveys of and interviews with inactive priests with allegations of abuse, and a comparison sample of priests in active parish ministry who had not been accused; (4) interview and primary data from the 1971 Loyola University study of the psychology of American Catholic priests; (5) surveys of survivors, victim assistance coordinators, and clinical files about the onset, persistence, and desistance from abuse behavior; (6) surveys of bishops, priests, and other diocesan leaders about the policies that were put in place after 1985; and (7) analyses of clinical data from files obtained from three treatment centers, including information about priests who abused minors as well as those being treated for other behavioral problems.

## Findings

No single "cause" of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests is identified as a result of our research. Social and cultural changes in the 1960s and 1970s manifested in increased levels of deviant behavior in the general society and also among priests of the Catholic Church in the United States. Organizational, psychological, and situational factors contributed to the vulnerability of individual priests in this period of normative change. The *Causes and Context* report provides data about the historical time period of the problem: the increase in incidence until the late 1970s and the sharp decline by 1985. Although no specific institutional cause for the increase in incidence was found, factors specific to the Catholic Church contributed to the decline in the mid-1980s. Analyses of the development and influence of seminary education throughout the historical period is consistent with the continued suppression of abuse behavior in the twenty-first century. The priests who engaged in abuse of minors were not found, on the basis of their developmental histories or their psychological characteristics, to be statistically distinguishable from other priests who did not have allegations of sexual abuse against minors.

### Historical and Sociocultural Context

- The "crisis" of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests is a historical problem. The count of incidents per year increased steadily from the mid-1960s through the late 1970s, then declined in the 1980s and continues to remain low. Initial estimation models that determined that this distribution of incidents was stable have been confirmed by the new reports of incidents made after 2002. The distribution of incidents

reported since 2002 matches what was known by 2002—the increase, peak, and decline are found in the same proportions as those previously reported.

- A substantial delay in the reporting of sexual abuse is common, and many incidents of sexual abuse by priests were reported decades after the abuse occurred. Even though incidents of sexual abuse of minors by priests are still being reported, they continue to fit into the distribution of abuse incidents concentrated in the mid-1960s to mid-1980s.
- The rise in abuse cases in the 1960s and 1970s was influenced by social factors in American society generally. This increase in abusive behavior is consistent with the rise in other types of "deviant" behavior, such as drug use and crime, as well as changes in social behavior, such as an increase in premarital sexual behavior and divorce.
- At the time of the peak and subsequent decline in sexual abuse incidents by Catholic priests, there was a substantial increase in knowledge and understanding in American society about victimization and the harm of child sexual abuse; changes were made in statutes related to rape and sexual abuse of children and in reporting requirements of child abuse and neglect; an understanding of the causes of sexual offending advanced; and research related to the treatment of sexual abusers was expanded.
- Features and characteristics of the Catholic Church, such as an exclusively male priesthood and the commitment to celibate chastity, were invariant during the increase, peak, and decrease in abuse incidents, and thus are not causes of the "crisis."

## Seminary Education

- When priests who abused minors are grouped by the decade of their ordination to the priesthood, each group displays a distinct pattern of behavior. The social influences can be seen in the behavior of each ordination group, or "cohort." Men ordained in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s did not generally abuse before the 1960s or 1970s. Men ordained in the 1960s and the early 1970s engaged in abusive behavior much more quickly after their entrance into ministry.
- The ordination cohorts of men entering the priesthood before 1960, and before any moderation of the regimentation of seminary life, represent 44 percent of those later accused of abuse.
- There was no evidence of any significant level of sexual activity among seminarians before the mid-1970s. The men ordained after 1975 had a lower level of subsequent abuse.
- Most priests who had allegations of sexual abuse against minors were educated in freestanding seminaries or schools of theology. They were not significantly more likely than non-abusers to attend minor seminaries or foreign seminaries.
- The development of a curriculum of "human formation" as part of seminary education follows the recognition of the problem of sexual abuse by priests. Participation in human formation during seminary distinguishes priests with later abusive behavior from those who did not abuse. The priests with abusive behavior were statistically less likely to have participated in human formation training than those who did not have allegations of abuse.
- Regular assessment of priests once they are ordained varies considerably from diocese to diocese. Evaluation processes are usually reserved for the newly ordained in the first five years after their ordination. In most dioceses, pastors are not obliged to undergo regular assessment of any substance.
- Many accused priests began abusing years after they were ordained, at times of increased job stress, social isolation, and decreased contact with peers. Generally, few structures such as psychological and professional counseling were readily available to assist them with the difficulties they experienced. Many priests let go of the practice of spiritual direction after only a few years of ordained ministry.

## Individual, Psychological Factors

- Less than 5 percent of the priests with allegations of abuse exhibited behavior consistent with a diagnosis of pedophilia (a psychiatric disorder that is characterized by recurrent fantasies, urges, and behaviors about *prepubescent* children). Thus, it is inaccurate to refer to abusers as "pedophile priests."
- Priests with allegations of sexually abusing minors are not significantly more likely than other priests to have personality or mood disorders.
- Sexual behavior in violation of the commitment to celibacy was reported by 80 percent of the priests who participated in residential psychological treatment, but most sexual behavior was with adults.
- The majority of priests who were given residential treatment following an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor also reported sexual behavior with adult partners.
- Those priests who had sexual relationships either before seminary or while in seminary were more likely to also have sexual relationships after ordination, but those relationships were most likely to be

with adults. They were not significantly more likely to abuse minors.
- Priests who had same-sex sexual experiences either before seminary or in seminary were more likely to have sexual behavior after ordination, but this behavior was most likely with adults. These men were not significantly more likely to abuse minors.
- Priests who were sexually abused as minors themselves were more likely to abuse minors than those without a history of abuse.
- Priests who lacked close social bonds, and those whose family spoke negatively or not at all about sex, were more likely to sexually abuse minors than those who had a history of close social bonds and positive discussions about sexual behavior. In general, priests from the ordination cohorts of the 1940s and 1950s showed evidence of difficulty with intimacy.

## Organizational Factors

- Prior to 1985, reports of abuse were predominantly brought forward by parents of the youths who had experienced abuse soon after the incident took place. By the mid-1990s, reports of abuse were being made by adults ten to twenty years after the incident date. In 2002, reports of abuse were more likely to be put forward by lawyers for the person who was abused, and many reports described incidents that happened thirty to forty years earlier.
- By 1985, bishops knew that the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests was a problem, but they did not know the scope of the problem. Though more than 80 percent of cases now known had already occurred by 1985, only 6 percent of those cases had been reported to the dioceses by that time.
- When allegations of abuse were made, most diocesan leaders responded. However, the response typically focused on the priest-abusers rather than on the victims. Data indicate that the majority of diocesan leaders took actions to help "rehabilitate" the abusive priests.
- There is little evidence that diocesan leaders met directly with victims before 2002; consequently, the understanding of the harm of sexual abuse to the victim was limited. As knowledge of victim harm increased in society generally in the 1990s, so did the understanding by diocesan leaders.
- In 1992, the American bishops endorsed the "Five Principles" in response to the sexual abuse of minors, but implementation of the principles was uneven among dioceses. These principles stated that diocesan leaders should: (1) respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is reasonable belief that abuse has occurred; (2) if such an allegation is supported by sufficient evidence, relieve the alleged offender promptly of his ministerial duties and refer him for appropriate medical evaluation and intervention; (3) comply with the obligations of civil law regarding reporting of the incident and cooperating with the investigation; (4) reach out to the victims and their families and communicate sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being; and (5) within the confines of respect for privacy of the individuals involved, deal as openly as possible with the members of the community.
- Diocesan leaders were more likely to respond to the sexual abuse allegations within the institution, using investigation, evaluation, and administrative leave rather than external mechanisms of the criminal law. Many of the diocesan leaders' actions were not transparent to those outside the church. This response framework, as well as the lack of transparency, is not an atypical response to deviant behavior by members of an institution.
- The procedures for formal canonical responses such as laicization, or dismissal from the clerical state, were complicated, time-consuming, and often avoided.
- The decline of abuse cases by 1985 is earlier and sharper than the decline in the levels of other deviant behaviors of the time (such as crime); contributing factors to this decline include activism by victims of abuse by priests, discussions of sexual abuse of minors at annual meetings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and evolving diocesan responses to abuse and abusers.
- Some bishops were "innovators" who offered organizational leadership to address the problems of sexual abuse of minors. Other bishops, often in dioceses where the Catholic Church was highly influential, were slow to recognize the importance of the problem of sexual abuse by priests or to respond to victims. The media often focused on these "laggards," further perpetuating the image that the bishops as a group were not responding to the problem of sexual abuse of minors.

## Onset, Persistence, and Desistance from Abuse

- Like sexual offenders in the general population, priests with allegations of abuse show patterns of behavior consistent with David Finkelhor's often-quoted four-factor model of offending: (1) motivation to abuse (often emotional congruence with the minor, as well as a blockage to [nonsexual] intimate relationships with adults); (2) overcoming internal inhibitions to abuse (through the excuses and justifications that

alleviate their sense of responsibility for the behavior); (3) overcoming external factors (by creating opportunities for abuse to occur); and (4) overcoming the child's resistance (through grooming techniques).

- It was common for abusive priests to create opportunities to be alone with minors, for example, during retreats. These men often integrated themselves into the families of the victims.
- Minors who were abused typically did not disclose their victimization; the signs of abuse were not detected by those close to them. This silence, typical of the period of the 1950s through the 1990s, is one reason why the abusive behavior persisted.
- Detection and an official report were rarely the reason for the end of an abuse incident, as reports of abuse were often made decades after the abuse occurred. The causes of desistance are complex and include a combination of factors, such as increased understanding by the victim that the behavior of the priest was wrong, others (often peers) finding out about the abuse, the victim removing him- or herself from the situation in which the abuse was occurring, and in some cases self-correction by the abusing priests.

### Situational Factors and Prevention Policies

- For abuse to occur, three factors must converge: there must be a person who is motivated to commit the act of abuse, there must be a potential victim, and there must be a lack of a "capable guardian."
- Education of potential victims, potential abusers, and potential "guardians" is essential to reduce the opportunities to abuse.
- Continued outreach to priests after ordination is important in reinforcing the knowledge and understanding about human formation.
- For diocesan efforts to be accepted by the community, they must be direct and transparent, and they must become part of the conscience of the community. Only when the policies about and responses to abuse are "routine" will the community consider them to be acceptable.

## Summary

The findings of the *Causes and Context* study indicate that few of the priest-abusers exhibited serious pathological, developmental, or psychological characteristics or behaviors that could have led to their identification prior to the commission of their abusive acts. Priests who sexually abused minors did not differ significantly from other priests on psychological or intelligence tests but had vulnerabilities, intimacy deficits, and an absence of close personal relationships before and during seminary. A very small percentage of the priests who had allegations of abuse were motivated by pathological disorders such as pedophilia. The annual count of priests who exhibited pedophilic behavior does not change during the period of study; this flat, consistent pattern is the opposite of the general pattern for the majority of incidents, which increased in the 1960s and 1970s and decreased continuously from the mid-1980s.

The majority of priests who had allegations of abuse against minors were trained in national, mainstream seminaries prior to the 1970s. These seminarians had little or no exposure to a curriculum of what is now understood as "human formation"; the training in self-understanding and the development of emotional and psychological competence for a life of celibate chastity was extremely limited. Many abusers educated in early cohorts had a "confused" sexual identity; however, this was not evident in later cohorts. Social changes paralleled the increase of sexual abuse on all cohorts of priests. The incidence of abuse allegations for all pre-1980s ordination cohorts peaked in the late 1970s.

Sexual victimization of children is a serious and pervasive issue in society. It is present in families, and it is not uncommon in institutions where adults form mentoring and nurturing relationships with adolescents, including schools and religious, sports, and social organizations. This study provides a framework for understanding not only the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, but sexual victimization of children in any institution. No other institution has undertaken a public study of sexual abuse and, as a result, there are no comparable data to those collected and reported by the Catholic Church. Other organizations should follow suit and examine the extent of sexual abuse within their groups to better understand the extent of the problem and the situations in which sexual abuse takes place. Only with such an understanding can effective prevention policies be articulated and implemented. While some sexual abuse will always occur, knowledge and understanding of this kind of exploitation of minors can limit the opportunities for abuse while also helping to identify abuse situations as early as possible.

## Chapter 1

# Context for the Study of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010

## Introduction

In January 2002, the *Boston Globe* began publishing a series of investigative articles on the sexual abuse of minors by priests in the Archdiocese of Boston. The impetus for the articles was concern about actions taken by the diocese in response to the behavior of John Geoghan, a Boston priest with a long history of accusations of sexual abuse. Cardinal Law and other bishops had allowed him to serve in multiple parishes despite the many allegations of abuse that had been made against him. The *Globe*'s series of articles in 2002, as well as the growing number of reports nationally about priests who sexually abused minors, led to the understanding that there was a sexual abuse "scandal" or "crisis" in the Catholic Church.

In response to the vast number of victims reporting abuse allegations that year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) created the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (*Charter*) in June 2002 that aimed to understand and address this problem. As part of the *Charter*, the USCCB created two entities: the Office of Child and Youth Protection (OCYP) and the National Review Board (NRB: a group of prominent lay Catholics). These two groups were to share a mandate to not only help investigate and understand the sexual abuse of minors by priests but also to recommend policies that may prevent such abuses in the future. Catholic bishops affirmed the *Charter* that, among other things, proposed a study of the sexual abuse of minors by priests. Specifically, Article 9 of the *Charter* stated in part:

> To understand the problem more fully and to enhance the effectiveness of our future response, the National Review Board will also commission a descriptive study, with the full cooperation of our dioceses/eparchies, of the nature and scope of the problem within the Catholic Church in the United States, including such data as statistics on perpetrators and victims.

As a result of the 2002 *Charter*, the OCYP and the NRB commissioned researchers at John Jay College of Criminal Justice to conduct an initial descriptive study entitled *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons: 1950-2002* ("*Nature and Scope*"),[1] which was released in February 2004. In the two years that followed, the USCCB granted John Jay College researchers access to the *Nature and Scope* database to conduct further multivariate analyses. A supplementary report was released in 2006.[2] Also in 2004, members of the NRB conducted an initial analysis of their own on the sexual abuse of minors by priests.[3] In this report, the NRB presented the findings of eighty-five interviews that board members conducted with a variety of people with knowledge of the crisis, including priests and other church leaders, lay people, psychiatrists, law enforcement officials, and lawyers.

The *Nature and Scope* study provided valuable information about *what* happened, including the extent of the abuse of minors by priests, the distribution of offenses nationally and over time, the characteristics of priests against whom allegations were made, the minors who were abused, the church's response to the allegations, and the financial impact of the crisis. What the report did not do was explain *why* this crisis occurred. The NRB report served as a preliminary analysis of the causes of abuse by priests, but in order to more fully understand the causes and context of the crisis, it was necessary to conduct a more comprehensive study.

The USCCB released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a second study in late 2004. The RFP outlined a study that would include investigation and analysis of the causes of the abuse of minors from a psychological, sociological, and organizational perspective, as well as a full account of the context of the sexual abuse of minors in the United States and in the Catholic Church. In November 2005, a team of researchers from John Jay College was chosen through a competitive process to conduct the study (hereafter referred to as the *Causes and Context* study). Research

for the *Causes and Context* study began in mid-2006, and we present the results of the study in this report.

The researchers identified five types of factors, or possible causes, for investigation: (1) general cultural factors, including the impact social changes in the 1960s and 1970s had on individual priests' attitudes and behavior and on organizational life, including social stratification, emphasis on individualism, and social movements; (2) church-specific factors, including the aftermath of Vatican II, changes in priestly formation, the impact of resignations from ministry, and changes in diocesan structures and leadership; (3) environmental factors, including changes in the patterns of parish activities, youth ministry, and changes in living situations and responsibilities of parish priests; (4) psychological factors, including psychological disorders, sexuality, past behaviors, developmental issues, and vulnerabilities of individual priests; and (5) structural and legal factors, including changes in the understanding of and legal status of certain behaviors in society.

The research team conceptualized the study in six separate but overlapping segments:

- *Social and historical context*. This segment considered the synthesis and longitudinal analysis of data on historical phenomena and social attitudes at the societal level and within the Catholic Church. Social movements, such as the sexual revolution and development of understanding about sexual victimization and harm, necessarily had an influence on those within organizations just as they did on those in the general society.[4] Through a time-series model of social and political events, it was possible to understand covariation of abuse events and reports, as well as their influence on the Catholic Church.
- *Preparation for priesthood*. This section addressed seminary education and priestly formation. Based on information from current and former seminary staff and seminarians about education, training, culture, and experience, the objective was to understand the development of priestly formation and education throughout the century and how the changes in training may have affected different cohorts of priests.
- *Psychological differences among priests*. This segment considered exploration of individual psychological differences, developmental problems, relational histories, and situational risk markers for sexual abuse behavior. Through data from clinical files of priests who sexually abused minors and those treated for other problems, it was possible to analyze psychological differences in the groups and to determine whether priests who abused minors were primarily influenced by pathology rather than other situational, developmental, or social factors.
- *Response by church leaders*. This segment comprised an evaluation of the structural and leadership factors that framed the response to the sexual abuse crisis. This section includes the comparison of a range of institutional responses to cases of abuse and an understanding of the organizational framework for understanding the abuse problem.
- *Sexual victimization of children*. This segment analyzed information about the onset, persistence, and desistance from abuse situations. This research had a particular focus on the characteristics, precipitating events, situations in which abuse occurred, duration of abusive behavior, and disclosure patterns. A particular focus of this segment was the examination of opportunities for abuse presented in situations where priests have "nurturing" or "mentoring" relationships with adolescents.
- *Situational crime prevention, policy and practice*. This segment presented an understanding of the situations in which abuse occurred. Based on all of the above components, this section provided a synthesis of individual and institutional risk factors and opportunity structures of known incidents. This section proposed prevention models, taking into consideration the extensive safe environment training that was established after 2002 and audits to ensure compliance.

To appreciate the structure of the *Causes and Context* study, it is important first to understand the key findings from the *Nature and Scope* study. These provided the framework for the research questions in the *Causes and Context* study. By utilizing the existing data from the *Nature and Scope* study in conjunction with a theoretical and microlevel analysis of the problem, researchers at John Jay College, working with a team of consultants who are experts in related fields, accepted the mandate of the USCCB to generate new knowledge of the causes and context of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in the United States.

## The Nature and Scope Study

The mandate for the *Nature and Scope* study was substantial; the USCCB wanted to know the extent of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church on a national level from 1950-2002. Any method of data collection on a project of this scope has limitations. The John Jay College researchers determined that it would be impossible to gather an adequate sample—there was simply not enough known about the problem nationally. It was decided that the best method to study this problem was to conduct a "census," or to collect comprehensive information from the records of every diocese, eparchy, and religious

institute in the United States. Though this method had restrictions, these files provided a wealth of information regarding the abusers, minors who were abused, and the financial cost of the individual cases.

The researchers developed three surveys: one asking for information about each diocese, one asking for information about every priest with an allegation of sexual abuse of a minor, and one asking for information about each incident as well as who was abused. The surveys were pre-tested, revised, and distributed to all United States dioceses and eparchies (that is, Eastern Rite dioceses). These surveys were also distributed to 140 religious orders of men. The John Jay College researchers incorporated procedures that ensured complete confidentiality for the survey respondents and for the data they transmitted. Any information about the identity of a specific diocese or individual person was removed by an independent auditor before the data were sent to John Jay College. Ultimately, 97 percent of all dioceses and eparchies responded to the survey.

## Summary Findings

The results of the *Nature and Scope* study indicated that the total number of priests with allegations from 1950 through 2002 was 4,392 out of a total of 109,694 priests who served in ministry at some point during that time. The number of accused priests is equivalent to 4 percent of priests in ministry. The majority of priests with allegations (69 percent) were diocesan priests; 4.27 percent of diocesan priests and 2.7 percent of religious priests had allegations of abuse. The number of individual reports of sexual abuse by priests made known to dioceses by early 2003 was 10,667.

### *Distribution of Incidents by Year, Region, and Size of Diocese*

The annual number of incidents of sexual abuse by priests during the study period increased steadily to a peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s and then declined sharply after 1985.[5] This temporal distribution of incidence was consistent across the fourteen USCCB-designated regions of the Catholic Church in the United States (see Chapter 2 for a map of the regions). While the overall rate of abuse was 4 percent for the United States as a whole, this figure ranged from 3 to 6 percent for dioceses in all regions. This percentage was also consistent by size of diocese, again ranging from 3 to 6 percent when all dioceses were separated into ten equal categories based on size. Although the pattern of increase in incidence is not the same in all of the USCCB regions, the marked decline in incidents of abuse from 1985 was evident in all regions. The decline, which began by 1985 in all regions, continued through 2002 (when data collection ended for the *Nature and Scope* study), as shown in Figure 1.1.

**Figure 1.1** *Nature and Scope*: Incidents of Sexual Abuse by Year of Occurrence, 1950-2002

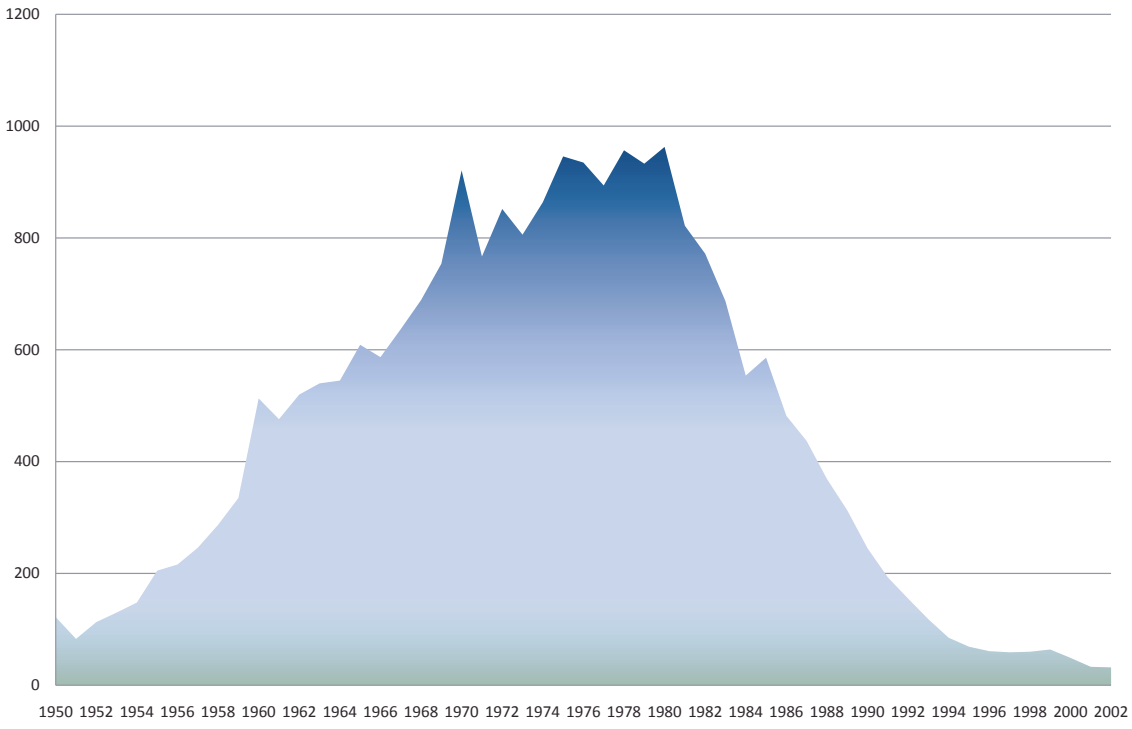


Figure 1.1 shows the count of incidents of abuse that occurred in each year between 1950 and 2002 that were known to the dioceses in 2003 and reported to the John Jay College research team in 2003 and 2004. If the abuse took place in more than one year, for example, between June of 1976 and March of 1977, it is counted as an incident in 1976 and in 1977.

Although the majority of abuse incidents had occurred by 1985, most incidents had not yet been reported to the dioceses. If only the 10,667 incidents of abuse reported in the *Nature and Scope* study are considered, 80.5 percent, or four out of five incidents of abuse, had taken place by 1985, but only 810 incidents had been reported to dioceses by that time. This discrepancy is the result of a significant delay in the reporting of most abuse incidents; one-third of all incidents known by the end of 2002 (the year the media reported widely on the abuse crisis) were reported in that year alone. Figure 1.2 shows the distribution of offenses reported in the *Nature and Scope* study between 1950 and 2002, counted and displayed in the year when the incident was reported or became known to the diocese.

Figure 1.3 displays the *Nature and Scope* data along with a count of newly reported incidents of sexual abuse of minors collected between 2004 and 2009 by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) for the USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection. Each year from 2004 to 2009, Catholic dioceses in the United States have been asked to respond to a survey and questionnaire from CARA about the reports of child sexual abuse they have received in each of these calendar years. The incidents of abuse reported annually to CARA between 2004 and 2009 were not known by the dioceses at the time of the *Nature and Scope* study. These data are shown in five-year intervals, rather than annually, because the CARA data are collected in five-year intervals. The distribution of offenses over this time period is remarkably consistent; the rate of decline between the 1980-1984 level and the 1990-1994 level for the *Nature and Scope* data is 76.4 percent compared to 77 percent in the CARA data. This decline in incidence of abuse is discussed at length in Chapter 2.

### *Abusers and Victims*

Most abusers (69 percent) were diocesan priests, and most had the duties of either pastor (25 percent) or associate pastor (42 percent) at the time of the abuse. The age of abusers ranged from mid-twenties to ninety at the time they first abused, with the largest group—40 percent—abusing when they were between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine. The majority of priest-abusers (56 percent) had one victim, though 3.5 percent of abusers were responsible for abusing 26 percent of victims who had come forward by 2002. This behavior is consistent with the criminological literature, where a small fraction of offenders are referred to as "career criminals." The generalist nature of the deviant behavior of these priests is addressed further in Chapter 3.

The majority of victims (81 percent) were male, in contrast to the distribution by victim gender for sexual

**Figure 1.2** *Nature and Scope*: Incidents of Sexual Abuse by Year of Report, 1950-2002

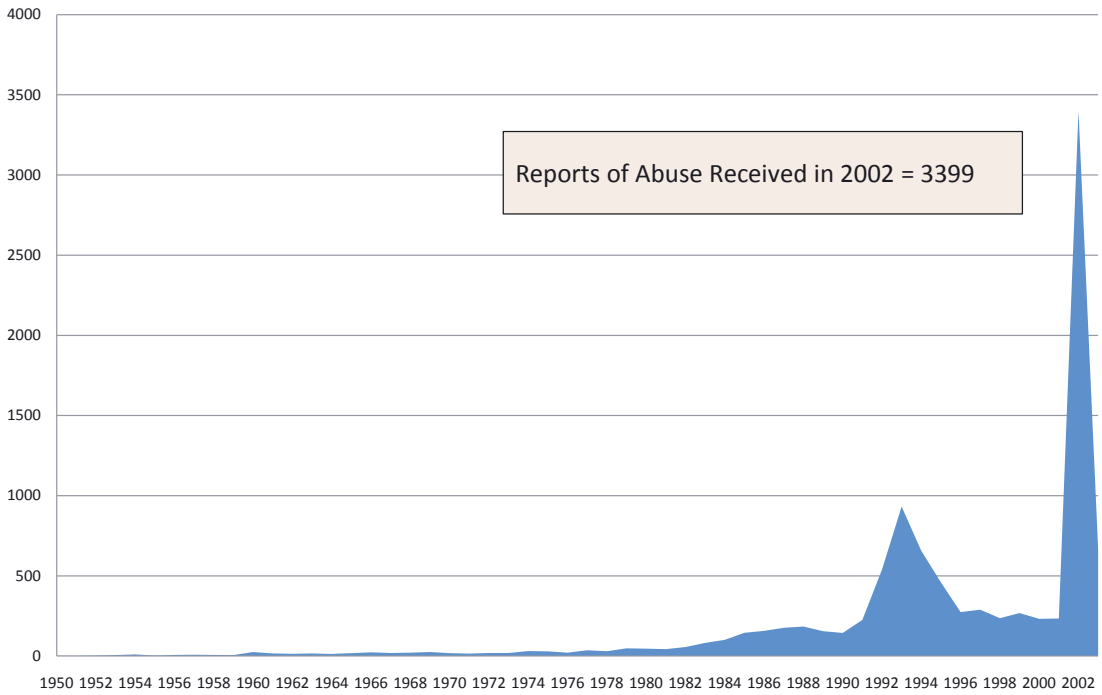
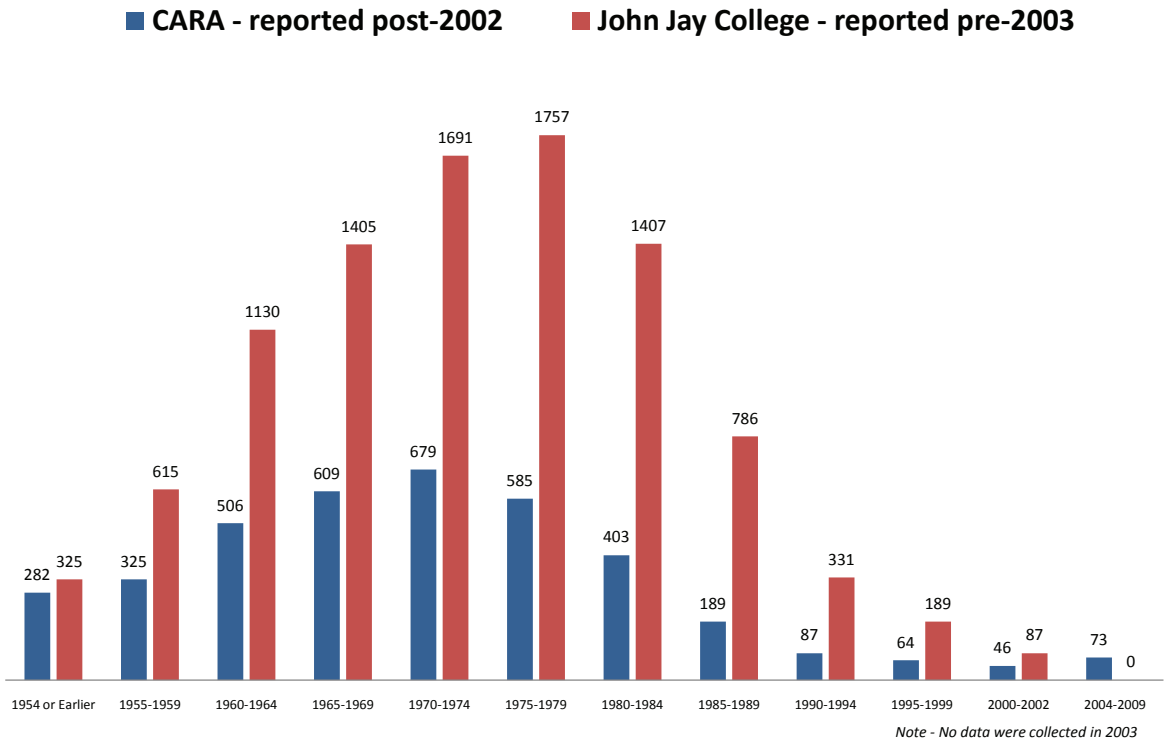


**Figure 1.3** *Nature and Scope* & CARA: Reports of Sexual Abuse from the John Jay Study in 2002 and Reports to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate after 2002




crimes in the United States. National incidence studies have consistently shown that in general girls are three times more likely to be abused than boys.[6] Despite this widely accepted statistic on victim gender, recent studies of sexual abuse of minors within institutions have shown a higher percentage of male than female victims.[7] Most sexual abuse victims of priests (51 percent) were between the ages of eleven and fourteen, while 27 percent were fifteen to seventeen, 16 percent were eight to ten, and nearly 6 percent were under age seven. Over 40 percent of all victims were males between the ages of eleven and fourteen. It is worth noting that while the media has consistently referred to priest-abusers as "pedophile priests," pedophilia is defined as the sexual attraction to prepubescent children. Yet, the data on priests show that 22 percent of victims were age ten and under, while the majority of victims were pubescent or postpubescent. Figure 1.4 shows the overall gender and age distribution of the victims from the *Nature and Scope* data.

### *Type and Location of Offenses*

Priest-abusers were accused of committing more than twenty types of sexual offenses, ranging from touching outside the clothes to penetration. Nearly all priests with allegations of abuse committed more than one type of abusive act and involved the youths in explicit sexual activity. The *Nature and Scope* data include only a few priest-abusers who committed only the most minor acts of abuse, such as sexual touching over clothes, or "fondling." The most common place for the abuse to occur was in the home of the priest (41 percent), though it also occurred with frequency in the church (16 percent), in the victim's home (12 percent), in a vacation house (10 percent), in school (10 percent), or in a car (10 percent). Understanding where abuse takes place is critical in developing prevention strategies for abuse in the future, and this topic is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

### *Diocesan Action in Response to Reports of Abuse*

Nearly 40 percent of priests with allegations of sexual abuse participated in some type of treatment program. Those with more than one allegation of abuse were more likely to participate in treatment, regardless of the severity of the offense(s) committed. Type of treatment program varied and included sex-offender specific treatment programs, spiritual counseling, psychotherapy, and general treatment programs. The church also responded in a variety of other ways, such as reprimanding the priest-abusers, giving them administrative leaves, and, less commonly, laicization. Police were contacted regarding 14 percent of abusers, though many incidents were reported after the statute of limitations had expired. Overall, 3 percent of all priests with allegations of abuse were criminally convicted and about 2 percent received prison sentences. A full analysis of actions by diocesan leadership is addressed in Chapter 4.

# Context for the Crisis

## Understanding Sexual Abuse in Society

While the *Nature and Scope* study provided a snapshot of the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, it did not explain why the Catholic Church experienced a surge in abuse incidents and a subsequent decrease. To understand this phenomenon in the Catholic Church, it is necessary to be familiar with the changing perceptions of, and responses to, sexual behavior in general. An analysis of the patterns in the Catholic Church must be situated in a broader analysis of social and societal forces in the United States over the last half of the twentieth century. Perceptions of "normal" sexual behavior are not stable over time, nor are laws governing the sexual behavior that is considered wrong. Reports of sexual abuse reflect an understanding of what acts are abusive, but also an understanding of how the victim perceives that the report of sexual abuse will be received. Rates of reporting child sexual abuse—particularly those incidents of abuse committed by a relative, close acquaintance, or other person in a position of authority over the child or adolescent—have changed dramatically over the last fifty years, increasing steadily along with the understanding of the acts of abuse.

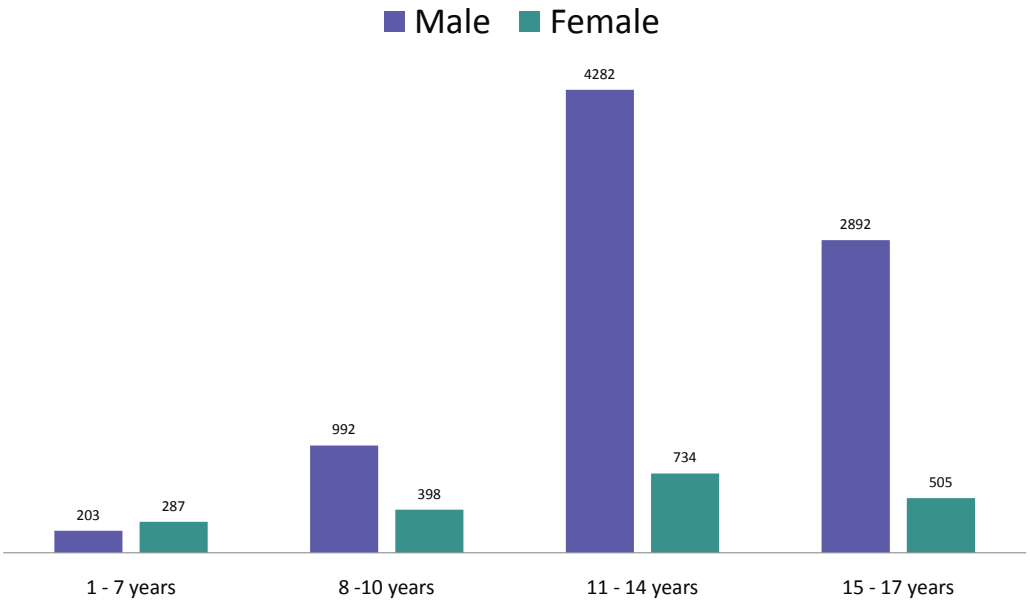
### *Historical Overview of the Problem of Sexual Abuse in the United States*

The understanding of child sexual abuse and abusers has increased progressively throughout the last century. Most of the early research on these phenomena indicates that there was little understanding of child sexual abuse or abusers, and the abusers were often studied as if they were a homogeneous group. Most of the research on sex offenders through the mid-twentieth century was conducted from a psychoanalytic or psychodynamic perspective, and the researchers often wrote about the "perverse" nature of the offenders. Nearly all of the studies on sex offenders are based on samples of convicted offenders or those who have otherwise come to the attention of authorities. While this is true of studies even today, such a practice produced a particularly skewed sample of offenders in the first half of the century when those in prisons or institutions were the most extreme sex offenders, often strangers to their victims, who used violence and who physically harmed their victims. A brief summary of the findings of these early studies is indicative of the knowledge of sex offenders at the time.[8] Though the analysis of the offenders has developed substantially since then, such early studies provided some valuable insight into the demographics of child sexual abusers, or at least those offenders who were arrested and convicted.

#### *Estimates of the Prevalence of Abuse*

An accurate estimate of the total number of children who are sexually abused by adults is elusive, and all data sources used for such estimates have their limitations. The most well-known statistics rely on official reports of abuse, and child sexual abuse is substantially underreported. There are two primary sources through which the incidence of child sexual abuse is estimated: The National Incidence Study (NIS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The NIS is a congressionally mandated effort from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to assess the overall incidence of child maltreatment in the United States.[9] Data were

**Figure 1.4** *Nature and Scope*: Victims Grouped by Age and Gender



collected in 1979 and 1980 for the NIS-1, followed by the NIS-2 in 1986 and 1987, and the NIS-3 in 1993 and 1995. The Fourth National Incidence Study (NIS-4) provides estimates of the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the United States 2005-2009 based on substantiated and *un*substantiated cases. These studies provide child, perpetrator, and family characteristics and demographical information about the nature and severity of the maltreatment, as well as the extent of changes in the incidence over time.

In order to measure the scope of child abuse and neglect, the NIS includes not only children who were investigated by Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies but also children who were not reported or who were screened out by CPS agencies. The study expanded its data by utilizing a sentinel methodology, which required community professionals to look for victims or possible victims of child abuse and neglect. The "sentinels," as they are called, are staff members who have contact with children and families in various social service contexts (such as law enforcement agencies, medical services, educational institutions, and other social services). This methodology is designed to look beyond official abuse reports and include children who come to the attention of community professionals.

The NIS-4 includes a nationally representative sample of data collected from 126 CPS agencies in 122 different counties. The 126 CPS agencies provided demographic data on all children who were reported and accepted for investigation between September 4 and December 3, 2005, and between February 4 and May 3, 2006. Data for the NIS-4 were also collected from 10,791 community professionals in 1,094 sentinel agencies. A total of 6,208 forms were collected from the sentinels, and 10,667 forms were completed on cases at participating CPS agencies.

Children were evaluated according to standard definitions of abuse and neglect as previously used in the NIS-2 (1986) and NIS-3 (1993). In order to be classified as abuse or neglect, the Harm Standard requires that an act or omission result in demonstrable harm. The Endangerment Standard includes all children who meet the Harm Standard but also includes children deemed by the sentinels in their professional opinion to be endangered or children whose maltreatment was substantiated in a CPS investigation. Only children who fit these standards of abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional) and neglect (physical, emotional, and educational) were used to generate national estimates.

According to the Harm Standard from the NIS-4, one child in every fifty-eight in the United States experienced maltreatment. The number of children who experienced physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse under the Harm Standard decreased 26 percent from the NIS-3 to the NIS-4. The estimated number of sexually abused children decreased 38 percent from the NIS-3 along with a 44 percent decrease in the rate of sexual abuse. The estimated number of physically abused children decreased 15 percent from the NIS-3 along with a 23 percent decrease in the rate of physical abuse. The estimated number of emotionally abused children decreased 27 percent from the NIS-3 along with a 33 percent decrease in the rate of emotional abuse. There were no significant changes in neglect since the NIS-3. Results showed a 57 percent decrease in the number of children for whom injury could be inferred due to the nature of the maltreatment. Overall, the NIS-4 shows a 19 percent decrease in the total number of maltreated children in the United States since the NIS-3 in 1993. This decline in incidence is significant compared to the 56 percent increase between the NIS-2 in the mid-1980s and the NIS-3 in the mid-1990s.

According to the Endangerment Standard, one child out of every twenty-five in the United States has been maltreated. Results, however, did not show any reliable change since the NIS-3. Of those who were maltreated, 29 percent of children were abused and 77 percent were neglected. Of the 29 percent who were abused, 22 percent were sexually abused. In all of the NIS reports, girls were more likely to be sexually abused than boys.

The other well-known source of information for child abuse statistics is NCANDS, a national data collection and analysis system created for the purpose of documenting the scope and nature of child maltreatment reporting.[10] The NCANDS Child File consists of case-specific data of all investigated reports of maltreatment to state Child Protective Service agencies. NCANDS defines maltreatment as an "act or failure to act by a parent, caretaker, or other person as defined under State law which results in physical abuse, neglect, medical neglect, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child."[11] Child File data are collected annually through the voluntary participation of states and include the demographics of children and their perpetrators, types of maltreatment, investigation dispositions, risk factors, and services provided.

Reports of child maltreatment are collected by social services across the United States; however, states are not required to submit data to NCANDS. The reporting agency investigates and decides whether the case of abuse is substantiated by evidence or not. Reports may contain information about multiple children, abuse types, and perpetrators. Information is not collected about the perpetrator(s) for unsubstantiated cases. Data on substantiated cases, however, include the perpetrator's gender, race, and relationship to the child. Additionally, the Child File contains information about the support services provided to the family and any problems identified for the child, caretaker, or family.

Annual data sets for calendar years from 1990 through 2002 are available from NCANDS. In 2003, the data collection period changed to fiscal years. The 2004 data set included a total of 3,134,026 records from forty-four states and Washington, DC, while the 2003 data set included 1,216,626 total records from twenty-two states and Washington, DC. The most recent available data are for federal fiscal year 2004.

Together, the NIS and NCANDS data show a high incidence of sexual abuse of children, though rates of abuse have been decreasing since the 1990s. Though not directly comparable to the data collected about abuse in the Catholic Church, the NIS and NCANDS data provide context for understanding the extent of sexual abuse in society. Using the number of allegations in the *Nature and Scope* data, it was possible to calculate a rate (index of events per 100,000 persons) of sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests and compare this to the rate of sexual abuse reported by state in the NCANDS data.

The state-level rates of child sexual abuse in 1992 range from a minimum of 87 per 100,000 children in New Jersey to a maximum of 688 per 100,000 children in Alaska. The average for forty-eight states and the District of Columbia is 246 children per 100,000.

In order to be able to calculate a similar statistic for the exposure of Catholic youth to sexual abuse by a priest of the Catholic Church, it is necessary to have the total of reported incidents occurring in a specific time period and the total number of youth who would have had contact with a Catholic priest in the same time period. There is no exact calculation of the number of children who come into contact with Catholic priests in a year. One reliable measure of contact with a Catholic priest that can be used as a proxy is the total number of confirmations in a particular year.[12] Although the number of youth confirmed in a year would be less than the total number of youth who had some contact with a Catholic priest in a given year (thus, overestimating the rate of abuse in the organization), it is stable from year to year.

In comparison to the state-level rates of abuse shown above, in 1992, there were 80 reported cases of abuse of youth by a Catholic priest, and 530,925 individuals were confirmed in 1992. The number of reports of abuse divided by the number confirmed, divided by 100,000, yields an "exposure" rate of 15 incidents of abuse per 100,000 confirmations.

The state-level statistics for reports of sexual abuse of a youth are available for 2001 as well as 1992, and show a general decline. The minimum estimate of abuse by state in 2001 is 23 per 100,000 in Arizona, and the maximum is 788 per 100,000 in Alaska. The average rate of abuse for the forty-nine jurisdictions decreased by 45 percent 1992-2001, to 134 per 100,000 children. In 2001, there were 35 reports of sexual abuse taking place in that year by Catholic priests, and 651,433 confirmations. The rate calculation yields an "exposure" statistic of 5 incidents of abuse per 100,000 confirmations in the Catholic Church. The 2001 rate of abuse represents a 56 percent decline in incidence from the 1992 statistic.

Thus, incidence of child sexual abuse has declined in both the Catholic Church and in society generally, though the rate of decline is greater in the Catholic Church in the same time period. The use of confirmations as a proxy for the number of Catholic children in contact with priests in the United States has limitations but provides a stable comparison rate by year in the Catholic Church.

### *Early Psychological Studies of Child Sexual Abusers*

Many of the early studies on child sexual abusers focused on serious offenders, often men with psychiatric problems, many of whom were driven by pathologies. Nearly all studies were based on forensic samples, thus skewing the results toward more dangerous offenders. For example, in the 1930s, Frosch and Bromberg conducted a psychological study of 709 sex offenders passing through a psychiatric court clinic in New York City.[13] Among their findings were that sex offenders had a low rate of recidivism (a finding that has consistently been replicated in contemporary studies); many were men over age forty who reported having a strong religious affiliation; alcoholism and mental deficiency were only minor factors in their offending; many of the men in this sample had a maladjusted sex life; and "pedophiles" had a higher rate of psychopathic personalities and neurotics. Apfelberg et al. studied 250 male nonpsychotic sex offenders through Bellevue Hospital, among whom two-thirds were classified as "pedophiles" or exhibitionists. [14] This investigation found that more than a quarter of the offenders were married and living with their wives at the time of their offenses, 32 percent had been previously charged with sex offenses, and 38 percent had been charged with other types of offenses. The authors of the study advocated making psychiatric examination of all sex offenders mandatory by legislative enactment.

By mid-century, the focus of research was still focused largely on the pathology of offending behavior. In his 1949 book *The Sexual Criminal*, based on case studies of extreme offenders, De River described anecdotal examples of numerous types of sex "degenerates" and "perverts." [15] He claimed that "pedophiles" were psychosexually immature, had a predilection for young children, had mental or physical handicaps, and were often shy or uneasy around adults. It was publications like this that helped develop the popular image of the sexual "pervert" at the time,

even though the stereotypes were not based upon empirical analyses.

In a study of prisoners at Sing Sing Correctional Facility in 1950, Abrahamsen found that all of the 102 sexual offenders in his sample expressed the same characteristics, including: hostility toward authority; mental disorders; the prominence of alcohol in many offenses; prior commission of sex crimes (one third of the sample had previously committed sex crimes); and the developmental delay of conscience in most offenders. [16] By the end of the 1950s, Toobert, Bartelme, and Jones published an article arguing that "pedophiles" are not always aggressive, but rather their behavior stemmed from a sense of weakness, inadequacy, or low self-regard, and that such behavior correlated with some type of family disruption during childhood.[17] Gigeroff, Mohr, and Turner analyzed three distinct groups of "pedophiles": [18] the adolescent pedophile, who is often still in puberty; the middle-aged pedophile (aged thirty-five to thirty-nine), who is usually married, shows severe marital and social maladjustment, and exhibits abusive behavior; and the senescent pedophile (aged mid-fifties to sixties), who is characterized by loneliness and social isolation, and whose abusive behavior evolves "out of a situation in which a particular child is the only one the man can emotionally relate to."[19] They noted that recidivism rates are low for most sexual offenders—between 6 percent and 8 percent—however, those with a previous sexual offense conviction had recidivism rates of 30 percent, and those with sexual and nonsexual offenses had recidivism rates of 50 percent. The three reports that were based on empirical evaluations of sex offenders were based on samples of men who had been arrested for sex crimes; these "forensic samples" of men with criminal justice system contact cannot be assumed to represent all men who commit sexual abuse of minors.

In 1957 Hammer and Gleuck studied approximately two hundred sex offenders over a five-year period at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. [20] They found consistent psychological patterns, noting that all offenders exhibited five key characteristics: a reaction to massive Oedipal entanglements; castration fear or feelings and fear of approaching mature females psychosexually; interpersonal inhibitions of schizoid to schizophrenic proportions; weak ego-strength and lack of adequate control of impulses; and concrete orientation and minimal capacity for sublimation. They noted that subgroups of offenders exhibited these characteristics on a continuum, with those convicted of rape having the lowest levels followed by those who had heterosexual contact with adolescents and children, then homosexual actions with adolescent partners, and finally homosexual actions with child partners. They explained this multilevel representation of characteristics as indicating the increasing intensity of castration feelings on the one hand, and the correspondingly greater distance from the mature female as a potential sex object on the other. However, the authors also stated that intrafamilial offenders harbored the most intense castration feelings. Though well-developed from a methodological perspective, the researchers' psychoanalytic characterization of the offenders' behaviors and their meanings was typical of the sex offender research at mid-century. It is worth noting the sophistication of (or lack of) knowledge about sexual offenders at this time, since the *Nature and Scope* and *Causes and Context* studies evaluate reports of sexual abuse from 1950 onward.

In another methodologically sophisticated research project from the mid-1960s, Gebhard and Gagnon studied sexual offenders who abused young children (and notably did not label all of the offenders pedophiles). [21] The authors stated that the regression to sexually abusing children is a function of a breakdown in control over sexual behavior that results from a current environmental stressor, and the disposition for this behavior was based on disordered childhood relationships. They did state, however, that they were not able to determine exactly what would constitute the childhood precursors of acts of sexual abuse of children.

Several mid-century studies compared groups of offenders who committed abuse against children of the same sex to those who abused children of the opposite sex. In 1962, Fitch found no significant differences between the "homosexual" and "heterosexual" offenders with respect to age at time of offense, age at first conviction for sexual offense, and intelligence. [22] However, the study found major differences in employment level, marital status, sentence decreed, and pattern of previous and subsequent convictions. This study showed that sexual recidivists were predominantly single homosexual offenders who had a history of previous convictions for sexual offenses.

### *Understanding "Normal" Sexual Behavior and Identity*

As researchers were studying sex offenders in prison mid-century, other sex researchers were studying "normal" sexual behavior. Alfred Kinsey, in two controversial reports, analyzed the prevalence of sexual acts that were considered by most to be deviant at the time, such as masturbation and same-sex behavior.[23] He discovered that a high percentage of individuals had, in fact, participated in such acts, therefore creating questions about the use of the term "deviant" for these acts. Other studies of normal sexual behavior were carried out in the next two decades,[24] which focused on determining the prevalence of certain sexual practices, such as masturbation, and on understanding how various sexual acts could add pleasure to traditional

relationships. Despite the controversy associated with the methodological flaws of the Kinsey reports and with sex research in general, this body of work was highly influential at the time and demonstrated that "normal" sexual behavior could be documented using empirical analyses.

Sex researchers also began to study issues of gender identity in the 1950s and 1960s. Notable for his work was John Money, who joined the faculty at Johns Hopkins in 1953 and studied sexual behavior for over fifty years. In 1955 he coined the term "gender role," later expanded to "gender-identity/role," and in 1966 helped establish the Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins. The clinic performed sex-reassignment surgeries, and in 1972 Money published the controversial book, *Man and Woman, Boy and Girl*.[25] In this work, he expressed the view that gender is malleable and can be altered through external factors such as prescribed hormones and behavior therapy. He used as an example the "John/Joan" case, in which he advised a Canadian couple whose son's genitals had been severely damaged in a circumcision mishap to raise the child as a female. The family acted according to this advice and allowed the child to undergo surgery to construct a vagina and to begin estrogen treatment. Money followed "Joan's" progress for five years and declared the treatment successful. However, as soon as "Joan" was informed about the treatment at the age of fourteen, he reclaimed a male identity and underwent sex reassignment surgery. In 2004, "John," who had remained troubled about his gender identity ordeal throughout his life, committed suicide. The "John/Joan" case is now perceived as a tragedy and profound ethical violation, but Money's impact in the field was substantial given that his research marked the initial steps in the study of gender—a field that is still developing today.

### *Sex Offender Typologies and Multimodal Explanations of Behavior*

By the late 1960s, researchers began creating empirically based typologies of sex offenders. Cohen et al. are principally credited with the first classification system. [26] They evaluated sixty-five child sexual abusers and rapists living in a segregated treatment center who had been identified by a diagnostic procedure and placed into a clinical, descriptive classification. They used a sociometric procedure to study differences in social effectiveness to test the usefulness of the classification. The diagnostic procedure identified three groups of "pedophiles." The first group of offenders was never able to develop "mature object relationships with peers." Conversely, these men were "socially comfortable with children." The second group was socially mature but had increased feelings of "masculine inadequacy." The third group of offenders was a "pedophile-aggressive type," and they were characterized by aggressive behavior. The "fixated/regressed" typological system created by Groth et al.[27] did not emerge for more than a decade after this first rudimentary typological system by Cohen and colleagues.

By the 1970s, the comparative research on sex offenders had become more developed. Pacht and Cowden compared "sexually deviated" offenders, defined as those who were seen to be motivated by sexual psychopathology, and "criminal code" offenders, defined as those who were not deemed to need specialized treatment. [28] They found that the sexually deviated offenders were older Caucasians who had more sex offenses and prior psychiatric treatment, were less likely to have used alcohol during their offenses, and had closer relationships with their victims over a longer period of time.

The theoretical framework for understanding sexual abuse also became more sophisticated in the 1970s. Researchers began to understand that deviant sexual behavior was not simply caused by deviant sexual attraction; rather, other factors such as cognitive distortions, poor social skills, low self esteem, weak self-concept, negative emotional attitudes, poor attachments, delayed psychosexual development, and other related issues also contributed to the likelihood of child sexual abuse.[29] In the 1980s, Finkelhor proposed a four-factor model of the preconditions of sexual abuse that integrates various theories about why individuals begin to participate in sexually deviant behavior. [30] This foundational framework addresses the full complexity of child sexual abusers, from the etiology of the abuse through the rationalizations for it. Finkelhor proposed that there are four underlying factors that act as preconditions to sexual abuse. He argues that in order to sexually abuse, an individual must: (1) have motivation to sexually abuse; (2) overcome internal inhibitions; (3) overcome external factors that may act as inhibitors to the abuse; and (4) overcome the child's resistance to the abuse. This conceptual framework remains the current basis for understanding the motivation of child sexual abuse as well as the situational factors that play a role in victimization. Researchers studying abuse from an ecological perspective have focused particularly on the third factor of this model, noting that the risk of sexual victimization can be reduced by modifying the opportunities for the abuse to occur. Potential offenders use the environment to their advantage and will not commit the abusive act if it presents too much risk, offers too little reward, or requires too much effort.

This greater understanding of individual motivations for deviant sexual behavior that began to develop in the 1970s and 1980s led to a more effective strategy for treating sexual offenders. The resultant cognitive behavioral treatment programs, in conjunction with relapse prevention programs, continue to be the most effective forms

of sex offender treatment today at reducing recidivism for most offenders. In the last decade, there has been an increased focus on reducing the opportunities for abuse through situational crime prevention strategies, both in the general society and in institutional settings.

### *The Role of Opportunity in Sexual Abuse*

As researchers of sexual abuse have developed explanations of deviant sexual behavior in the general population, sociologists of religion and other academic researchers within the Catholic Church have published accounts and overviews of the problem of child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church from a variety of theoretical perspectives. However, as Keenan[31] points out, published works fail to address the problem in all its complexity. In particular, they focus on perceived individual-level risk factors such as homosexuality or celibacy but fail to acknowledge the organizational and institutional contributions to the root of the problem. Father Keenan calls for discussion of the crisis of authority, the clerical subculture, the declining and aging clerical population, the lack of a role of lay people and women in the church, the relationship between bishops and priests, and the lack of hierarchical or democratic accountability.

This focus on organizational explanations for the crisis does not exclude the possible existence of "rotten apples," the colloquial term for deviant individuals who may elude even the most sophisticated of the exclusionary criteria for acceptance into the ministry. There are two ways to address the risks posed by such individuals. The first is to develop a greater understanding of offender risk factors based on the understanding of individual differences in child sexual abusers within the church. The *Nature and Scope* study began to address this issue, and the *Causes and Context* study continues to analyze the psychological and boundary problems of offenders as well as their grooming and socialization behavior toward their victims.

A second way to understand the possibility of abusive behavior is to apply routine activities theory, which argues that crime can be prevented simply by reducing the opportunity for deviant behavior. Routine activities theory posits that in order for a predatory crime to occur, three elements (the "crime triangle") must be present at the same time and in the same space: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from happening. In other words, this theory does not address the reason for the motivation to abuse someone sexually; rather, it addresses the opportunity structure of crime. Situational crime prevention strategies are opportunity-reducing measures directed at highly specific forms of crime and involve the management, design, or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent a way as possible in order to make crime more difficult, riskier, less rewarding, or less excusable for a wide range of offenders. As Clarke notes, "The lesson is that the limits of situational prevention should be established by closely analyzing the circumstances of highly specific kinds of offences, rather than by theoretical arguments about the presumed nature of motives for broad categories of crime such as sexual or violent offences." [32]

In what appears to be the first study looking at situations of sexual abuse instead of the psychology of the offender, Erlanson mapped the locations of sex offenses and the residences of corresponding offenders. [33] He found that in eighty-five out of one hundred cases, the sex offender lived in the same neighborhood in which the offense was committed. Later, Gigeroff, Mohr, and Turner also studied the situations in which abuse occurred and found that in cases of child sexual abuse, the location of abuse is usually an environment close to the child (be it his or her home, the home of the offender, or the home they share). [34]

The combination of routine activities theory and situational analysis creates an important theoretical construct that acknowledges that there will always be some people motivated to abuse children, but prevention strategies can be effective regardless of motivation. This framework is particularly important in the cases of sexual offending against children because, as noted in the *Nature and Scope* study,[35] there are many types of situations that were exploited by abusers.

## Understanding Sexual Abuse in Youth-Serving Organizations

Since 2002, much of the focus on child sexual abuse by the media has been on the Catholic Church. However, the available evidence suggests that sexual abuse in institutional settings, such as churches, schools, or child care facilities, is a serious and underestimated problem, although it is substantially understudied. Gallagher reported that 3 percent of social service referrals are for claims of sexual abuse by an authority figure within an institution, with the most prevalent institutional abusers being teachers, clergy, scout leaders, tutors, and social workers.[36] Abusers in these settings are generally understood to be employees or volunteers having some authority over children.[37] Data on abusers in institutional settings is limited, and most have come from social services, law enforcement agencies, and journalists rather than from the institutions themselves. No organization has undertaken a study of itself in the manner of the Catholic Church in the *Nature and Scope* and *Causes and Context* studies. Moreover, most literature is theoretical in nature, and the studies that are available

tend to be small in scope. As such, it is impossible to accurately compare the rate of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church to rates of abuse in other organizations. Nonetheless, it is useful to review what is known about the various organizations to provide context for the incidence of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church.

Of particular concern is the notion that some individuals choose to work in youth-serving organizations so that they can abuse children. In a study of the situational aspects of child sexual abusers, Wortley and Smallbone found that 20 percent of extrafamilial offenders reported having accessed children via an organized activity, with some 8 percent having joined a child or youth organization for the primary purpose of perpetrating a sexual offense. [38] Colton, Roberts, and Vanstone found in their study that adult male abusers were attracted to particular positions within educational institutions or voluntary organizations that would afford them easy access to potential victims and allow them to maintain the abuse without being detected. [39] Sullivan and Beech, in a study of forty-one "professional" perpetrators, found that 15 percent reported having specifically picked their profession to access children while 41.5 percent reported that access to children was at least part of their motivation for having selected their profession. [40] Indeed, over 90 percent of the abusers studied were reported to have been aware of their sexual attraction to children prior to having begun their professional careers. Sullivan and Beech also found that abuse by religious leaders was more common than that committed by teachers or child care professionals. [41] However, the authors observed considerable crossover in roles; many religious professionals worked in a teaching capacity while teachers worked in residential or religious settings. Pertinent findings about the sexual abuse of children in specific institutions are outlined below.

### *Schools*

The most substantial report summarizing knowledge of sexual abuse by educators was written by Charol Shakeshaft in 2004, in which she stated that "educator sexual misconduct is woefully understudied."[42] In this report, Shakeshaft synthesized the statistics and results of the existing literature on sexual misconduct in schools. Drawing upon, in her own words, the "limited research that is available in this area,"[43] she found that physical, verbal, and visual forms of sexual misconduct are widespread in schools. The most thorough of studies that she drew upon was that by American Association of University Women (AAUW),[44] a study that showed that nearly 7 percent of students in grades eight to eleven experienced an unwanted sexual contact, with 21 percent of these unwanted contacts reportedly perpetrated by educators. Importantly, specific job characteristics were associated with a higher rate of abuse; teachers whose jobs involved individual time with students, such as coaches or music tutors, were more likely to abuse.

The Shakeshaft report is an excellent first step forward in understanding the prevalence and incidence of sexual misconduct within schools. However, the limitations of the report are substantial and indicative of the difficulty in studying this problem within schools. The limitations are chiefly a result of having used small samples of clinical or interview data, or of surveys conducted in ways that limit their generalizability. An additional methodological problem for those who study sexual behavior is the lack of stable definitions of sexual misconduct and sexual abuse. Responses to questions vary depending on how a question is framed, making any meaningful summaries difficult if not impossible.

### *Child Care Settings*

The findings of a number of studies published in the last two decades reported that a significant proportion of sexual offenses occurred in the context of day care or other child care settings.[45] Finkelhor and Williams, who conducted an empirical study that evaluated substantiated claims of sexual abuse in 270 center-based and family-based day care institutions, found that these institutions yielded 1,639 victims and 382 abusers between 1983 and 1985.[46] The authors estimated that 5.5 out of every 10,000 children enrolled in day care centers and 8.9 children out of every 10,000 children in families are reported to be sexually abused. Particular situational elements, including low staff presence, have been found to be related to the occurrence of abusive acts in institutional settings.[47] Moulden et al.[48] found that age (<25) and being single were risk factors for child sexual abuse perpetration among nonfamilial child care providers. Abusive acts were also more likely to take place in informal care settings than in formal care settings, consistent with the findings of Margolin.[49]

### *Boy Scouts of America*

In 1991, journalist Patrick Boyle investigated the confidential files of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), publishing his findings in a five-part series in *The Washington Times* as well as in his 1994 book, *Scout's Honor: Sexual Abuse in America's Most Trusted Institution*.[50] According to BSA records, 416 male Scout employees were banned between the years of 1971 and 1989 as a result of sexual misconduct. Boyle found that 1,151 cases of sexual abuse were reported within this time period. The Boy Scouts had one million adult volunteers and four million Scouts (including Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc.) during this time period. The majority of the victims were believed to have

been Boy Scouts, who typically range in age from eleven to seventeen. Boyle found that Scoutmasters perpetrated the majority of the abuse, but Assistant Scoutmasters, of which there were roughly 147,000, were also responsible. Further, Boyle reported that most of the abuse occurred during camping trips. The Scouts claimed that sexual abuse in this organization was not a major crisis, but Boyle argued that sexual abuse is more common in Scouting than accidental deaths and serious injuries combined.

Boyle also discussed the impact of the abuse on the victims through individual narratives. Given that the information in confidential files is limited, the effects of the abuse on children are unknown. However, Boyle asserted that out of the approximately four hundred abuse cases he investigated, four victims attempted suicide and at least three leaders who were charged with abuse also made suicide attempts.

More than fifty lawsuits were filed against the Scouts by families of boys who were abused prior to the introduction of its Youth Protection program. Boyle claims that the organization has paid at least fifteen million dollars in order to settle cases out of court, with payments ranging from $12,000 to $1.5 million. Of particular interest is the case of *Doe v. Goff* in 1999,[51] in which a victim filed a lawsuit against his abuser, the Boy Scouts, and the Rainbow Council of Boy Scouts, the latter two of which he claimed were negligent in their investigation of Goff's moral fitness and in implementing appropriate child protection programs. However, the court decided that the organizations were not negligent and should not be held liable for the abuse. The majority opinion stated that the organizations could not reasonably have foreseen the abuse, that the overwhelming majority of Boy Scout leaders are not sexual predators, and that the organizations' subsequent implementation of child protection programs did not render them liable for the abuse.

Conversely, in a civil trial in April 2010 an Oregon jury awarded the largest known verdict in the history of the BSA, $18.5 million, to a former Scout.[52] In this case, the BSA was found liable for allowing a former Assistant Scoutmaster to continue to work with children after the abuser admitted to molesting seventeen boys. During the trial, it came to light that the BSA began keeping records detailing sexual abuse within the organization soon after its inception in 1910; this represents the largest compilation of known or suspected records of child sexual abusers, with an estimated six thousand files.[53] As a practice the BSA does not release detailed statistics on child sexual abuse.[54] The majority of such cases are settled out of court to ensure that the files are kept confidential.[55] One news report estimated that the BSA settled sixty similar cases out of court recently.[56] Also revealed during the trial was the fact that between 1965 and 1985 the BSA had classified 1,600 individuals as "unfit" to work with children.[57] This number is much larger than Boyle uncovered in his 1991 investigative report.

In cooperation with experts in the field of sexual abuse, the Scouts developed an extensive training program that is meant to raise the awareness of both children and Scoutmasters. This program is similar to the Safe Environment program for priests, lay staff, and volunteers in the Catholic Church. The BSA now has a requirement that all employees and volunteers must pass a background check in order to be employed by or work with the organization. Additionally, among other protections for youth, there now exist internal policies requiring a minimum of two adults at every event and prohibiting adults from being left alone with individual Scouts.[58] The BSA has been criticized, however, for not making their youth training program mandatory,[59] and their recently implemented policies prohibiting homosexual Scout leaders have come under scrutiny by various civil rights organizations.

### *Big Brothers Big Sisters*

Big Brothers Big Sisters, an organization providing mentorship to economically disadvantaged youths, has also experienced incidents of sexual abuse. No empirical data on sexual abuse in this organization exist, but a database search of major newspapers revealed six published incidents between 1973 and 2001.[60] In 2002, the organization's president reported that Big Brothers Big Sisters receives fewer than ten allegations of sexual abuse per year in an organization that matches 220,000 children with mentors.[61] Another representative stated that almost half of the allegations end in conviction or an admission of guilt.[62] Despite a reported decline in the number of incidents within the organization, several more incidents have surfaced in the media within the last decade.

Of particular interest is the case of *Doe v. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*,[63] in which the plaintiff claimed ongoing sexual abuse by his mentor while enrolled in a Big Brothers program operated by a Chicago affiliate of the national organization. The national organization was sued for negligent hiring practices and supervision. The court ruled that the national organization was not liable given that the organization's hiring and supervision policies and procedures (including child-protection policies) were not mandatory, but merely recommendations. A similar decision was reached regarding the organization's liability in a child sexual abuse case in New York, *Lamarche v. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*.[64]

As cited in Boyle,[65] Donald Wolff reviewed one hundred allegations of sexual abuse in the Big Brother Big Sister organization and determined that, much like in the Boy Scouts of America, the majority of offenders were single and came from various professions. These results were

based on an unpublished study commissioned by the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization that was subsequently presented at an interorganizational conference. The sexual abuse ranged from inappropriate touching to other sexual acts, and the most common situational contexts for the abuse were camping trips and visits to the abuser's house. Offenders also appeared to target emotionally vulnerable children. Once criminal charges were filed, Wolff found that such charges often led to confessions or convictions. Further, Wolff's review showed that many of the abusers were also involved in educating and counseling children in other child-serving organizations such as the Boy Scouts. In light of these findings, Big Brothers Big Sisters has instituted a strict screening process that involves a criminal background check for all employees and volunteers.

### *Athletic Organizations*

Since the mid-1980s, athletic organizations have engaged in a number of studies of sexual abuse in sports.[66] Research suggests that abuse is most often perpetrated by coaches,[67] but Bringer et al. caution that other authority figures may also abuse, such as sports medicine professionals, sports psychologists, and officials of the organization. In the first major study of the issue, Kirby and Greaves examined sexual harassment and abuse among 1,200 current and former Canadian Olympians. [68] They found that 8.6 percent of respondents had experienced forced sexual intercourse with an authority figure in their sport, and 1.9 percent (n=5) of victims were younger than sixteen years of age at the time of abuse. Differences in definitions of abuse as well as methodological approaches all contribute to the difficulty in accurately predicting prevalence and incidences of child sexual abuse within sporting organizations.[69]

However, a review of media reports shows that sexual abuse incidents can occur in a variety of sport settings (for example, swimming, basketball, baseball, track and field, football, soccer, hockey, and gymnastics). Typically the abuses are committed by someone involved with a school, either as a teacher, coach, or principal.[70] Most of the abusers identified had abused between ten and twelve alleged victims. Socialization with the family appeared to be a common "grooming" tactic,[71] often making detection difficult.[72] Brackenridge found that athletes often did not identify or define abusive behavior as such until years later. Furthermore, she found that victims were reluctant to report abuse out of fear of their coach or the possibility of being blacklisted from their sport.[73] Brackenridge likened the power of a coach to that of a priest whose absolute knowledge is not questioned or challenged.[74]

USA Swimming, the governing body for competitive swimming in the United States, has recently been criticized as a result of several cases of sexual abuse that have recently surfaced. However, The executive director of USA Swimming denied widespread child sexual abuse within the organization.[75] During a prime time ABC television interview, he acknowledged that thirty-six swim coaches were banned over the last ten years due to sexual misconduct,[76] but this number represents 0.3 percent of the 12,000 coaches active during that time period.[77] Allegations of misconduct ranged from videotaping athletes who were showering to sexual intercourse. USA Swimming has been criticized for failing to act on reports of abuse and conspiring to cover up allegations for fear that its public image would be tarnished.[78] In the midst of lawsuits and media attention, USA Swimming put forward a plan to protect swimmers, partnering with the Child Welfare League to develop new safeguards to prevent abuse.[79] Nevertheless, the organization has been sharply criticized for not acting swiftly or aggressively enough.[80]

### *Professional and Legal Remedies*

In a study of institutions and organizations serving youth, Gallagher[81] notes that institutional abuse is a principal concern among policy makers, practitioners, and the public. The study outlines preventative steps to be taken as a preferable approach to the issue. Hanson[82] and Moulden et al.[83] advise screening applicants for positions of trust as a way to prevent sexual abuse in youth-serving organizations, noting that standard police checks may be insufficient given that criminal histories are uncommon among professionals.[84] In light of the impact of contextual factors such as access to children, Hanson[85] suggests that screening techniques should consider the match between individual characteristics and risks inherent in the position or context.

State legislatures and courts across the United States have sought to protect minors from individuals who abuse their positions of authority; such protection has emerged by implementing legal proceedings and statutes.[86] These "position of authority" statutes and other legal changes take many forms. Some states consider sexual contact an offense despite the victim being of legal age to consent whereas others consider it an aggravating factor. A number of states categorize such actions as both an aggravating factor and a separate offense. States also vary in their definitions of what constitutes abuse of authority. Some require evidence of coercion, but some individuals automatically qualify just by virtue of the position they hold. The variety in statutes is indicative of the complexities and delays in reporting sexual abuse committed by people who hold positions of authority. [87]

## Understanding Sexual Abuse in Religious Institutions

Though the media has widely reported on the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests, child sexual abuse also occurs in other religious organizations. Despite this, no other religious organizations have conducted a methodologically sound study of this problem within their institutions nor had an independent audit of policy compliance. The information that currently exists in the public press, on personal websites, and in other reports is summarized below.

### *Protestant Denominations*

The Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies estimates that 224,000 churches could be classified as Protestant.[88] Only limited data are available from these churches because of the autonomous organizational structures and varied reporting systems among different denominations, which makes estimating the extent of child sexual abuse within all Protestant churches very difficult. Nevertheless, in 1996, Jenkins published a book entitled *Pedophiles and Priests*, in which he reported that 10 percent of Protestant clergy have been involved in sexual misconduct, of whom about 2 or 3 percent are child sexual abusers.[89] More recent statistics have been reported in the news media from three insurance companies that provide liability coverage to approximately 165,000 Protestant churches in the United States.[90] The insurers estimate that Protestant churches receive upwards of 260 reports annually of sexual abuse by clergy, church staff, volunteers, or congregation members from persons eighteen years of age or younger.[91]

Two of the three insurance companies released information regarding legal claims.[92] GuideOne reported that on an annual basis, over the past five years, their companies paid approximately $4 million for child sex abuse and sexual misconduct settlements, excluding attorney fees. Brotherhood Mutual reported about $7.8 million in claims has been paid in the last fifteen years for sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse. While these estimates provide some indication of the monetary cost of abuse within the organization, the figures do not give any indication of whether or not the accused was found guilty by the legal system or the church.

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) originated as a support group by Catholics for abuse victims of Catholic priests. However, SNAP has developed into a national movement of support for victims of sexual abuse by any church leader and, more recently, all victims of sexual abuse by any person in a position of authority. Reformation.com, although not affiliated with SNAP, catalogs newspaper articles about Protestant ministers alleged to have sexually abused children. As of July 2010, 838 ministers were listed on the website.[93]

### *Southern Baptist*

The Southern Baptist church represents the nation's largest Protestant denomination.[94] The Baptists gained attention in 2008 because of their failure to implement a "pedophile" database to keep track of accusations of abuse against ministers and church officials. *Time* magazine labeled this inaction as one of the top ten underreported news stories in 2008, and stated that "while the headlines regarding churches and pedophilia remain largely focused on Catholic parishes, the lack of hierarchical structure and systematized record keeping in most Protestant churches makes it harder not only for church leaders to impose standards, but for interested parties to track allegations of abuse."[95]

SNAP advocates who argue for better oversight of sexual abuse within the Southern Baptists claim that autonomy is an excuse.[96] The website, StopBaptistPredators.org, a SNAP affiliate, currently tracks the names of ministers that have allegedly committed sexual misconduct against children and acts as an information and resource center for interested parties.

### *Episcopal*

The Episcopal Church has promulgated its detailed policies regarding responses to child sexual abuse.[97] Such publication of the church's policies was spurred by a 1991 event in which a Colorado woman accused an Episcopal diocese and presiding bishop of concealing sexual misconduct by her priest; the church was found liable and paid $1.2 million to the victim.[98] Though this case involved sexual misconduct with an adult victim, the church responded by establishing formal policies on all types of sexual abuse, including but not limited to training, guidelines, videos, and discussion of abuse. The Episcopal Church requires that all priests, staff, and laity who work with children participate in this program. Furthermore, the church reports the names of priests suspended or dismissed in their annual yearbook and informs congregations of misconduct by priests. The Episcopal Church's policies and enforcement surrounding child sexual abuse have served as models for other mainline Protestant denominations, including Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans.[99]

### *Jehovah's Witnesses*

The sexual abuse policies of the Jehovah's Witnesses were described in 2003 by Laurie Goodstein, a reporter for the New York Times.[100] Goodstein revealed that Jehovah's Witnesses' policies are largely based on biblical standards; allegations of sexual abuse are brought before a panel of male elders who review the case privately. Reports may be substantiated in one of two ways: the child has two witnesses to verify his or her account or the abuser admits his or her actions. In the latter case, if the abuser repents,

the congregation is notified that the individual has been disciplined, although the reason remains confidential. Elders then report the abuser to the Jehovah's Witnesses Headquarters in Brooklyn, where the abuser's name will be placed in a database and the abuser will be banned from serving in positions of authority. It is not mandatory in all states that such information be reported to the police. Current Jehovah's Witnesses policy dictates that after twenty years and no additional confirmed reports of abuse, the abuser can be reappointed to authority positions within the organization.[101]

A support website for victims of sexual abuse by Jehovah's Witnesses, www.silentlambs.org, reports that the names of people accused or found guilty of child abuse are listed in the Jehovah's Witnesses database. Information recorded includes details of the abuse, age of victim and abuser, whether the abuse was reported to secular authorities, and the actions of the elders. Estimates based on the data indicate that one in four congregations could house a child sexual abuser.[102]

Critics and former Jehovah's Witnesses members, many of whom have been expelled for speaking out against child sexual abuse policies, contend that current policies protect abusers.[103] The victims' website has collected more than five thousand witness statements, primarily from girls and young women, asserting that the church had mishandled child sexual abuse cases that were filed against adult congregants and elders. In 2007, MSNBC reported that Jehovah's Witnesses settled nine lawsuits that alleged their policies shielded men who sexually abused children over the course of many years.[104] The church settled the lawsuits for an undisclosed amount without admitting wrongdoing; news reports disclosed that one victim received $781,250.[105]

### *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—Mormons*

The scope of child sexual abuse within the Mormon faith is unknown. While news reports have indicated that annotations in computerized confidential personnel files are made, no estimates of the prevalence of abuse have been released to the public.[106] Critics claim that religious beliefs and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) have kept child sexual abuse away from the public eye. Nonetheless, a news report in the *Salt Lake Tribune* claimed that rates of child sexual abuse within their ranks are comparable to the rest of the United States in general.[107]

In 1995, Gerdes et al. conducted a retrospective study of seventy-one adult Mormon women who were survivors of childhood sexual abuse.[108] Of the sixty-one who reported their abuse to church leaders, forty-nine said the experience of coming forward was a negative one. The victims described their bishops as judgmental, unbelieving, or protective of the abusers. Fifty percent felt guilt or frustration when they were admonished by church leaders to forgive the abusers. Five of the women were either disfellowshipped (denied the privileges of praying and speaking publicly at church) or they were excommunicated for behavior related to their abuse. Of the eighty reported Mormon abusers, only three were disciplined. Some abusers remained priests, maintained leadership positions, or continued in good standing even after they were legally convicted.

More than forty plaintiffs have alleged that Mormon officials knew of abuse or ignored the warning signs and failed to notify the families or authorities.[109] With just over eleven thousand congregations in the United States, an attorney for the Mormons, Von G. Keetch, reported that in the past ten years there have been three or four lawsuits annually; this amounts to allegations in roughly 0.5 or 0.4 percent of the wards, or units of church governance, each year.[110] Since 1989, LDS has provided training for their ministers, who are all lay members, and distributed flyers on child sexual abuse.[111] Additionally, in 1995 LDS established a 24-hour hotline for bishops to access information and advice on child sexual abuse allegations.[112] The hotline is staffed by experienced therapists familiar with child sexual abuse reporting law.[113]

### *Jewish Community*

Reports of sexual abuse are surfacing with regularity and frequency in the Jewish community.[114] Two sexual abuse survivors' organizations have been formed in the Jewish community: The Awareness Center[115] and Survivors for Justice.[116] The Awareness Center lists names of 107 rabbis accused of sexual misconduct and 279 other trusted officials (for example, parents and counselors), as well as 85 unnamed abusers. Though not identifying specific cases, the Survivors for Justice website notes that "the sexual abuse of children is at alarming proportions within our community."[117]

The Orthodox Jewish culture disapproves of involving secular agencies in family and business matters.[118] Strict adherence to this policy has helped to keep child sexual abuse out of the criminal justice system; instead, it is brought for investigation to rabbinical courts.[119] These institutionally protective practices mean that abusers are not formally investigated, prosecuted, or punished for their crimes and that there are no reliable statistics on the prevalence of child sexual abuse within the Orthodox Jewish community.

The lack of transparency has not kept researchers from investigating child sexual abuse within the Orthodox Jewish community. A case study by Neustein and Lesher[120] of alleged child sexual assault within the Orthodox Jewish community describes the context of alleged

abuse including the roles of religious and secular authorities. A retrospective study conducted by Yehuda et al.[121] found that 26 percent of respondents, self-identified as observant Jewish women, reported sexual abuse and 16 percent reported that the abuse occurred before the age of thirteen. However, these studies are based on small and nonrandom samples and cannot be considered a basis for estimating the overall problem of sexual abuse in Orthodox Jewish communities.

News articles and studies provide some insight into why Orthodox families do not report child sexual abuse to secular authorities. Reasons for the lack of reporting in this group include: strong community pressure to remain quiet; fear that the report would bring shame to their community and tarnish their family reputation; concern stemming from the stigma of abuse and concern about social ostracism following reporting; and denial, as well as repercussions for the entire family, such as prospects for marriage and employment.[122] The Brooklyn District Attorney's Office has come under attack for not actively pursuing abusers within the Orthodox community.[123] As a result, the Brooklyn office implemented a radio program, Voice of Justice, which encourages victims to report abuse. The office conducts outreach to schools and community centers to discuss abuse[124] and has put in place a hotline for Orthodox sex abuse victims.[125] As a result of this recent outreach to Orthodox victims of sexual abuse, twenty-six men were tried in 2009 and eight were convicted.[126]

## Understanding Sexual Abuse within Families

Though the perpetrators of sexual abuse are often those who have developed relationships with children through institutions and organizations, it is also common for the abuser to be a family member of the victim. Some researchers, for example Blanchard,[127] have stated that many similarities are found between the abuse of a minor by a family member and the abuse of a minor by a priest. Blanchard suggests that both types of victims are affected by issues of power, trust, authority, intellectual and educational differences, idealization, and vulnerability. Additionally, the priest often serves as a father figure to children and adolescents, and the priest remains in the lives of minors for many years.

Research on intrafamilial sexual abuse, like the research on sexual abuse in organizations, adds to the situational explanations of abusive behavior rather than explanations of sexual abuse as pathologically driven. Though few studies have directly compared intrafamilial and priest-offenders, it is helpful to review what is known about intrafamilial offenders to help frame our understanding of priest-abusers, given the similarities noted above between the two groups.

Much of the research on intrafamilial offenders compares this group of abusers to pedophiles, extrafamilial child molesters, violent offenders, or another control group. Overall, studies have generally found that intrafamilial offenders have a lower risk of reoffending than other groups of offenders, they tend to be older and more educated, and they are as, or more, receptive to treatment than other offenders.[128] This comports with Haywood's research, in which he found that clergy sex offenders are older and more educated than are lay sex offenders.[129] Many studies have found that alcohol and/or substance abuse is common among intrafamilial offenders, and intrafamilial offenders are more likely to be alcoholics than pedophiles.[130] Family tensions and negative affective states are also common in the intrafamilial groups. According to Hanson et al., intrafamilial offenders are less likely than other types of sex offenders to reoffend.[131] Similarly, priest-abusers are more likely to have a single victim than to have multiple victims.[132]

Langevin and Watson studied 122 cases of intrafamilial sexual abuse of daughters by fathers and stepfathers. [133] They found that while most offenders had only one victim, the offenders showed high rates of anxiety, had problematic family backgrounds, and showed confused thinking. In a small sample of intrafamilial offenders, Hartley found that participants grew up feeling distant from their parents and were commonly rejected by at least one parent.[134] Most offenders in Hartley's study were abused either physically or emotionally and experienced unstable childhoods. Before they began sexually offending, most offenders reported feeling stress in their lives due to jobs or relationships, and some were experiencing problems with alcohol or self-esteem. Moreover, offenders did not have sexual relations with their partners as often as they wanted and had become dissatisfied with the relationship. Some stated that sex was important to them and started to have sexual contact with their daughter to fulfill the desire. Similarly, Miner and Dwyer found that incestuous fathers who engaged in sexual behaviors with their daughters perceived them as being second wives and expected them to respond as such.[135] Further, Hanson found that some intrafamilial offenders, mostly those with a stepdaughter victim, considered their abuse to be an affair.[136]

The link between intrafamilial offenders and alcohol abuse has been consistent among several studies. Lang et al. examined aggressive behaviors and erotic attraction to females at various ages among a group of intrafamilial offenders, heterosexual pedophiles, violent offenders, and a group of volunteers from the community.[137] The authors found that intrafamilial offenders were more likely to engage in alcohol abuse. They also found that

intrafamilial offenders were older and often got angry or yelled at the victims to assume control, yet rarely resorted to violent physical behavior. Erickson et al. noted differences between fathers and stepfathers who committed acts of sexual abuse; the biological fathers who abused their children were more likely to have anger and marital problems, be hostile, and have passive-aggressive personalities, whereas stepfathers were more likely to be alcoholics, not care about others' feelings, and have a tendency to act out.[138]

Some researchers have studied the link between psychopathy and type of child sexual abuser, with consistent findings that intrafamilial offenders were the least likely group of child sexual abusers to show signs of psychopathy. Firestone[139] found a negative relationship between psychopathy and deviant sexual arousal among intrafamilial offenders. This study showed that intrafamilial offenders were the oldest group of offenders and were the least likely to be violent. Similarly, Oliver examined the psychopathy of 638 extrafamilial child molesters, 460 intrafamilial offenders, and 110 "mixed-type" offenders and found that intrafamilial offenders displayed the lowest amount of psychopathy and did not exhibit behavioral problems or have a lengthy criminal record.[140]

Like other types of child sexual abusers, intrafamilial abusers have been shown to exhibit cognitive distortions that minimize the harm they cause to the victim. Hanson et al. compared the attitudes of fifty male intrafamilial offenders to those of twenty-five male batterers and a control group of twenty-five males who were not receiving any type of treatment.[141] Analysis showed that intrafamilial offenders have more deviant attitudes than the control group and batterers and that they view children as "sexually attractive and sexually motivated." Intrafamilial offenders have distorted perceptions of the harm of sexually abusing a child and have attitudes similar to sexual entitlement; in other words, they are narcissistic and seek opportunities to fulfill their own sexual needs. These findings are consistent with other research.[142] About 58 percent of the intrafamilial offenders in Hanson et al.'s study had more than one victim, with a majority being female victims. Most offenses in this study involved exposure or touching, with only 28 percent engaging in intercourse. Results indicate that intrafamilial offenders did not report feeling frustrated nor did they view affairs as being unacceptable.

Intrafamilial sexual abusers exhibit some types of psychological and emotional difficulties. In a study of the personality of biological intrafamilial abusers, nonbiological intrafamilial abusers (stepfathers), extrafamilial abusers, and non-sex offenders, Dennison found that extrafamilial and nonbiological intrafamilial abusers have higher levels of anxiety.[143] The study found no difference between levels of impulsiveness and hostility, but all sex offenders had high levels of depression and self-consciousness. Participants who committed intrafamilial abuse against immediate family members and extrafamilial members had low levels of extraversion while all intrafamilial offenders had low levels of both assertiveness and openness. These findings suggest the possibility that intrafamilial abusers are more conventional and closed-minded. Nonoffenders had slightly higher levels of openness to experience; however, both nonoffenders and intrafamilial abuser stepparents had higher levels of fantasies. Intrafamilial immediate family and extrafamilial offenders both showed low levels of deliberation showing that they were more likely to suffer from self-esteem and self-control problems.

Some researchers have evaluated the relationship between brain pathology and sexual behavior among child sexual abusers. Langevin et al. analyzed the probability of the presence of brain damage and dysfunction in 160 extrafamilial child molesters, 123 intrafamilial offenders, and 108 sexual aggressors as compared to a control group of 36 nonviolent and non-sex offenders.[144] In contrast to other studies, there were no differences between alcohol and drug use, use of violence, education, and whether the abuse was admitted in this sample. However, intrafamilial offenders were significantly older than offenders in other groups.

Some research on intrafamilial offenders has shown that many offenders do not "specialize" in abusing a particular type of victim. Struder et al. analyzed past convictions and self reports of 150 intrafamilial offenders and 178 nonincestuous offenders.[145] This study found that 22 percent of the intrafamilial sexual offenders had other extrafamilial sexual offenses, and about 58 percent of the intrafamilial offenders had additional nonsexual crimes. About 53 percent of offenders who targeted biological children had additional nonincestuous victims, while about 62 percent of the intrafamilial offenders who targeted nonbiological victims (stepchildren) had nonincestuous victims. Gould[146] studied a sample of eighty-six extrafamilial and intrafamilial abusers receiving outpatient treatment and fifty-three who were incarcerated. Though only 20 percent were previously arrested for other sex offenses and 15 percent were arrested for nonsexual crimes, 67 percent had been sexually involved with children before the arrest. Further, this study showed that 43 percent of intrafamilial offenders had nonincestuous victims, while only 18 percent of extrafamilial offenders had incestuous victims.

Findings from research on sexual abuse within families and within other organizations are important for several reasons: (1) they illustrate the difficulty of classifying sex offenders into specific typologies; (2) they show the heterogeneity of sexual offenders; and (3) they indicate that many, if not most, sexual offenders are not necessarily driven to commit offenses against children because

of a strong sexual attraction to a particular type of youth. These results are consistent with the findings of the *Causes and Context* study, discussed at greater length in subsequent chapters.

## Causes of the Crisis: Why Was There a Sexual Abuse Crisis in the Catholic Church?

Within the context of understanding sexual abuse in society and in other organizations, the goal of this study is to understand the factors that led to a sexual abuse "crisis" in the Catholic Church. Through a more thorough understanding of the factors that were associated with an increase in sexual abuse of minors in the Catholic Church in a specific time period—the mid-1960s through the mid-1980s—it is possible to make recommendations to Catholic leadership about how to reduce the occurrence of sexual abuse in the future.

It is important to understand that no single "cause" of sexual abuse in society can be found; similarly, no single "cause" of sexual abuse by priests is evident. Rather, sexual abuse is a complex phenomenon, and the pattern of change in incidence that is analyzed in this study has social, psychological, developmental, and situational explanations.

The John Jay College research team was not the first group to study the causes of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. The NRB engaged in an examination of factors purporting to be linked to the abuse phenomenon and published their findings in a 2004 report. [147] Methodology for the NRB report included interviews with more than eighty-five individuals with either experiences or ideas related to the sexual abuse by priests. Given that respondents (bishops, priests, victims of abuse, experts in sexual misconduct, lawyers, and concerned lay Catholics) were not chosen using a standard sampling model and the authors of the report acknowledged that the methodology was limited, results of the NRB study are considered more anecdotal than scientific.[148] Nevertheless, the NRB report identified several factors worthy of further exploration in a more comprehensive study. These factors, combined with factors identified in the *Nature and Scope* study, shaped the research goals and objectives for this *Causes and Context* study.

### Research with Empirical Methods

Results of the data analysis from the 2004 *Nature and Scope* study, conducted by researchers at John Jay College, informed the framework for the *Causes and Context* study at its outset in 2006. The incidence of sexual abuse by priests was not constant from 1950 to 2002, the time period analyzed in the *Nature and Scope* report; the pattern was one of steady increase, a notable peak, and then a rapid decline. Most incidents of sexual abuse were reported many years after they had occurred and, seemingly, most had not been detected at the time of occurrence. The objective of the *Nature and Scope* research was to investigate a cluster of factors on two levels of analysis—the individual (micro) level and the organizational (macro) level.

The *Nature and Scope* study included data collection on accused priests and individual victims from all Catholic dioceses and eparchies in the United States as well as from religious orders, or religious institutes, of men in the United States. The *Causes and Context* study was commissioned by the body representing dioceses and eparchies (not the religious institutes of men) and, for the most part, has limited its data collection to such bodies.

The *Causes and Context* study investigated potential causes of sexual abuse by priests through a combination of quantitative and qualitative empirical approaches. The broad *Causes and Context* study includes seven smaller empirical studies. A summary of the studies is as follows:

- *Analysis of historical data*. A longitudinal analysis of data sets of deviant behavior over the time period of the peak of the crisis, including a time-series analysis;
- *Seminary leader surveys and study of priestly formation documents*. Analysis of historical documents of seminary education from the 1950s to present;
- *Identity and Behavior Survey*. Surveys of and interviews with priests with allegations of abuse, and a comparison sample of priests in ministry without allegations of abuse;
- *Analysis of the raw data from* The Loyola Psychological Study of the Ministry and Life of the American Priest. Collected by Eugene Kennedy and colleagues for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops from 1969-1971 to analyze priest satisfaction;
- *Surveys of survivors and victim assistance coordinators*. Information collected on victim assistance coordinators at the national level regarding their knowledge of the abuse crisis. Analysis of surveys from abuse survivors about the onset, persistence, and desistance from the abuse behavior;
- *Surveys of diocesan leaders*. Analysis of the experiences of diocesan leaders including bishops, vicars general, and vicars for clergy about the policies and action taken in response to reports of abuse after 1985, and interviews with diocesan leaders; and
- *Assessment of clinical files of priests who abused children*. These are compared to clinical files for priests treated for other reasons, including sexual misconduct with adults and other psychological disorders.

The present study is unique; it consists of a large-scale analysis, the research team had rare access to information on a single population of abusers, and the study encompasses a universe of a non-forensic population of abusers. The purpose of the incorporation of multiple surveys was to ensure that the research team could find confirmation of the study's conclusions in more than one area and to be alert to possible disconfirmation. The data collected here, combined with the data from the *Nature and Scope* study, provide a thorough understanding of the sexual abuse "crisis" as a historical event. Although there are limitations to this study, as there would be for any retrospective study encompassing sixty years, the breadth of data and consistency of results provide a firm foundation for our conclusions.

Most importantly, this *Causes and Context* study provides an analysis of the serious problem of sexual abuse over a substantial period of time, both generally and within the context of an organization. No other institution has undertaken a similar effort and, as such, this research and its results are a unique opportunity to gain knowledge about the sexual abuse of minors within an institution and to understand the response of an organization to this problem.

## Conclusion

The sexual abuse of minors is a pervasive problem in society and in organizations that involve close relationships between youth and adults. The *Nature and Scope* study analyzed abuse patterns in the United States from 1950 until 2002, which was a time of great social change in the United States. Knowledge of the extent of child sexual abuse increased, as did knowledge about abusers, the harm of victimization, and the dynamics of victim-perpetrator relationships. As agencies began collecting data on child maltreatment, it became possible to calculate rates of abuse based on population estimates and assess the change over time. Although no exact measure exists for the number of youths who have contact with priests in the Catholic Church in a year, annual counts of confirmations are recorded. The count of abuse incidents can be indexed to the number of confirmations. Despite the media focus on child sexual abuse by Catholic priests, it is clear that these abuse acts are a small percentage of all child sexual abuse incidents in the United States. Nonetheless, it is important to understand why the Catholic Church experienced an increase in abuse behavior at a particular point in time, and the body of this report evaluates the increase and subsequent decline in the abuse of minors by Catholic priests from historical, sociological, psychological, and situational perspectives.

## Chapter 2

# Historical Analysis of Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church: Explaining the Distribution of Abuse over Time

The *Nature and Scope* study provided data showing that the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests changed over time and showed a clearly identifiable distribution between 1950 and 2002. Even though the large majority of abuse cases were reported much later than they occurred, the data clearly show that the period of highest incidence across all geographical regions was consistent. In order to understand the causes of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, it is necessary to investigate the specific factors that are associated with the distribution of events over time. The phenomenon of delayed reporting, together with a convergence of incidents at a particular time period, makes the sexual abuse "crisis" a historical problem. This is not to suggest that abuse incidents have not happened recently and will not happen again in the future; however, the *crisis*, which involved a high number of sexual abuse incidents peaking at a particular point in time, has passed.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain further the distribution of abuse incidents over time and the factors, both within and outside the church, that may have influenced this behavior. The first section delineates the pattern and reporting of abuse based in the *Nature and Scope* study and also expands the data to cover the 2003-2009 period. The second section seeks to explain the changes over time by examining questions related to celibacy, sexuality, and sexual identity as well as social influences. The third section provides data about the distribution of priests in relation to the seminary backgrounds of those who were accused. It also describes the changes in seminary formation programs from the 1980s to the present and significant developments in the substance and requirements for celibacy formation from the first through the fifth editions of the *Program of Priestly Formation*.[149]

**Figure 2.1** Regions of the Catholic Church in the United States

# Incidence and Reports of Abuse, 1950-2010

## Patterns of Incidence of Abuse, 1950-2002

The *Nature and Scope* study began with the acquisition of information about every reported allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by priests and deacons in the United States from 1950-2002. The research team from John Jay College collected this information in surveys from existing files at all US Catholic dioceses, eparchies and religious communities. The results of the *Nature and Scope* study showed that 4,392 priests (4 percent) had been the subject of allegations of abuse between 1950 and 2002, and that 10,667 individuals had made allegations of child sexual abuse against priests during the same time period. These data revealed that the annual count of abuse incidents over this time period increased steadily from 1950 through the 1970s and then began to decline sharply at or about 1985, with the decline continuing through 2002. This pattern was consistent across the country, including all of the fourteen "episcopal regions" into which the Catholic Church in the United States is divided by the USCCB. These fourteen regions are shown in Figure 2.1.

Though media coverage of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church focused primarily on high-profile cases such as that of John Geoghan in Boston, reports of at least some sexual abuse against minors were made in nearly every diocese across the country from 1950 through 2002.[150] The percentage of priests accused of abuse per diocese, or prevalence of accusations of sexual abuse, was consistent. All the USCCB regions in the United States had an average of 3 to 6 percent of the priests in ministry per diocese accused of sexual abuse against a minor between the years of 1950 and 2002. If the same calculation is performed for all dioceses ranked by size of the diocese, the same result is found: on average, 3 to 6 percent of priests in ministry, per diocese, were accused of abuse.[151] Thus, the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests was not limited to, or clustered in, dioceses of a particular size or a particular geographical location. Rather, the temporal pattern of incidence is consistent throughout geographical regions, and in dioceses of all sizes. The confidentiality provisions of the *Nature and Scope* study preclude any knowledge by the John Jay College researchers of the specific name or subregional location of a diocese, so it is not possible to produce a detailed map at the diocese level.

### *National Patterns*

The accusation rate, the number of priests accused of sexual abuse of children for each 100 priests in service, was 1.3 in 1960, increased to 8.65 by 1980, and then fell sharply to 2.2 in 1990.[152] The change in annual accusation rates reflects the overall shape of the annual count of abuse events. Despite the substantial numbers of priests who left ministry in the Catholic Church between 1970 and 1985, the total number of priests in active ministry over the period of analysis did not change significantly. In 1950, 42,970 priests were in service compared to 45,713 in 2002, leaving the denominator for the rate largely unchanged. Figure 2.2 shows the count of incidents of sexual abuse over time in each of the fourteen USCCB regions of the Catholic Church in the United States. Each region has been assigned a letter (A through N) at random. The most notable interpretation of this figure is the consistent shape of the pattern of change over time and in each region. The consistent national pattern of the increase in incidents and the subsequent decline is the fundamental and defining characteristic of the problem of sexual abuse by Catholic priests in the United States. The actual number of incidents, however, varies considerably depending largely on the number of priests in the dioceses within each region.

## Patterns of Reporting Abuse, 1950-2002

Despite data indicating that the incidence of abuse rose steadily between 1950 and 1980 and fell sharply by the mid-1980s, most of these events were unknown to civil authorities or church leaders before 2002. Between 1950 and 1985, the total number of incidents of sexual abuse of children that had been reported to Catholic dioceses in the United States was 810; the total now reported to have occurred in that period exceeds 11,000.[153] Figure 2.3 shows when abuse incidents were reported, by year, in each USCCB region of the Catholic Church. The temporal pattern of reporting is even more consistent than the temporal pattern of occurrence of the events, with a significant increase in reports in 1993 and another notable increase in 2002.

A delay, or time lag, in the reporting of sexual abuse cases is typical,[154] and the Catholic Church is no exception. The lag or delay in the disclosure of abuse raises the question: What is the effect of this delay in reporting of abuse cases? Was the incidence curve shown in the *Nature and Scope* data from 2002 a product of an inherent delay in the disclosure of acts of sexual abuse and therefore a predictable lagged pattern? If that conjecture were to be proven, it would be estimated that, as years passed, victims would reach the point of readiness to report abuse and then come forward. New cases would be added to those known, and the center, peak, and temporal distribution would shift forward in time.

The explanation of this fundamental question of timing allows for a consideration of whether sexual abuse had become enmeshed in the institutional culture of the

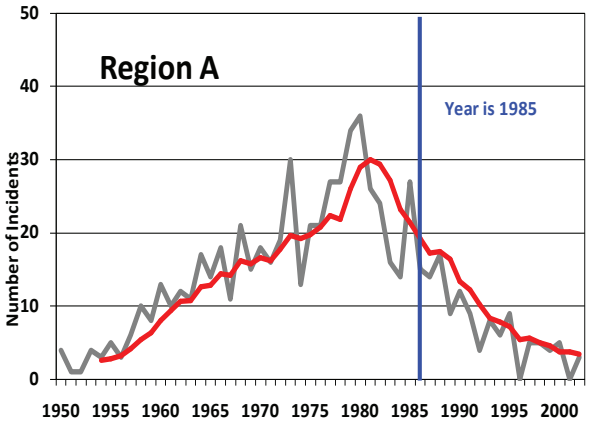
**Figure 2.2** *Nature and Scope*: Incidents of Sexual Abuse by Year of Occurrence by USCCB Region of the United States, 1950-2002

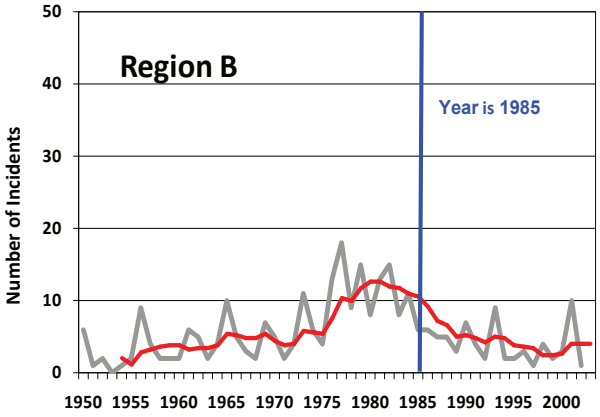
## Legend

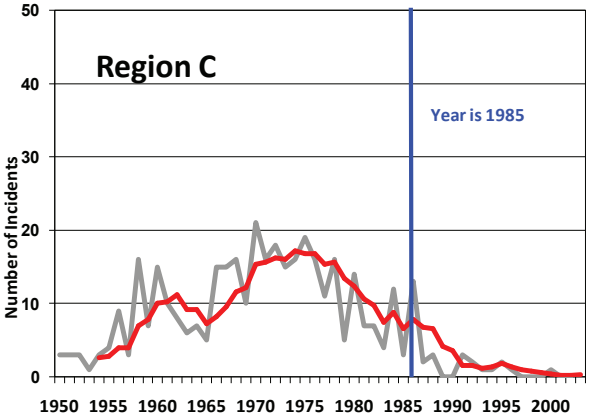
The red line shows the **moving average**, a smoothed trendline that is the result of the average of the prior five years.

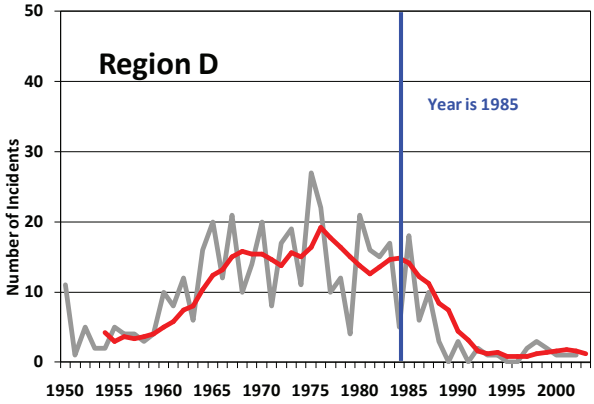
The grey line shows the **actual counts** by the first year of an incident.

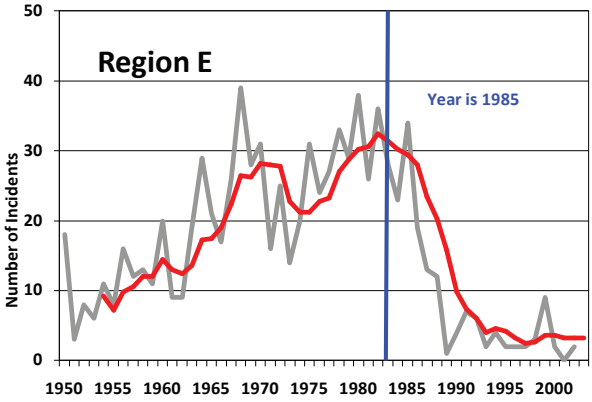
The blue line marks the year 1985.

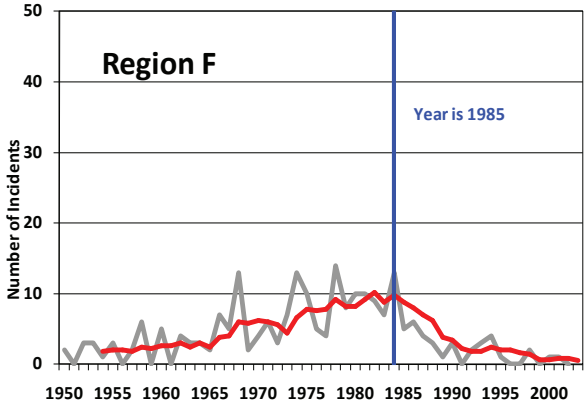


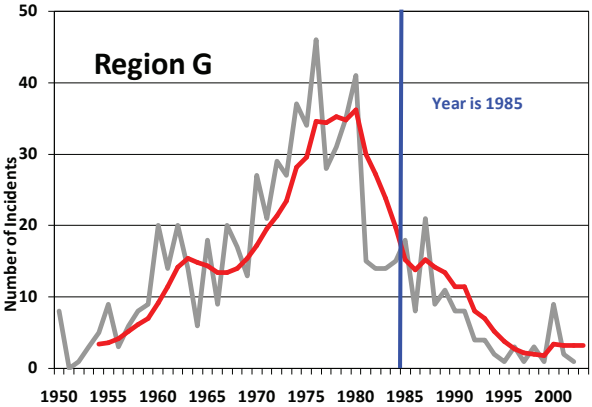



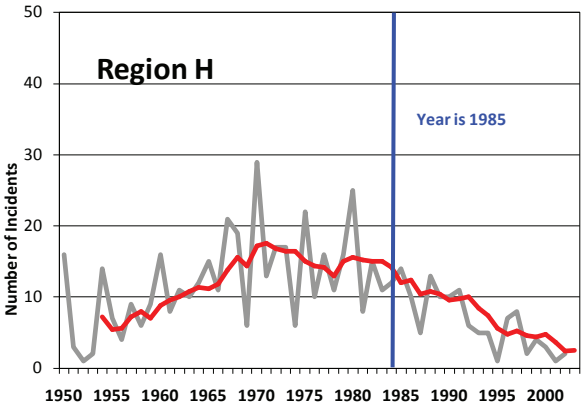



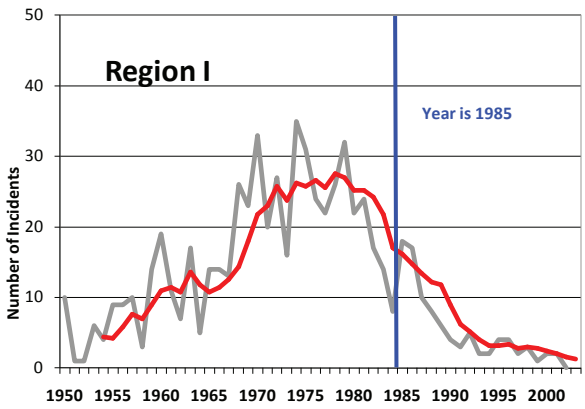



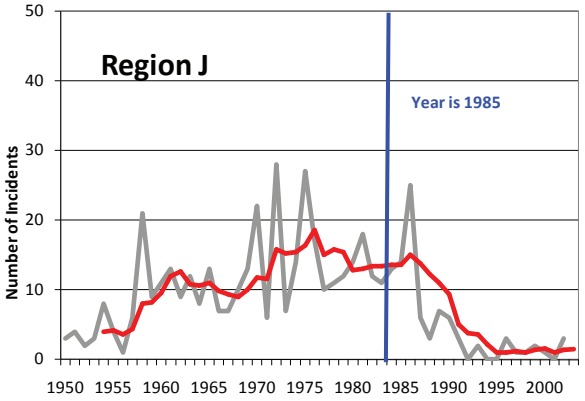



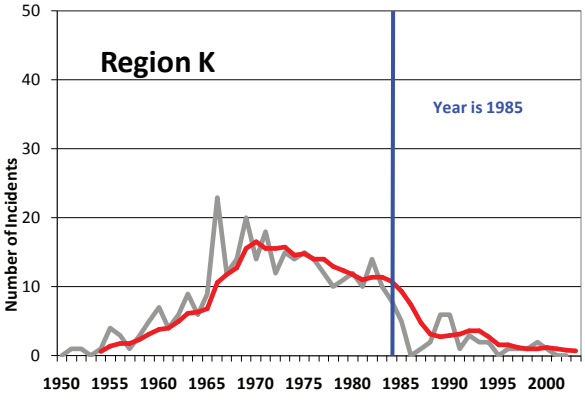



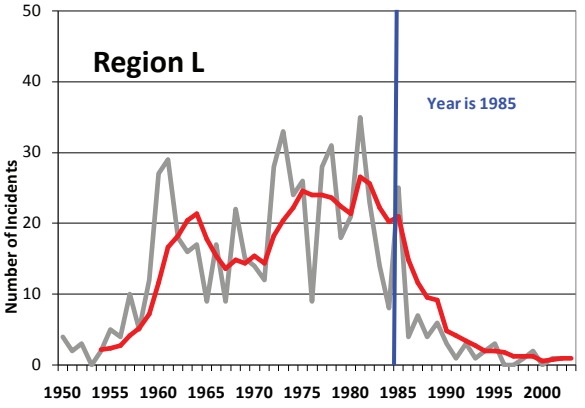



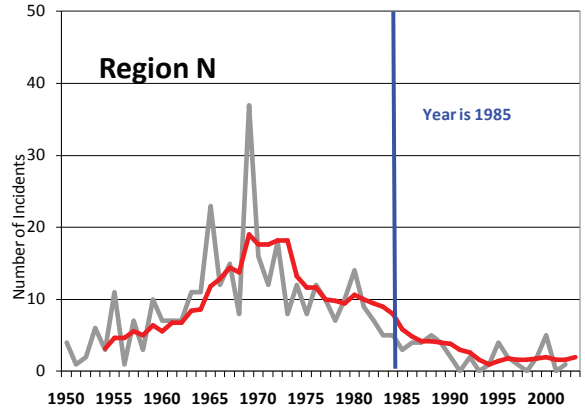


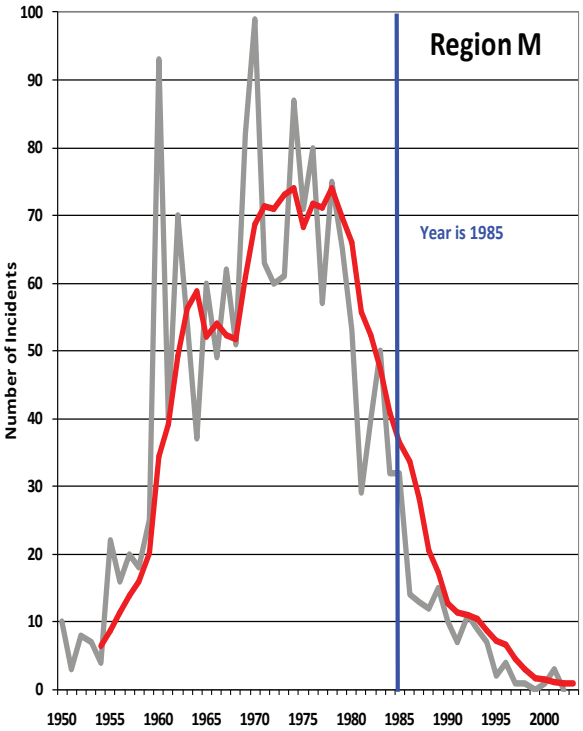



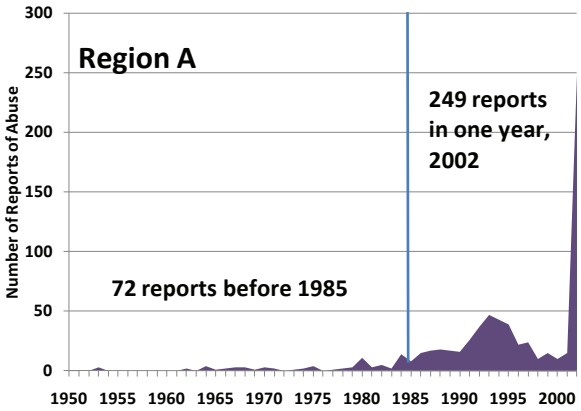



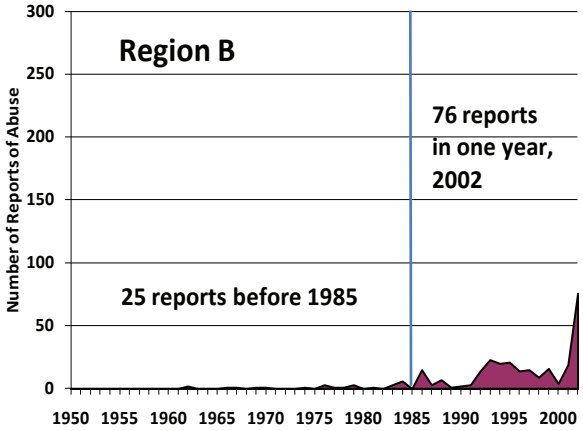



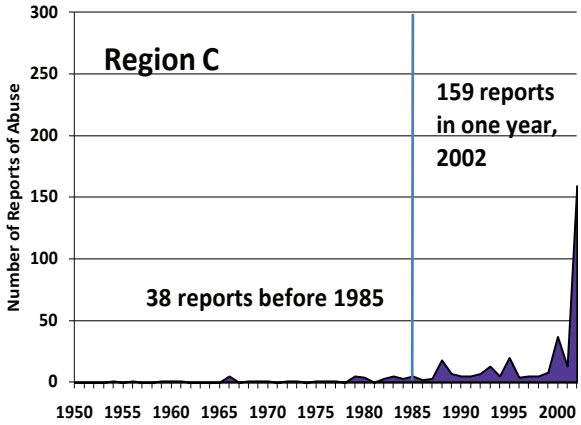

Please note the difference in the vertical axis for Region M.

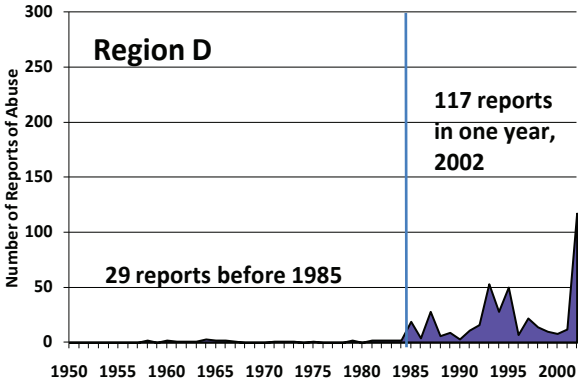
**Figure 2.3** *Nature and Scope*: Count of Reports of Sexual Abuse by USCCB Region of the United States, 1950-2002

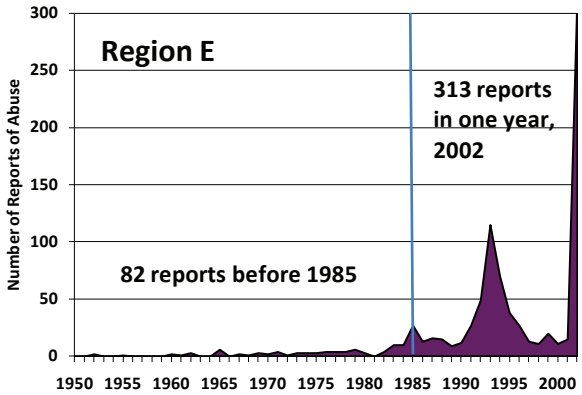
**These individual area charts display the quantity and timing of reports of sexual abuse by priests in the dioceses of each geographical region of the US. The blue vertical line marks the year 1985, as Figure 2.2.**

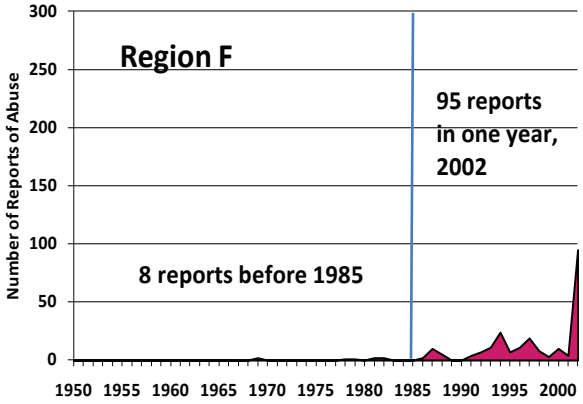


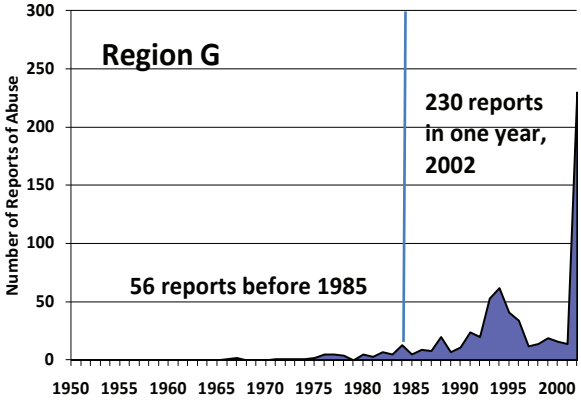



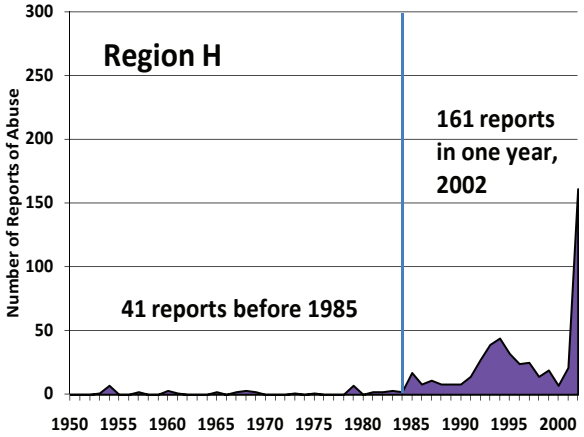



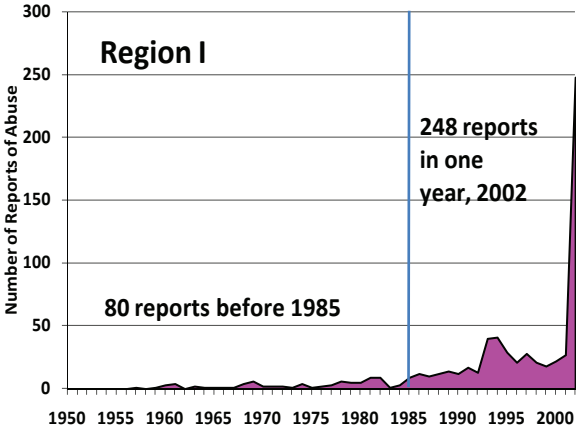



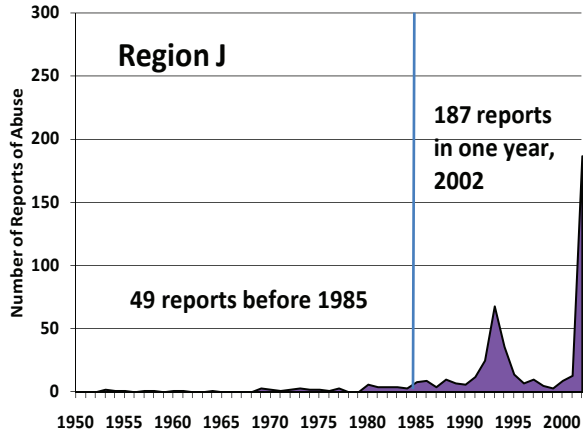



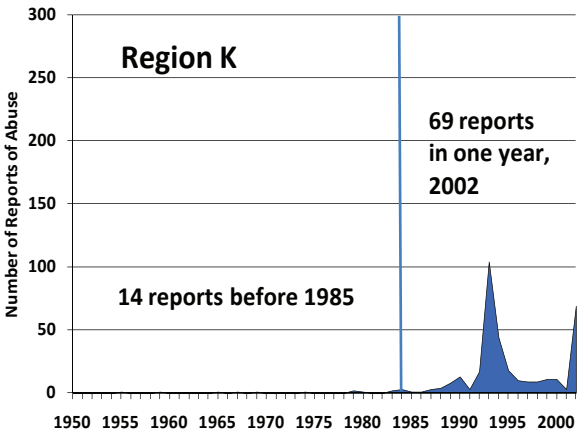



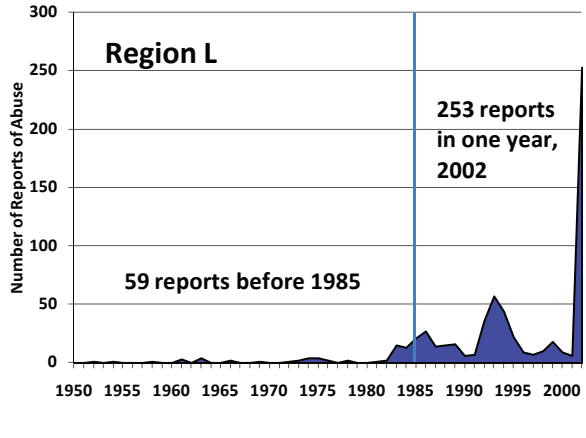



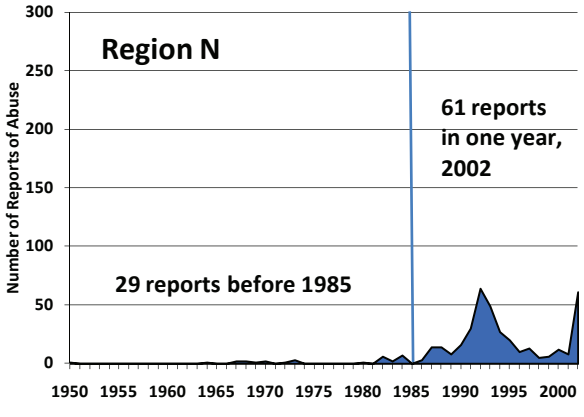


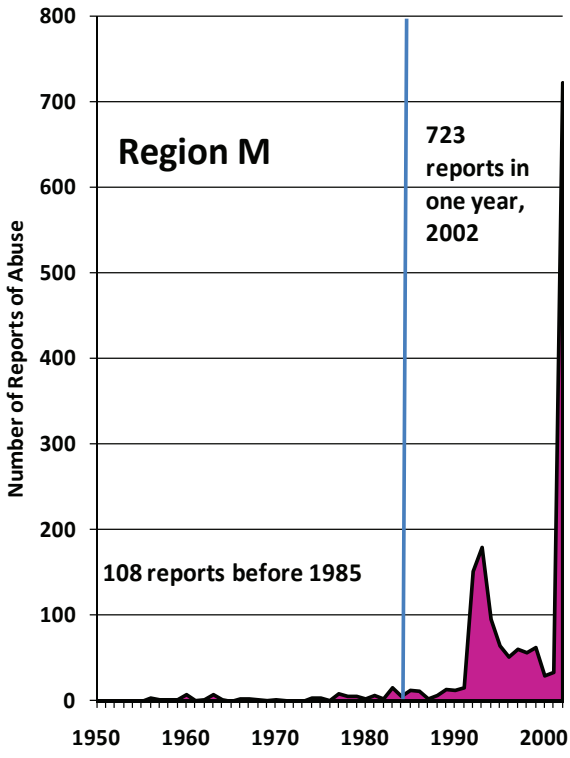




Please note the difference in the vertical axis for Region M.

Catholic Church and thus had become an ongoing problem, or whether it was a historically specific phenomenon. If the incidence of sexual abuse had been continuous over the last thirty or forty years, and the delay in reporting a stable factor, then reports would have increased in recent years. Conversely, if the abuse incidents were clustered in the 1960s and 1970s, as is apparent from the 2002 data, then subsequent reports would reproduce the pattern.

### *Estimating the Distribution of Unreported Cases of Abuse*

The *Supplementary Report* on the *Nature and Scope* data, published in 2006, concluded that the temporal distribution of incidents of sexual abuse, as measured by the dates the acts of abuse took place, is stable and an accurate representation of the rate of change in the behavior of priests.[155] The research team predicted that while additional incidents of abuse would be reported to the dioceses, the peak years of incidence and the rate of increase or decrease would not change. This provisional conclusion was the result of statistical analyses that employed three methods of estimation applied to the annual count of reports of abuse made to the Catholic Church. Two versions of a lagged time series were carried out using two different sets of assumptions about relevant variables thought to influence the reporting of sexual abuse. Neither procedure was able to replicate the observed data structure. A mathematical procedure using the expectation maximization algorithm was done to estimate unknown cases and confirm the time series findings. This procedure used a subset of data of events based on what is known or reported prior to each year in the data set and then modeled the distribution of unknown events most likely to produce those results by using a Gaussian distribution based on the annual incidence data. The predicted distribution peaked in the late 1970s and was stable by the early 1990s, providing further confirmation that the pre-2003 observed pattern is an accurate representation of the pattern of unreported cases.

### *Reports of Sexual Abuse, 2004-2009*

Prior to the release of the *Nature and Scope* study in 2004, a process was established to collect basic information from all Catholic dioceses about reports of sexual abuse of minors in each year from 2004 onward.[156] Statisticians at the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University compile and report data annually. The CARA reports include the following information: the year that incidents occurred (counted in five-year increments), the gender and age of victims, and a discussion of costs and responses by the dioceses, eparchies, and religious institutes. The distribution of events of abuse replicates the *Nature and Scope* distribution in each of six years of audits—from 2004 to 2009. The age and gender distributions have also been stable: four of five victims were boys, and most were between ten and fourteen years of age at the time of the abuse. These six years of data provide further confirmation that the sexual abuse took place primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, that its peak was apparent in the late 1970s, and that the much lower levels of abuse after 1985 have not increased. Figures 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 show the number of new reports of abuse by diocesan priests, counted in the five-year periods when they took place, that were brought to the dioceses of the Catholic Church in the years 2004,[157] 2006,[158] and 2008.[159] The incidents of abuse are counted in the year the alleged offense either occurred or began (for those incidents that continued over a span of time). The total number of new allegations of abuse by diocesan priests that took place after 1950 has declined from 898, reported in 2004, to 398, reported in 2009.[160]

### *Understanding Change over Time*

A longitudinal model of change establishes a pattern of increase and decrease in the occurrence of an event over time. The descriptive elements of such a model include base rate, rate of increase to the peak of incidence, and rate of decline. In this study, the base rate is an estimate of the level of sexual abuse that would be expected to occur at any time, or at least at the point of the time period analyzed in the study. In a model of the change in deviant sexual behavior, it is not reasonable to assume that the base rate is zero, for there is no documented society or period of time that has been known to be free of deviant sexual behavior.

Initial data analysis included use of total distribution in order to model the problem of increasing incidence of sexual offenses in the Catholic Church between 1950 and 1980. Clusters of possible factors for the model were reviewed, first for theoretical applicability and then for evidence of longitudinal covariation. Sociological inquiry employs factors defined as "social indicators" to estimate the stochastic process, the social process over fifty years, and then uses the most efficient model to anticipate the impacts on the populations of individuals to be studied.[161] The overall variation in social indicators between 1950 and 1990 is well known, and specific indicators chosen for the model are explained further in this report.

There is particular need for estimation of cohort effects for seminarians, as the data show that temporal curves for the incidence of abuse and resignations from the ministry peak at the same point in time. Two primary theoretical constructs underlie cohort research: the "life stage principle" and the "lasting effects principle."[162] The life stage principle asserts that groups born into similar circumstances at the same time share characteristics; the lasting effects principle models the lasting impact of

**Figure 2.4** CARA: Count of Allegations of Abuse by Diocesan Priests Reported in 2004

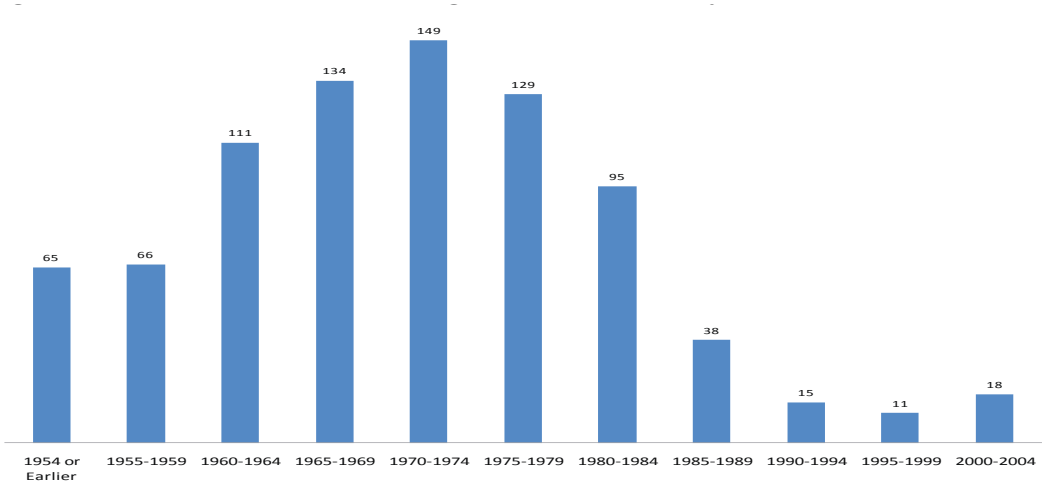



**Figure 2.5** CARA: Count of Allegations of Abuse by Diocesan Priests Reported in 2006

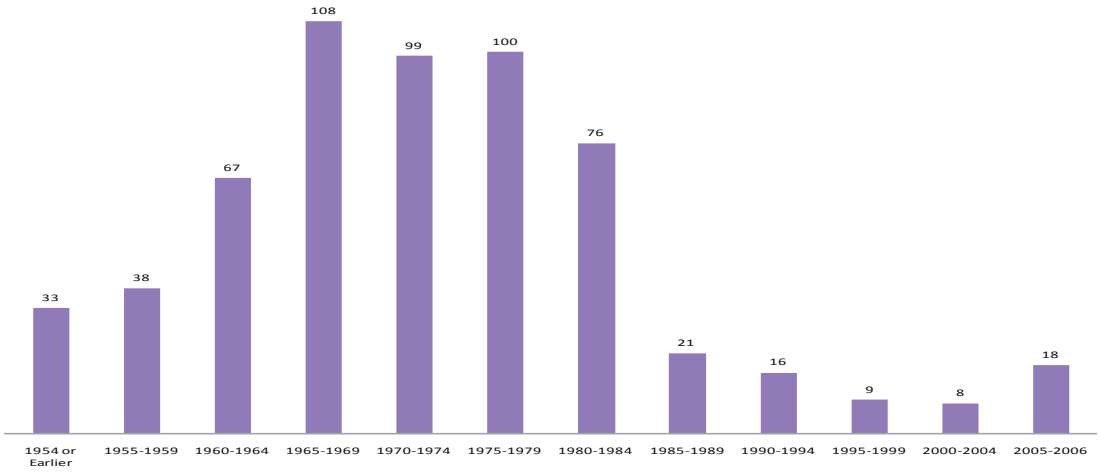
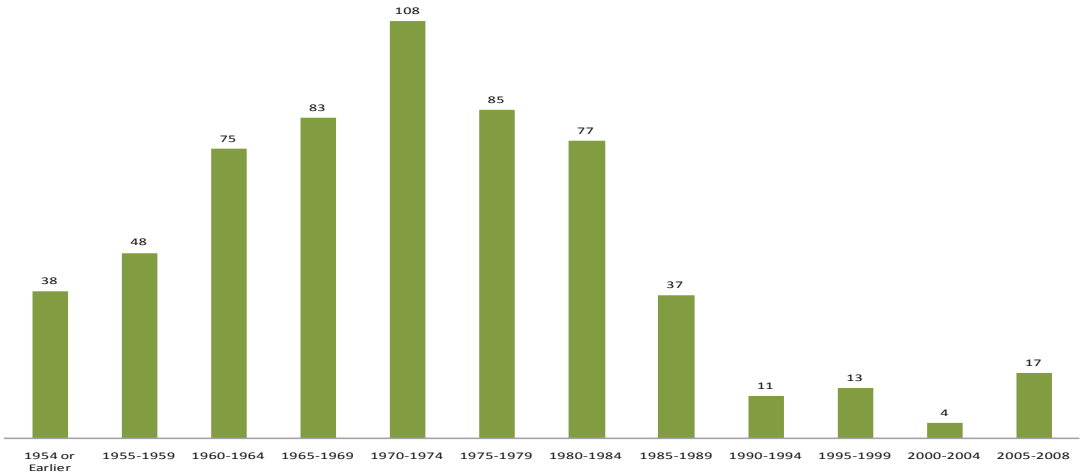



**Figure 2.6** CARA: Count of Allegations of Abuse by Diocesan Priests Reported in 2008



a powerful event on the lives of those who experience it at the same age. One candidate to model the impact of cohort differences is the age-period-cohort characteristic model (APC), most commonly used in epidemiology.[163] In criminology, theorists for routine activities theory and situational crime prevention use a model that identifies crime as a function of the combination of level of opportunity for motivated offenders, availability of suitable targets, and the level of supervision. Both models are often used in criminology, as data are gathered from different populations of individuals.

In this research, significant interruption in the time series of incidence takes place in or around 1985 and is modeled using an interrupted time series or event history analysis. Factors specific to the Catholic Church in the United States are considered endogenous factors, and factors that are typical of the United States are defined as exogenous. Both clusters of factors are explored in the statistical models used in this study. These statistical techniques are mathematically complex but capable of yielding causal inferences. Data collected from priests, bishops, seminary leaders, and lay Catholics are used to evaluate the factors.

## Research Questions: Incidence of Abuse

The notable stability and continuity of data gathered for this study resulted in a clear research question. The data show not only stability of the shape of the distribution of abuse incidents, but also show continuity in the count of events of abuse per year on the timeline between 1950 and 2002. Further, supplemental data from the years 2004 through 2009 confirm the consistency of the pattern. Therefore, the research question articulated for this study considers the reasons for the increase of sexual offenses from 1950 to a peak in the late 1970s, as well as reasons for the sharp decline after 1985.

### Reasons for Variation in Sexual Abuse

The research group further defined the purpose of this investigation by proposing two potential explanations for the very clear pattern evident from the empirical data. First, the reasons for the variation in the total amount of sexual abuse by priests may be found through individual-level differences in the character and composition of the priesthood throughout the years in the investigative period. Alternatively, the variation of sexual abuse by priests could be explained by the impact of sociocultural changes on the men in the priesthood over this period of time. These potential explanations led the research group to explore individual-level psychological and behavioral explanations for the abuse; in other words, are there characteristics of individual priests that make them more likely to commit future sexual abuse? This inquiry is discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.

The consistency of the pattern of sexual offenses over time is clear when the total counts of abuse events are displayed. However, if incidents are grouped by behavioral typology of sexual offenders, differences emerge. For the purpose of this comparison, a *pedophile* is defined as a priest who had more than one victim, with all victims being age eleven or younger at the time of the offense. [164] An *ephebophile* is defined as a priest who abused more than one victim, with all victims being boys above the age of twelve.[165] *Single* offenders are those who had only one victim, and the *multiples* group includes all other accused priests who had more than one victim but were not defined by the other groups. For those in the *multiples* group, the age and gender of victims of sexual abuse varied. The groups of diocesan priests shown in Figure 2.7 are mutually exclusive; an accused priest is only included in one group. The curve of incidence for the pedophile group (Figure 2.7, indicated by a red line) is much flatter, showing much less variation over time than the curve of the ephebophile group (Figure 2.7, indicated by a green line). The singles group is represented in Figure 2.7 with a blue line. The most marked variation, or change over time, is in the annual count of those priests who do not fall into the pedophile, ephebophile, or singles group. This group of priests is designated as the multiples group—priests who abused victims of different ages and genders (Figure 2.7, indicated by a purple line). All groups except the pedophile group show an increase, peak period and marked decrease in the same or similar pattern as the overall distribution of incidence of abuse. The influence of the social changes is shown most dramatically in the group whose behavior involves abuse of boys and girls of various ages. The opportunistic behavior of the "multiples group" is in contrast to the low, but steady, level of pathologically driven pedophilic behaviors. The pathology of sexual abuse behaviors is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

### The Commitment to Celibacy

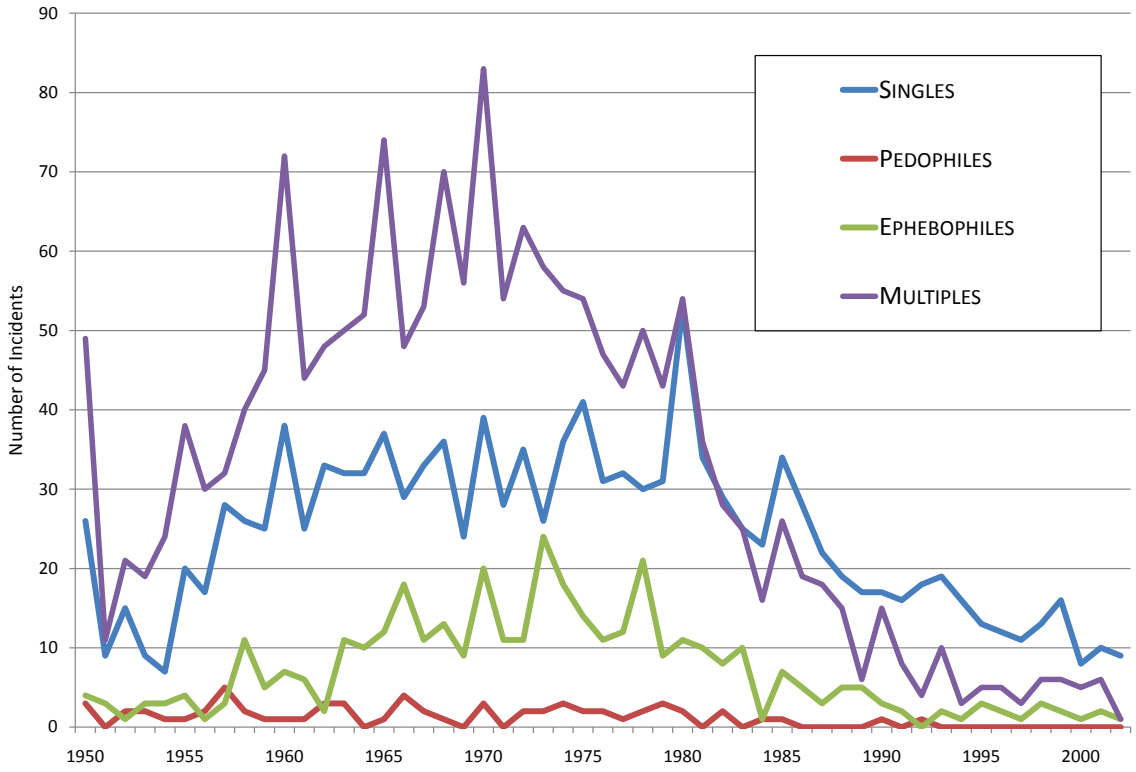
The popular media has consistently identified the practice of priestly celibacy as a contributing cause of the problem of sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. This explanation has found support from a variety of more serious commentators. From the eleventh century to the present, men ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood have foregone marriage and abstained from any sexual contact with others.[166] Celibacy is a multidimensional commitment that is a core aspect of the identity of a priest. Sister Katarina Schuth, an expert on seminary preparation for

priesthood, describes it as "a willingness to build on the virtue of chastity as the seminarian prepares to live the celibate life. Grace builds on nature, and so the human qualities of intimacy, friendship, charity, and generosity are not neglected in producing the well-rounded human person who will serve the Church as a celibate ordained minister."[167] A significant part of the preparation for ordination to Catholic priesthood, therefore, requires a program that promotes an understanding of the meaning of the commitment to lifelong celibacy, including a willingness to forego the prospect of marriage. The commitment to lifelong chastity is subsumed within the commitment to celibacy, since sexual expression is considered chaste only within the context of marriage. The term *celibate chastity* is used to emphasize the behavioral constraint, now understood to prohibit any sexual behavior, or any behavior that has as its purpose sexual gratification.

Those who support change in the requirement of priestly celibacy argue that it has been unevenly practiced and point to a long history of efforts to define, condemn, and control the violations by priests of their commitment to celibacy.[168] That the commitment to celibacy is demanding, and that priests have struggled to sustain it, does not, in principle, obviate the value of the practice to the Catholic Church. For Catholics, the sacrament of marriage is a similarly unequivocal commitment, and yet the difficulties that couples have in sustaining the practice of monogamy does not undermine the importance of the commitment. Those married couples who fail to uphold their commitment to monogamy, but want to continue to be married to one another, are forgiven and encouraged to try to make their marriage succeed. It is thus not surprising that priests who fail to uphold the commitment to celibacy, but who wish to remain priests, have been forgiven and are still considered to be "celibates." That is to say, celibacy may be understood by some priests as a commitment, not a condition.[169]

Given the continuous requirement of priestly celibacy over time, it is not clear why the commitment to or state of celibate chastity should be seen as a cause for the steady rise in incidence of sexual abuse between 1950 and 1980. Andrew Greeley makes the same argument, joining it to the obvious statistical observation that the vast majority of incidents of sexual abuse of children are committed by men who are not celibates.[170] What is explored in this report is the preparation for a celibate life, an understanding of what behavior is mandated by the commitment to celibacy, how those understandings have been learned by and communicated among priests, and how they may have changed over the time of the study.

**Figure 2.7** *Nature and Scope*: Distribution of Diocesan Priests Accused of Abuse, in Behavioral Groups



### Questions of Sexuality and Sexual Identity

Attempts to grasp more fully the meaning of sexuality have a long history. The terms "homosexual" and "heterosexual" were first used in personal written communications in 1868 between a writer and a sex reformer.[171] "Homosexual" appeared in public in 1869, and by 1900, was being used as a negative classification within the medical field. "Heterosexual" was also being used by the medical community in reference to those men and women who practiced nonprocreative intercourse. In the United States, the terms appeared in print in a medical journal in 1892 defining "two kinds of sexual perversion, judged according to a procreative standard . . . 'to abnormal methods of gratification.'"[172] Adoption of common, nonmedical usage of the term "heterosexual" was gradual, and the use of the terms to characterize the sexual identity of a person is recent.[173] There is abundant evidence that sexual behaviors, or sexual acts with partners of the same sex and the opposite sex, have varied in the lives of many individuals for centuries.[174] There is an important caution here—that the way such words have been defined reduces the complexity of sexual self-understanding, even when the evidence of heterogeneous sexual behavior is pervasive.

As generally understood now, homosexual behavior is the commission of a sexual act with someone of the same sex, in contrast to a heterosexual act, or sexual behavior engaged in by persons of different sexes. What is not well understood is that it is possible for a person to participate in a same-sex act without assuming or recognizing an identity as a homosexual. More than three-quarters of the acts of sexual abuse of youths by Catholic priests, as shown in the *Nature and Scope* study, were same-sex acts (priests abusing male victims). It is therefore possible that, although the victims of priests were most often male, thus defining the *acts* as homosexual, the priest did not at any time recognize his *identity* as homosexual. Data on homosexual identity and behavior of priests who have been treated are presented at length in Chapter 3.

## Social Influences on Sexuality: Period Effects

In 1948, Alfred Kinsey published research that analyzed the prevalence of sexual acts considered by most to be deviant, such as masturbation and homosexuality, and discovered that a high percentage of individuals had, in fact, participated in such acts, therefore creating questions about the use of the label "deviant."[175] Many social changes occurred in the 1960s—the confrontation with racial segregation, the reemergence of a feminist movement, the importance given to young people and popular culture, and the development of a "singles culture."[176] Additionally, homosexuality became a more socially acceptable sexual alternative as a result of the gay liberation movement, exemplified in 1969 by the Stonewall Riots in New York City. The representation of sexuality was contested in print, film, and photographic media, and increased openness about the depiction of sexuality emerged as sexual acts became more loosely associated with reproduction. These changes were termed "sexual liberation," and sexual behavior among young people became more open and diverse.[177] All of these social changes can be understood as a new "valuation" of the individual person and fostered the exploration and pursuit of individual happiness and satisfaction. The 1970s were an era of social change for women, with the legalization of abortion in *Roe v. Wade* and the women's movement against sexual violence that rose in an attempt to combat the prevailing negative views of female victims.[178] Though the Equal Rights Amendment failed, it was an effort to recognize the disadvantaged position of women in many areas.

The economic and social optimism of the 1960s came with a rise in social activism, intergenerational conflict, illegal drug use, crime, and disorder. The 1970s continued the pursuit of individualist projects and values as the economy faltered and a conservative reaction to openness and experimentation became more apparent. Further caution about sexual behaviors arose when AIDS developed into a national issue in the early 1980s. As general public attitudes about sex and sexuality changed, the statutes that defined sex acts as criminal changed as well. The General Social Survey (GSS), a regularly conducted public opinion poll, showed a marked change in the proportion of the respondents who felt that premarital sex was "not wrong at all"—the figure was 26 percent in 1972, the first year the survey was done, and rose to 42 percent in 1985.[179] By 1985, twenty-seven states in the United States had passed legislation to decriminalize sex among adolescents ("age-span provisions"), and forty states had amended their statutory rape laws so that women could be prosecuted.[180] In the mid-1980s, a majority of states modified their rape laws to expand the definitions of criminal sexual behavior, and almost all had passed legislation for mandatory reporting of sexual abuse of a child by 1990.

For the *Causes and Context* study, the social indicators found to be most relevant to the modeling of the change in incidence of sexual abuse are divorce, use of illegal drugs, and crime. Sexual abuse of a minor by a Catholic priest is an individual deviant act—an act by a priest that serves individual purposes and that is completely at odds or opposed to the principles of the institution. Divorce is an act also made for personal reasons that negates the institution of marriage. Illegal drug use and criminal acts violate social and legal norms of conduct, presumably at the will of

the offender. The recorded or reported incidence of each of these factors increased by 50 percent between 1960 and 1980.[181] If the data for the annual divorce rate are compared to data for the annual rate of homicide and robbery, the time-series lines move in tandem. From stable levels in 1965, the rates increase sharply to a peak at or soon after 1980 and then begin to fall.[182] This pattern is indicative of the period effects that can be seen in the *Nature and Scope* data on the incidence of sexual abuse by priests.

## Social Influences: Cohort Effects on Sexual Behavior

In the 1950s, the departure point for the *Causes and Context* study, the structure of seminary education for diocesan priests in the United States had begun to shift away from a linked network of high-school and college-level seminaries ("minor" and "major" seminaries) as seminary leaders sought bachelor's degree accreditation for their institutions.[183] In the years between 1950 and 1959, the total number of diocesan and religious seminaries in the United States increased 28 percent to a total of 381. If the starting point is 1945, the increase of seminaries to 1959 becomes 53 percent.[184] The number of seminarians increased apace with this opportunity to study and prepare for the priesthood. The structural changes in moving toward state and regional accreditation that, in some seminaries, reduced the academic and social isolation of seminarians was compounded by the need to accommodate the number of men seeking to study for the Catholic priesthood in the postwar United States.

Data from the *Nature and Scope* study reveal that 43.5 percent of the diocesan priests who were later accused of sexual abuse of a minor were ordained before 1960. A notable percentage (23.1 percent) was ordained in the 1950s. If the decades of 1940 and 1950 are combined, the percentage of those later accused rises to 34.6 percent. The full distribution of decade of ordination for diocesan priests later accused of abuse is shown in Table 2.1.[185]

### Resignations from the Catholic Priesthood

Ordinations to the Catholic priesthood have fallen steadily from 1,527 in 1960 to 454 in 2005. But the impact of this change would not readily be felt until the 1990s, because the total number of priests in ministry stayed between 50,000 and 60,000 throughout the period. The impact of falling numbers of ordinations may have been an increased workload for priests, but it has not diminished their satisfaction with the Catholic priesthood.[186] Resignations from the priesthood rose dramatically from a level of 200 per year in 1966 to a peak of 750 in 1969 and then declined consistently to 258 in 1976, leveling off in the 1980s at less than 200.[187] Research by the National Opinion Research Center, commissioned by the Catholic bishops, found loneliness and the desire to marry to be leading reasons for resignation from the priesthood.[188]

### Ordination Cohorts

The *Nature and Scope* data in Figure 2.8, Figure 2.9, and Figure 2.10 show priests defined in cohort groups by the decade of their ordination. Figure 2.8 shows the annual count of reported abuse incidents beginning in each year for those diocesan priests ordained before 1960 contrasted with those of all diocesan priests. The red line indicates the group of those ordained before 1960. The increased totals recorded for the years 1950, 1960, and 1970 are artifactual, that is, they are the result of the decade being given as the date of an incident because the exact year was unknown. The shape of this change in incidence corresponds to the pattern of resignations from the clergy: sharp increase in the mid to late 1960s and a consistent decline after the mid-1970s. The pattern of resignations does not produce a lagged effect on the behavior of the pre-1960s ordination cohort. If all priests in this group are considered, the average number of years in ministry before an incident of sexual abuse is 16.5. If only those ordained in the 1940s and 1950s are considered, the average number of years in ministry before an incident of abuse is 13.5, and the median is 12.

Figure 2.9 shows the annual count of reported abuse incidents beginning in each year for those diocesan priests ordained between 1960 and 1969 contrasted with those of all diocesan priests. The red line indicates the group of those ordained during the 1960s. For this cohort, the correspondence with the pattern of resignation is also evident. Young priests were overrepresented among those who resigned, and for those priests ordained in the 1960s, the number of years in ministry before an incident of abuse falls to seven.

Figure 2.10 shows the annual count of reported abuse incidents beginning in each year for those diocesan priests ordained between 1970 and 1979 contrasted with those of all diocesan priests. The red line indicates the group of those ordained during the 1970s. For this cohort, the time to first incident of abuse has dropped to four years. But, despite an earlier engagement in abusive behavior, the decline in incidence from this cohort occurs in 1980.

In each of these figures, the impact of the period from 1960 to 1980 is depicted. For each group of men ordained at different times, the participation in sexual abuse of the cohort rises in the 1960s and 1970s and falls in the 1980s. If the pattern were cohort-specific, the changes would occur at different times, based on the development of the

**Table 2.1** *Nature and Scope* Study: Decade of Ordination of Diocesan Priests Later Accused of Sexual Abuse of Minors

| Decade of Ordination | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| 1890-1919 | 28 | 1.0 |
| 1920-1929 | 58 | 2.1 |
| 1930-1939 | 169 | 6.0 |
| 1940-1949 | 329 | 11.6 |
| 1950-1959 | 662 | 23.4 |
| 1960-1969 | 773 | 27.3 |
| 1970-1979 | 561 | 19.8 |
| 1980-1989 | 198 | 7.0 |
| 1990-2002 | 54 | 1.9 |
| **Total** | **2,832** | **100 %** |

*Data for Table 2.1 do not include information reported after 2002.*

cohort in ministry. A cohort-specific pattern is not evident, for each cohort shows an increase and decrease in incidence in the same period. The impact of the events within the Catholic Church and the shift toward a reduced tolerance for behavioral deviance in society in general is a likely explanation for the sharp declines in incidence for all three cohorts.[189] The period of elevated incidence and subsequent decline are thus seen as "period effects" that were shaped by general social factors.

## Homosexual Behavior in United States Seminaries

Homosexual men entered the seminaries in noticeable numbers from the late 1970s through the 1980s. This statement is based on the direct experience and reports of seminary faculty and on many written reports by observers.[190] It can be seen to have prompted the *Letter on Priestly Formation by the Bishops of New England.*[191] What is not clear is whether the open expression of sexual identity in seminaries in this time period supports the thesis that more men were entering the seminary understanding themselves as homosexual—rather than being more likely to *reveal* themselves as homosexual—than in prior decades. Many ethnographic and journalistic reports by observers of Catholic seminary life in the mid-1970s and 1980s describe a situation that included much more open expression of homosexual identity, or what is called "homosexual lifestyle," and some report homosexual behavior with adults as well. But any claim about the causal connection of the homosexual identification of late 1970s and 1980s seminarians to the likelihood of increased risk of engaging in child sexual abuse while in ministry would have to take into account the fundamental distribution of incidence. Men in the seminaries in the late 1970s and in the 1980s were members of cohorts that were identified with a *decreased* incidence of abuse—not an *increased* incidence of abuse.

A review of the narratives of men who were seminarians in the 1950s[192] and of published histories of the seminaries themselves does not reveal any record of noticeable or widespread sexual activity by seminarians. The interviews done for the *Causes and Context* study and the data from the clinical files confirm this finding. Sociologist Dean Hoge, after a 2001 survey of diocesan and religious priests, reported their responses to a question about the presence of a homosexual subculture in the seminary they attended.[193] Only 3 percent of diocesan priests aged sixty-six or older, who would have been seminarians in the early 1970s, answered affirmatively. In contrast, 40 percent of the priests aged thirty-six to fifty-five, who would have been seminarians in the 1980s and 1990s, reported that there was a clear homosexual subculture in the seminaries they had attended.[194] As was shown in Table 2.1, 40.3 percent of the priest-abusers from the *Nature and Scope* study were ordained in the 1950s and 1960s and committed sexual abusive acts in the 1970s. The men ordained in the 1980s account for a comparatively smaller percentage of the abusers, 7.1 percent. Finally, those men ordained after 1989 represent only 1.9 percent of the accused.

Men who were seminarians during the period of a reported increase in homosexual activity did not go on to abuse minors in any substantial number. The 1980s cohort of seminarians is associated with a marked decrease in the incidence and a sustained suppression of abusive behavior.

## Cohort Patterns

The increase in incidence of sexual abuse for each cohort follows a similar pattern: increasing number of events per year for a period of ten years and then a decline. One purpose of this study was to examine whether the pattern reflects changes in decision-making behavior among the group of priests, namely, desistance from abuse, or whether the regularity is associated with a specific feature, such as more careful recruitment practices, seminary training, or early experiences in ministry. The problem of understanding the experiences during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s of the men who were ordained in the 1930s through 1950s is complex; understandings and characterizations of behavior (explanations to self and others) change as individuals integrate overall cultural change. It is particularly difficult to gather valid information in retrospective studies about how individuals could explain their behavior from many years earlier. Thus, the explanation given

**Figure 2.8** *Nature and Scope*: Pre-1960s Ordination Cohort, Comparison to Total

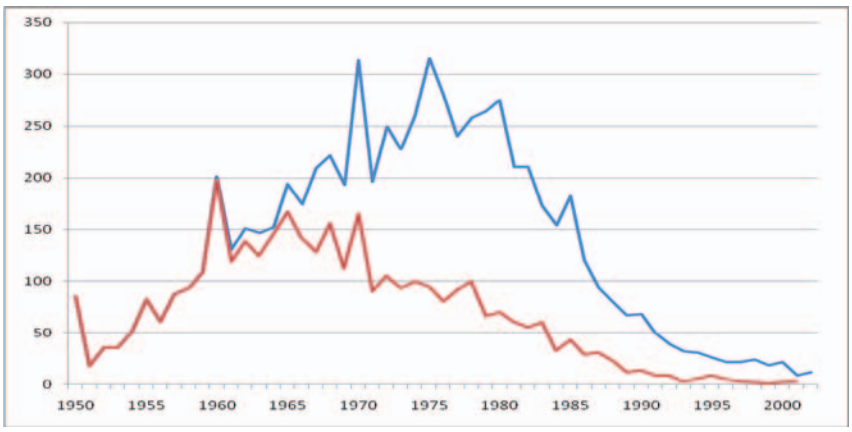



**Figure 2.9** *Nature and Scope*: 1960s Ordination Cohort, Comparison to Total

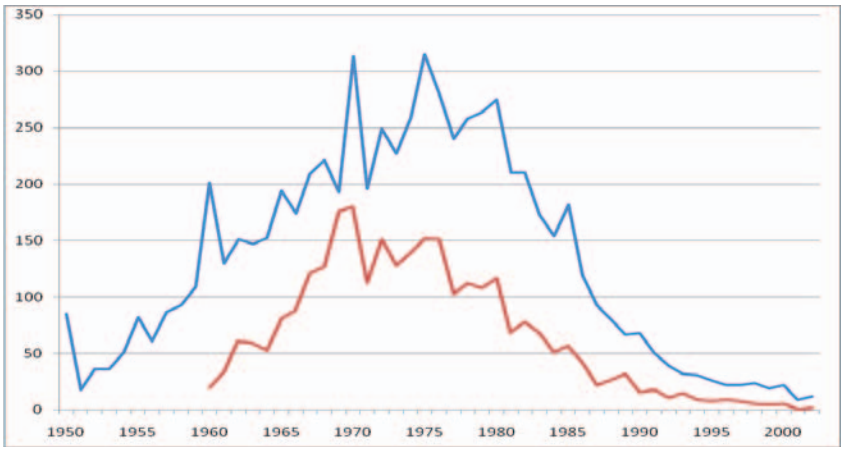
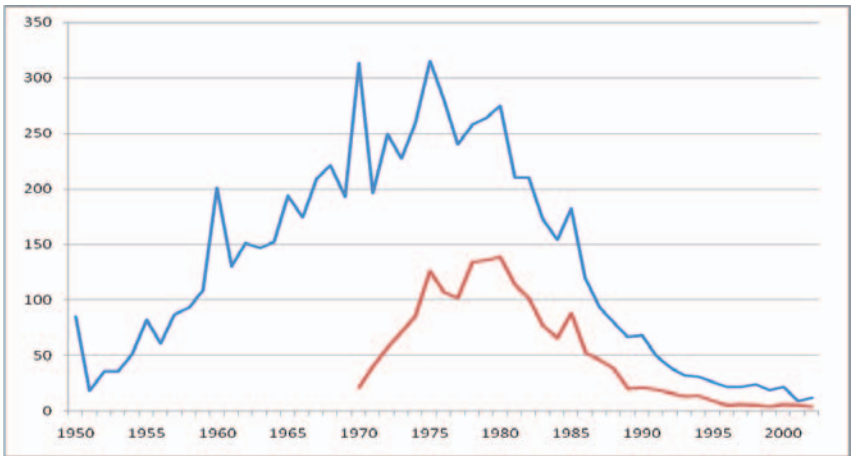



**Figure 2.10** *Nature and Scope*: 1970s Ordination Cohort, Comparison to Total



today by a priest ordained in 1945 for his action in 1965 is framed by the changes in how he understands social and cultural issues today. Chapter 3 addresses this issue further as it considers individual differences in the priests.

## SEMINARY FORMATION FOR MINISTRY

As the *Nature and Scope* study was being prepared for release in 2004, there was intense interest in the data on seminaries that had ordained the accused priests. This concern was expressed by lay people, journalists, and representatives of the USCCB alike. An underlying presumption was that there must have been a deficiency in the preparation for the priesthood that could be linked to the subsequent behavior by the priests later accused of sexual abuse of children.

For the *Nature and Scope* study, 4,392 surveys were received that reported information on priests accused of sexual abuse; of these, 3,399 included a response to the question, "What seminary/seminaries did the cleric attend?" When only the responses for the diocesan priests are considered, 2,245, or 76 percent, included a response to the seminary question. Careful work by experts in the study of Catholic seminaries working on the *Causes and Context* study identified and classified the distinct seminary listings in ways that permitted analysis.

Since some of the responses to the seminary question included duplicate entries on seminary backgrounds, 2,245 distinct entries remained. Among them were 263 diocesan priests who were ordained after graduating from a seminary outside the United States. The two seminaries in Europe that accept students primarily from the United States were not classified as foreign seminaries, but rather included with the US theologates. Classification of the type of US seminary for the diocesan group of 2,245[195] yields the distribution shown below in Table 2.2, with 1,930, or 85.5 percent classified with certainty. Table 2.2 shows the number of seminary graduates who were later accused of abuse, grouped by the type of seminary they attended.

In the pages that follow, the seminary data are used to define and examine descriptive statistics about three groups of priests: (1) the group of priests who attended a minor seminary; (2) the group of priests graduated and ordained by the freestanding seminaries or university-related seminaries that are still open and graduated the largest number of individuals later accused (national seminaries); (3) the group of priests who were ordained in a seminary outside the United States (foreign seminaries). Counts of the priests in the groups used for the analysis that follows are shown in Table 2.3

The following statistics are shown in Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6, sequentially and by decade of ordination for each group: average number of victims, average age at first incident of abuse, and average duration of abuse. The average number of victims per group is based on the data reported in the *Nature and Scope* study; thus they represent reports made to dioceses and do not include any suspected additional victims of a priest. Duration of abuse was calculated by using the first year of any accusation of abuse and the last year of all accusations. As such, the duration statistic does not necessarily represent a continuous period of abuse behavior; rather, it shows the length of time over which the offending persisted.

A number of interview subjects have observed that, in their experience, a significant fraction of the priests later accused of abuse were prepared for ministry and ordained in seminaries outside the United States. If religious and diocesan priests are both considered, the foreign-trained priests that have been identified in the analysis are slightly more than 10 percent of the total for whom there is

**Table 2.2** *Nature and Scope* Study: US Seminaries Attended by Diocesan Priests Later Accused of Abuse

| Seminary Group | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| US diocesan theologate-level seminaries now open (n=37) | 1678 | 86.9 |
| US diocesan theologate-level seminaries not identified (n=139)* | 168 | 8.7 |
| US diocesan college seminaries now open (n=5) | 44 | 2.3 |
| US diocesan college seminaries now closed (n=13) | 40 | 2.1 |
| **Total** | **1,930** | **100.0 %** |

** For 139 different listed seminaries, the information was not sufficient for clear identification. 168 accused priests attended these 139 seminaries.*

seminary data. If only the 263 diocesan priests graduated from foreign seminaries are counted, the percentage is slightly less than 10 percent of the total of diocesan priests. The total count of diocesan priests who graduated from foreign seminaries and served in the United States during the years 1950-2002 is unknown.

This analysis of three subgroups shows regularities that were consistent with the findings of the *Nature and Scope* study: the prevalence and incidence of behaviors of sexual abuse by priests were national in scope, generalized to all levels, and not limited to specific locations. The decade of the 1950s marked a shift to a predominance of male victims of sexual abuse by priests in all groups educated at diocesan seminaries in the United States. This transition did not take place for the priests educated outside the United States until twenty years later, in the 1970s.

The time between ordination and first allegation of abuse may be inflated for the early decades of the period of investigation primarily because cases that occurred before 1950 were not included in the *Nature and Scope* data. Those ordained in the early decades of the twentieth century may have had events of abuse before the *Nature and Scope* study begin date of 1950, but these events would not have been included on the surveys submitted to John Jay College. The result is that for men ordained in the early part of the century, the time to first event of abuse may not be accurate, because earlier events were not accounted for in the study. The result of the "left-censored" data is to inflate the overall average of time to first event of abuse.

If only accused priests ordained after 1940 are included in the analysis, the average time elapsed between ordination and the first accusation is nine years. This statistic declines to seven years if only those ordained after 1950 are included and stabilizes at six years for those cohorts ordained after 1960. These data underscore the importance of understanding the processes both in seminary and after seminary that can help to explain the behavior of 1940s and 1950s graduates; these earlier patterns may also have served to introduce a second pattern, evident in the stability of the post-1960s statistics, relative to the time lapse.

## Changes in Formation Program Content in Diocesan Seminaries: Impact on or Effect of Abuse?

Theological seminaries have made considerable changes in the models and content pertaining to human formation in the past twenty-five years. From the information available in diocesan seminary catalogs from the mid-1980s, the mid-1990s, and current catalogs (2008-2011), it is evident that almost every seminary changed its formation programs in response to pressing problems in the church related to clerical sexual abuse and to directives from the Vatican and the USCCB concerning these matters. During the first period, virtually none of the programs described in catalogs referred to human formation, but, rather, under the banner of spiritual formation, they mentioned the need for growth in maturity and balance in daily life for the sake of the people the seminarians would eventually serve. By the middle period, many seminaries adopted the language of personal development, and some described the formation associated with it as a separate component. During that period more than a few seminaries adopted the practice of providing a formation advisor for each student to monitor growth in all areas of formation.

In this mid-1980s period almost all seminary catalogs described priestly formation as comprised of three basic elements: spiritual, academic, and pastoral. In the thirty or so seminaries whose main mission was to prepare men for diocesan priesthood, the focus during this period was on the contents and organization of the spiritual dimension of formation. Almost all of the descriptions contained at least some mention of personal formation, but half the programs are called simply "Spiritual Formation." The other half specifically include in their titles the aspects of both spiritual

**Table 2.3** *Nature and Scope* Study: Diocesan Priests by Seminary Analysis Group

| Analysis Group | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Priests who attended a Minor Seminary | 79 | 4.09% of 1,930 |
| Priests who attended one of the 10 US seminaries that graduated the largest number of priests with subsequent accusations of abuse | 967 | 50.1% of 1,930 |
| Priests who attended seminaries in countries other than the USA* | 263 | 13.6% of 1,930 |

** This group does not include those seminaries whose students are primarily priests from the United States.*

**Table 2.4** *Nature and Scope* Study: Average Number of Victims, by Analysis Group

| Decade of Ordination | Minor Seminary | Foreign Seminary | 10 US seminaries |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1890-1919 | * | 1.20 | 1.28 |
| 1920-1929 | * | 1.00 | 1.56 |
| 1930-1939 | 1.00 | 2.07 | 2.03 |
| 1940-1949 | 2.13 | 1.63 | 2.18 |
| 1950-1959 | 2.56 | 2.03 | 2.70 |
| 1960-1969 | 2.70 | 2.57 | 2.77 |
| 1970-1979 | 3.62 | 2.14 | 2.47 |
| 1980-1989 | 2.00 | 1.90 | 1.86 |
| 1990-2002 | * | 1.38 | 1.45 |

* *No cases.*

**Table 2.5** *Nature and Scope* Study: Average Age of Priests at First Incidence of Abuse, by Analysis Group

| Decade of Ordination | Minor Seminary | Foreign Seminary | 10 US seminaries |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1890-1919 | * | 72.00 | 69.73 |
| 1920-1929 | * | 61.29 | 61.04 |
| 1930-1939 | 54.00 | 52.91 | 52.50 |
| 1940-1949 | 44.50 | 45.51 | 44.38 |
| 1950-1959 | 43.06 | 42.50 | 39.72 |
| 1960-1969 | 38.32 | 38.33 | 35.07 |
| 1970-1979 | 32.14 | 33.09 | 32.71 |
| 1980-1989 | 28.00 | 38.62 | 34.28 |
| 1990-2002 | * | 35.90 | 31.56 |

* *No cases.*

**Table 2.6** *Nature and Scope* Study: Average Duration of Abuse in Year, by Analysis Group

| Decade of Ordination | Minor Seminary | Foreign Seminary | 10 US seminaries |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1890-1919 | * | 2.33 | 1.00 |
| 1920-1929 | * | 3.83 | 5.76 |
| 1930-1939 | 1.00 | 5.10 | 3.89 |
| 1940-1949 | 6.80 | 5.53 | 5.41 |
| 1950-1959 | 5.42 | 4.90 | 6.90 |
| 1960-1969 | 6.94 | 5.76 | 7.16 |
| 1970-1979 | 4.76 | 5.80 | 4.61 |
| 1980-1989 | 9.00 ** | 1.09 | 3.15 |
| 1990-2002 | * | 1.43 | 1.64 |

** No cases.* *** One priest*

and personal formation: eight use just that title, five others use a broader title of "Priestly Formation," and two others are unique, one being "Growth in Life and Ministry" and the other "Student Life and Formation." Clearly, human formation, and its associated topics, was not at the forefront of the minds of seminary personnel during the 1980s and before.[196]

Several elements were common to most of the programs during this time, regardless of the title, but for those called "Spiritual Formation" the emphasis, as expected, was on spirituality with minimal elaboration of other areas of formation. First among the common elements was spiritual direction, in which almost all seminarians were specifically required to participate. They were to see a spiritual director every two weeks, or in a few cases, at least once a month. Many emphasized the confidential nature of the relationship, which was to be characterized by trust and openness. Terms like complete confidentiality and strict secrecy were used to indicate that this practice was entirely in the "internal forum," the content of which was not to be revealed except under a few rare circumstances.

To balance this practice, in nine seminaries each student was guided also by a formation advisor who was to assist him with all areas of formation. This relationship was not confidential in the sense that material covered in the conversations between advisor and student was understood to be in the "external forum" and thus, with the advisor using prudence about what to reveal, was to be included in evaluations. A third form of consultation mentioned by almost every seminary was psychological counseling. This arrangement would not be compulsory, but the service was available through the seminary. Accurate self-knowledge was the broad goal of all three forms of consultation.

A second common element in the Spiritual/Personal Formation programs was an emphasis on the importance of solidifying the vocation or commitment to lifelong ministerial service on the part of seminarians. Part of this task was to be achieved by developing spiritual and emotional maturity, a phrase used in one form or another by virtually every seminary. Generally the descriptions made the point that development of the mature person was for the sake of the people they would eventually serve in ministerial positions. They were to cultivate a deep prayer life, consisting of many required spiritual exercises, so that they could be prepared "to accept priestly burdens, particularly celibacy," as one seminary expressed it.

Less common were several other themes, most often included by seminaries whose understanding of spiritual formation was broader and involved a more developed

program of personal formation, later to be called "human formation" by Pope John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis* (*PDV*).[197] Of particular interest was the inclusion of program elements dealing with sexuality and preparation for celibacy. Only about half the seminaries mentioned workshops, formation sessions, and/or courses dealing with these topics. They described the programs as necessary for the seminarian to develop "a mature attitude toward his own sexuality and the celibate life," learn about "the meaning of celibate chastity" and how to deal with it in ministerial situations, as well as understand "sexuality, intimacy, and generativity" and "the many facets of celibacy." Less directly, they talked about "the ability to live a moral and virtuous life," and "social maturity." Often these expressions were followed by the comment that this development was for the sake of the "quest to be more fully human and fully Christian for the sake of the people." Certainly other seminaries may have discussed these matters, but until years later catalogs did not refer to them.

Responsibility for the evaluation process usually fell to the spiritual formation team, consisting mainly of faculty members. Spiritual directors, who were usually the heads of the Spiritual/Personal Formation programs, were not allowed to participate because of agreement about confidentiality. Components of the evaluation also involved peer evaluators, a practice in about ten of the seminaries. The explanation of the purpose of annual, or occasionally more frequent, evaluations was to assess the readiness of the seminarian for pastoral ministry. His personal qualifications and attributes were to be judged largely on the basis of how effectively he would be able to serve as a priest.

By the mid-1990s, some shifts in the content of catalogs relative to spiritual and personal formation were evident. More seminaries identified personal formation as a component, but only one or two mentioned "human formation." The descriptions of the human dimension of formation were relatively meager in most cases, and the emphasis was still strongly on spiritual formation. None of the seminaries had established distinct programs in human formation with its own goals and objectives. Yet personal formation and affective maturity received more attention than earlier. At least half the seminaries included some programs related to celibacy and described them at least briefly in a paragraph or two. These were often special workshops, class conferences, and discussions.

Notable in this period was the introduction of formation advisors in almost all seminaries, compared with only nine using this structure ten years earlier. The practice allowed for information about seminarians to move from the internal forum of spiritual direction to the external forum of faculty evaluations. Seminary faculty in earlier years knew relatively little about the progress of seminarians. The one who knew the most, the spiritual director, was bound by confidentiality. Certainly program development related to personal formation was expanded in the 1990s, but only in the mid-2000s and later did the content of the formation programs change significantly in seminary catalog descriptions.[198]

From about 2006-2010, immense changes were recorded demonstrating greater awareness of the need for human formation, including education about the role of sexuality and celibacy in the life of a priest. Separate programs for Human Formation and Spiritual Formation were documented in twenty of the thirty-one seminary catalogs, and most others made at least mention of the two areas. The term "human formation," taken from John Paul II's *PDV*, replaced "personal development" and similar phrases used in the past. The remaining eleven seminaries entitled their programs in different ways and usually combined the content of human and spiritual formation. About a third of the seminaries described the content of the programs in substantial detail, including considerable information about how the seminaries contend with the topics of sexuality and celibacy.

The effects of the sexual abuse scandal from 2002 and the Vatican-initiated visitation of seminaries in 2005-2006 undoubtedly influenced the considerable attention paid to these topics by 2010. The 2005 *Program of Priestly Formation* (*PPF*) included a chapter (twelve pages) entitled "Human Formation" for the first time, and it made numerous other references throughout the document to this dimension of formation. In particular, it provided extensive explanations and directives concerning the role of seminaries in preparing men to live a life of celibate chastity. Relative to admissions, for example, the *PPF* states, "For the seminary applicant, thresholds pertaining to sexuality serve as the foundation for living a lifelong commitment to healthy, chaste celibacy. As we have recently seen so dramatically in the church, when such foundations are lacking in priests, the consequent suffering and scandals are devastating."

Of particular interest is the shift in vocabulary that accompanied the new approaches to formation. To begin with, almost all seminaries discussed the importance of integration of the four aspects, or "pillars," of formation—human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. These are not to be considered discrete or layered dimensions of seminary formation, but rather are to be interrelated. Human formation is the foundation for all the others; spiritual formation enhances the capacity of the individual to develop a relationship with God and others; intellectual formation provides an understanding of all areas; and pastoral formation is the expression in ministry of the other dimensions of formation. An emphasis on developing positive relationships characterizes the role human formation is to

play. Living community life to the full and developing fraternal bonds with other seminarians are opportunities to learn about effective ways of interacting. As a public person, the priest is to act in appropriate ways with parishioners and understand how his actions affect those he meets in future ministry.

Another approach emphasized anew in the human formation program is the personal responsibility each seminarian must take in preparing for priesthood. In this regard, development of moral virtues is considered necessary to the life of a priest—self-knowledge, self-discipline, integrity, justice, and prudence among them. The practice of these virtues is to lead to development of a moral conscience, a proper ordering of the passions, and maintaining boundaries in order to achieve good and avoid evil. Acquiring these qualities is to result in the seminarian taking on habits that will make it possible for him to build his capacity to become emotionally mature, to live a chaste celibate life, and thus enable him to meet the expectations of the church. Spiritual directors and formation advisors assist the seminarian in this growth; periodic evaluations enable him to recognize the shortcomings he still must overcome. The interconnected areas heightened in recent seminary programs, more than ever before, have to do with integration, relationships, and personal responsibility for moral behavior.

## Curricular Change in Formation for Celibacy

From 1971 to 2005, the US bishops published five editions of the *PPF*, covering all aspects of formation. What is reviewed here is the topic of formation for chaste celibacy, its place in the overall program, the extent of coverage, the terminology, and the content in each edition. Most notable are the changes between the first three (1971, 1976, and 1981) and the last two editions (1992 and 2005).

### *The First Edition (1971)*

The first edition included four relatively brief paragraphs on celibacy, mainly under the "Pastoral Ministry" section, emphasizing the importance of celibacy being deeply rooted in the Lord and being for the sake of the pastoral mission. Developing appropriate attitudes toward celibacy, sex, and love were mentioned, as well as proper relationships with women. The College Formation section did not discuss celibacy in the first edition.

### *The Second Edition (1976)*

The second edition included five paragraphs on celibacy, four of which were virtually identical to the 1971 edition. The new paragraph emphasized the personal value of celibacy as a way of sharing in the life of Christ. All of this material was newly placed under "Development of the Seminarian: Personal and Spiritual." The College Formation section included four paragraphs with similar themes as Theology but geared toward a younger age group relative to emotional maturity and social development.

### *The Third Edition (1981)*

The third edition included eleven paragraphs on celibacy, five of which were very similar to the 1976 edition. Four new paragraphs were added under "Development of the Seminarian: Personal and Spiritual." They treated topics such as the necessity of learning the value of celibacy in a consumer culture, understanding the nature of sexuality, including homosexuality, and the church's teachings on all these topics. It also discussed the importance of discerning the call to celibacy, articulating the expectations for behavior, and evaluating progress being made in the seminarians' commitment to lifelong celibacy. Two other new paragraphs, under the introduction "Priestly Formation in the U.S.A.," emphasized the obligatory nature of celibacy and the responsibility of the seminary to prepare students to live out their commitment to celibacy. The College Formation section included six paragraphs, all virtually the same as Theology, but with the proviso that the content be geared toward college-age students.

### *The Fourth Edition (1992)*

The fourth edition is changed substantially in both content and length, with thirty-three paragraphs included. Almost all previous wording is changed and the content is found largely under "Foundations of Priestly Formation: The Spiritual Life of Diocesan Priests," with a few paragraphs under "The Admission and Continuing Formation of Seminarians." After describing the negative influences of the present social climate on lifelong commitment and a life of celibacy, most of the content is directed toward spiritual goals, behavioral expectations, and admissions standards. With Jesus as the model of the celibate life, the program is to make clear the rationale of the church for requiring celibacy. The content is to focus on the essential meaning of celibacy, its value, and its relationship to Christ, church, and ordination. Necessary practices to live a celibate life, including virtues and habits and seeing Mary as a model and support are mentioned. Eight paragraphs focus on "Celibacy for the Kingdom" and "Priestly Life and Ministry: Witness to the Kingdom." A clear delineation of behavioral expectations appropriate to a life of celibacy must be part of formation goals. Psychological assessment relative to celibacy in the admissions process is seen as integral, as is evaluation of seminarians regarding their growth in commitment to celibacy. Overall the new material is more specific and more oriented toward spirituality and appropriate behavior for a celibate

lifestyle. The College Formation section includes four paragraphs emphasizing spiritual formation for celibacy and the importance of community life in helping seminarians grow emotionally and psychosexually.

### *The Fifth Edition (2005)*

The fifth edition is changed substantially from the fourth and includes twenty-three paragraphs specifically concerning celibate chastity. The material on celibacy is expanded on and incorporated largely in a new lengthy section on "Human Formation." It speaks of integrating Human Formation with all other aspects of formation: Spiritual, Intellectual, and Pastoral. It provides extensive norms on Preparation for Celibacy, including the necessity of a coordinated and multifaceted program of instruction, detailed explanation of basic attitudes and behavioral expectations about the practice of celibacy, and how to understand and accept the value of one's sexuality when directed to God's service.

The program is to foster growth in solid moral character and moral conscience, to help seminarians develop habits and skills to live a celibate commitment, and to understand the meaning of chastity, required ascetical practices, and theological rationale. Several topics are mentioned for the first time in this edition: disqualification for admission if any criminal sexual activity with a minor or inclination toward such is known, the necessity to follow guidelines of the Holy See regarding same-sex experience and/or inclinations, and the requirement to investigate certain conditions prior to orders, such as whether or not the candidate has been sexually abused and whether any remedies are needed. High standards and vigilance are urged pertaining to sexuality, affective maturity, and capacity to live celibate chastity. Expanded norms for Admission of Candidates are given concerning psychosexual development, capacity to live a celibate life, and a minimum of two years of continent living before entry. College Formation does not have a separate section on celibacy, except to say that norms and expectations will vary from those given for Theology.

On the whole both seminary formation programs and the five editions of the *PPF* show significant modification and development over the past forty years. Many seminaries began adapting their formation programs before the sexual abuse crisis of 2002 became public. In the 1990s, at about the same time as seminaries changed significantly, the fourth edition of the *PPF* elaborated its requirements to include more meaningful formation in celibate chastity, but only in the 2005 fifth edition does the *PPF* discuss in clear terms sexuality and the expectations for education and behavior relative to the concerns surrounding celibacy. At that point it provides detailed explanations of the steps seminaries are to take to fulfill the directives. These requirements are reflected in the most recent catalogs of many seminaries.

## Conclusion

Data show that the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests peaked in the 1970s, with a decline by the mid-1980s in all regions of the Catholic Church in the United States. Though more cases of sexual abuse continue to be reported to dioceses today, almost all of these allegations are of abuse that occurred decades earlier. The documented rise in cases of abuse in the 1960s and 1970s is similar to the rise in other types of "deviant" behavior in society, and coincides with social change during this time period. This period effect is also clearly shown through analysis of the different cohorts of seminary graduates; the later the cohorts, the shorter the average time between ordination and commission of abusive acts. Factors that remained consistent over this time period, such as celibacy, do not explain the sexual abuse "crisis." Celibacy has been constant in the Catholic Church since the eleventh century and could not account for the rise and subsequent decline in abuse cases from the 1960s through the 1980s.

Several important findings emerged in relation to the role of seminary education on the abuse crisis. First, priests educated in foreign seminaries were not significantly more likely to have allegations of abuse than those educated in the United States. Second, those educated in minor seminaries were not significantly more likely to have allegations than those educated only in major seminaries. Third, the abuse crisis was a national problem in scope, and the priests with allegations were educated in mainstream seminaries across the country. Finally, the majority of those who had allegations of abuse were educated in seminaries prior to the 1970s; thus, even though the incidence of abuse peaked in the 1970s, many of the priests with allegations were in seminary in the 1940s and 1950s.

Seminary formation has evolved considerably over the past twenty-five years, and this evolution likely had an impact on the changing rates of sexual abuse of minors. In the mid-1980s and before, programs emphasized spiritual and academic formation, with some attention paid to pastoral formation in the form of field education and parish internships. Spiritual direction was the focal point for both spiritual and personal development. Woven into spiritual formation were elements of growth in emotional maturity and vocational commitment, which included lifelong celibacy. The focus was on moral development, with the goal of forming priests who could serve as effective ministers for the church. Though clearly an expectation, limited instruction was provided on how to live a life of celibate chastity.

By the mid-1990s, some changes in formation were evident. Programs were more often entitled "Spiritual and Personal Formation," and external formation advisors became part of the seminary structure. More time and attention were devoted to topics of affective maturity and community life, with attendant virtues to be practiced. Workshops, classes, and conferences on the topic of celibacy were more frequent. By the mid-2000s, striking changes were made in seminary formation. The four pillars identified by Pope John Paul II in *PDV* were adopted almost universally. Seminaries incorporated Human Formation as a separate program, and the contents were elaborated in many of the descriptions of priestly formation. It always included extensive formation in celibate chastity and many related elements such as the nature of appropriate relationships and the meaning of moral behavior as a priest. All aspects of formation were to be integrated so that the seminarian would develop personal responsibility for his future ministry. Over the past twenty-five years, a remarkable intensification of human formation and deeper understanding of the importance of its role are evident in almost every seminary. Over the same period, the total number of accusations of sexual abuse of a minor by a Catholic priest has fallen from 975 for the period of 1985 through 1989 to 253 for the period of 1995 through 1999, and then to 73 for the period of 2004 through 2008. An awareness of the problem of sexual abuse surely informed the development of the curriculum, but the benefits to seminarians may be seen in the continuing very low levels of sexual abuse of minors. As is discussed in the final chapter of this report, it is critical to ensure that priests continue to receive human formation training in seminary. One recommendation we make is for continued education on human formation to ensure that priests have the training and support to overcome any individual vulnerabilities they may face, as described in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

# Psychological Analysis of Sexual Abuse by Catholic Priests: Exploring the Individual-Level Characteristics of Abusers and Explanations for Sexual Abuse

## Individual Causes of Deviant Sexual Behavior

Scholarly research on child sexual abuse and abusers has increased significantly throughout the last century. Early research on sex offenders indicated that offenders were psychologically different from non-offenders and more often than not strangers to their victims. The late 1930s brought an increased focus on sexual offenders in the general public. The media promoted the image of the serious "sex fiend" through newspaper articles and magazines, and the news focused primarily on sex offenders who were strangers to their victims. In the 1950s, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover warned families of a looming "stranger danger," and these warnings continued through the 1960s. At mid-century, criminal justice practices, such as parole for repeat offenders, came under scrutiny, as such practices were perceived as a significant problem contributing to recidivism.[199] Politicians also began to address the problem of sexual "fiends" and "monsters,"[200] implementing laws to incapacitate them indefinitely. The use of civil commitment under sexual psychopath laws increased throughout the 1940s and early 1950s.[201] Sexual activity with an individual of the same sex was still considered a socially unacceptable behavior at this time, and some researchers linked homosexuals and pedophiles through their "perverse" sexual interests. An attraction to an individual of the same gender and an attraction to children were seen as evidence of "arrested psychosexual development."[202] The most common way of conceptualizing the acts of a person who sexually abused a child was to look for an explanation in the characteristics of the individual and a belief that the individual could be treated. It has only been in the last thirty to forty years that the focus of research on sexual abuse began to change. Victimization surveys showed that the majority of sexual abuse victims knew the perpetrators, and many of the perpetrators were not driven by psychological pathologies such as pedophilia. That said, much is still to be learned about sexual abusers and their pathways to abuse.

Similarly, much remains to be learned about the causal factors or etiological determinants of sexual abuse of minors by priests and whether and how risk differs for priest versus non-priest offender populations. While widespread speculation has focused on issues such as homosexuality[203] and the vow of celibacy,[204] John Loftus cautioned that "as regards the sexual misconduct of priests, we have plenty of theories, lots of anecdotal therapeutic explanations, but very little fact."[205] Indeed, there has been relatively little focus on other potential etiological explanations, despite evidence that priests, as a group, appear similar to other males.[206] Langevin, Curnoe, and Bain found few differences between priest-abusers and non-priest abusers when groups were matched on education and age. [207] Indeed, Langevin and colleagues found loneliness, social isolation, and substance abuse to be common correlates of offending across priest and non-priest abusers. [208] Hanson, Pfafflin, and Lutz similarly contend that, while abusive priests tend to be older, better educated, and less antisocial than non-priest child molesters, they share common risk factors of sexual perpetration, including deviant sexual interests and alcohol abuse.[209]

A review of the literature found several small-scale studies that have examined factors that may be etiologically related to sexual abuse of minors by priests.[210] Haywood, Kravitz, Wasyliw, Goldberg, and Cavanaugh, for example, found an association between having been sexually abused in childhood and perpetrating an offense against a child in adulthood; this association was apparent for both priests and non-priests.[211] Specifically, the odds of a sexually abused priest offending against children in adulthood were 6.05 times higher than that of the odds of a nonabused priest offending in adulthood. Although Haywood and colleagues suggested that these findings

may indicate unique etiological pathways to offending for priest and non-priest perpetrators, the small sample size of this study limits generalizability of their results.[212]

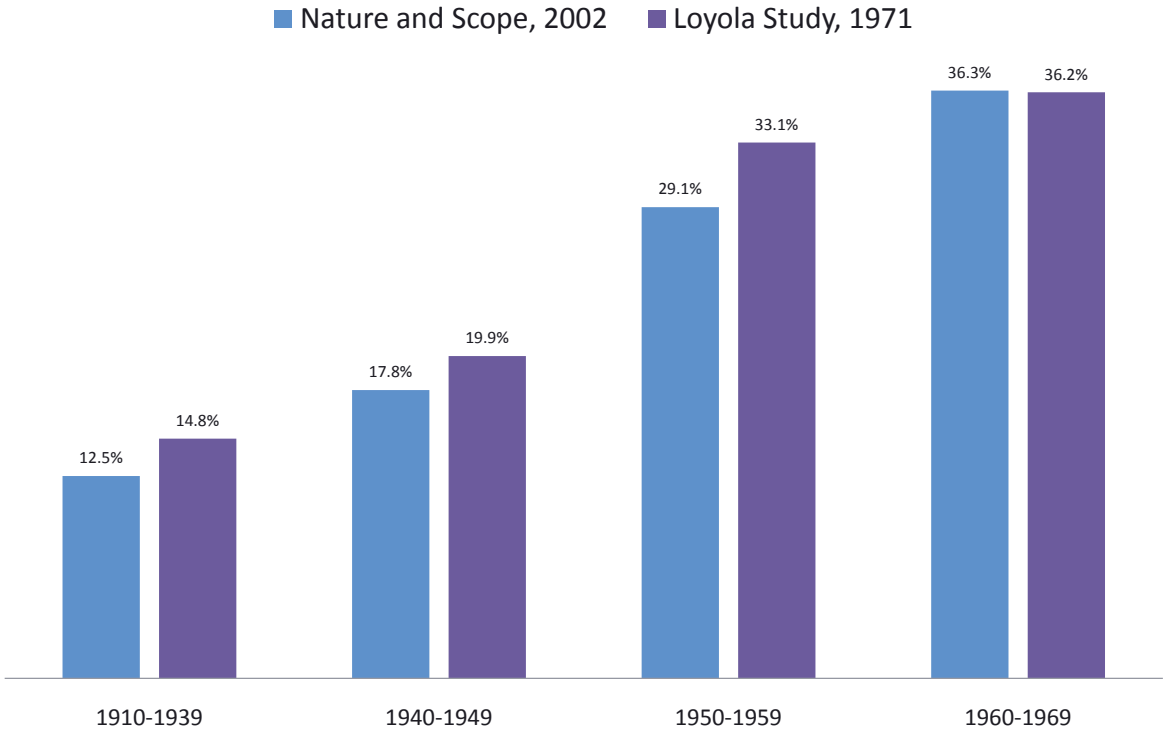
Marc Falkenhain found that a common personality pattern among a small sample of abusive priests was that of social isolation, overcontrolled affect, and passivity. [213] Similarly, Plante, Manuel, and Bryant found that overcontrolled hostility, as assessed by the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), most reliably distinguished priests who had offended against children from those who had not.[214] Plante and Aldridge later found that priest-abusers appeared defensive and isolative on MMPI-2 profiles but did not exhibit overcontrolled hostility as found in earlier studies.[215]

If individuals who commit acts of sexual abuse of minors can be distinguished or identified by preexisting psychological or behavioral characteristics, those characteristics could be used to screen candidates for the ministry or to evaluate their risk of future acts of abuse. In this section of the report, data from multiple sources are examined to evaluate the presence and influence of three clusters of individual-level characteristics: serious psychological disturbance, major mental illness, or personality disorder; behavioral experiences, disturbance in sexual development, or sexual history; and differences in attitude toward the ministry. Behavioral factors include a history of having been sexually abused as a child, the experience of major developmental trauma, and having had homosexual experiences prior to entering seminary or while attending seminary.

## Data Sources, Samples, and Methodology

The individual-level analysis of characteristics shown by priests accused of sexual abuse of minors draws on four data sources: (1) the *Nature and Scope* study; (2) primary data collected by a team of researchers at Loyola University led by Eugene Kennedy in 1971; (3) clinical data gathered from three treatment centers for the *Causes and Context* study; and (4) surveys of priests with and without allegations of abuse related to their identity and behavior. The *Nature and Scope* data include *only* information on priests accused of abuse while the Loyola study data describe a representative sample of priests in ministry in 1970. These 1970 data serve as a normative baseline for understanding the characteristics of men in the priesthood around the peak time of incidence of sexual abuse of minors. The composition of the Loyola study sample—based on the decade of ordination—is very similar to the distribution of priests in the *Nature and Scope* study. It is thus reasonable to expect that the same overall sociocultural influences—before seminary, in seminary and after

**Figure 3.1** *Nature and Scope* and *Loyola* Samples, by Ordination Decade, in Percentages



ordination—would have been experienced by the priests in both sets of data. This very close match in decade of ordination for the cohorts of priests in the *Nature and Scope* data and the sample included in the *Loyola* study are shown in Figure 3.1.

The identity and behavior and clinical data collected for the *Causes and Context* study include both information about priests accused of sexual abuse and comparison groups of priests in active ministry with no allegations of abuse. A chart comparing the composition of the three *Causes and Context* samples based on the decade of ordination follows at Figure 3.2.

Both Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show the percentages of the ordination cohorts in each sample or data source. The counts, or number of priests in each group shown in these charts, are very different. The *Nature and Scope* data are a universe, or census, of all priests known to have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of a minor between 1950 and 2002. In contrast, the other data groups are samples, or subsets, of priests.

## *Nature and Scope* Study

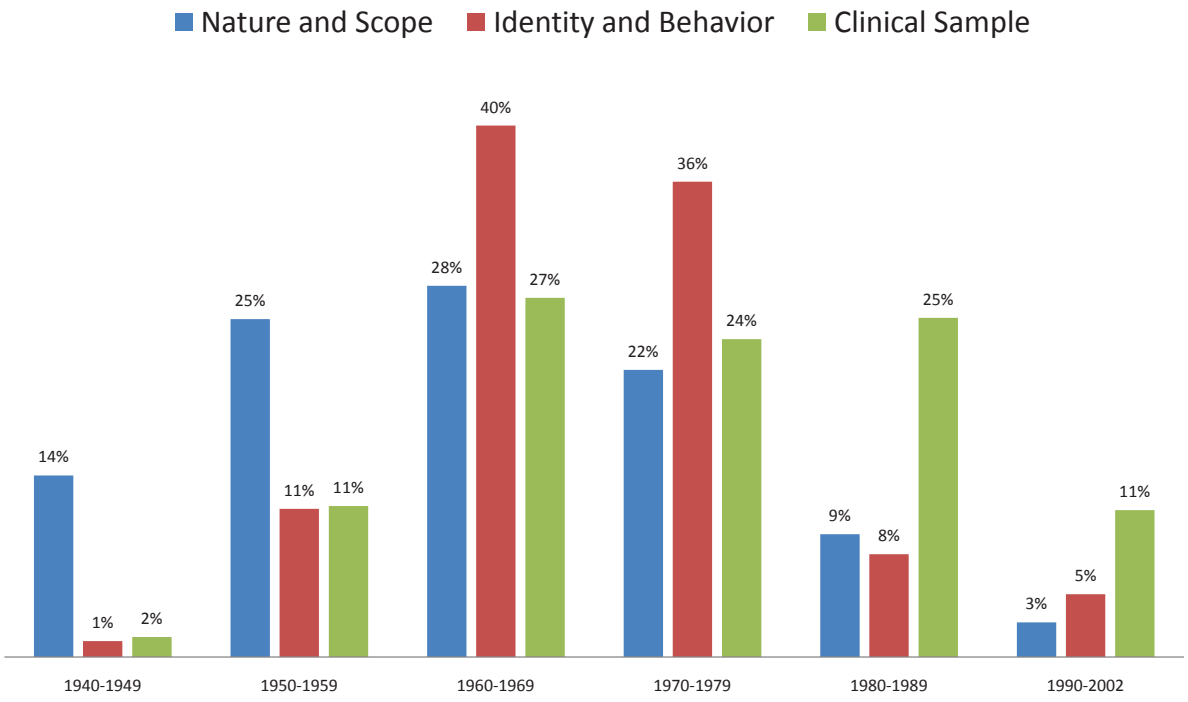
The *Nature and Scope* study, completed in 2004, is based on data drawn from diocesan files for 4,392 priests accused of sexual abuse of a youth under the age of eighteen together with data from 10,667 victims of this abuse. This data set allows for analysis of the patterns of abuse by individual priests as well as the distribution of characteristics of the abuse. Data are available on the diocesan handling of abuse cases and include data on psychological problems as well as other nonsexual forms of clerical deviance.

## *Loyola Psychological Study*

In 1970 and 1971, Dr. Eugene Kennedy, a Loyola University of Chicago psychologist, led a team of clinically trained interviewers in a study of 271 priests in active service. The priests selected for this study, *The Loyola Psychological Study of the Ministry and Life of the American Priest* (*Loyola* study),[216] were drawn from the careful random sample selected for Andrew Greeley's groundbreaking project, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Sociological Investigations*.[217] The *Loyola* research, conducted under contract with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB, the precursor to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), included in-depth psychoanalytic interviews, personality and attitude assessments, and life history data.

Dr. Kennedy granted the *Causes and Context* research team access to the archives of the *Loyola* study, including raw data, actual archival transcriptions, and test data. The research process for the present study used the raw data to summarize and describe the characteristics of the

**Figure 3.2** *Causes and Context*: Composition of the Data Samples Collected for the *Causes and Context* Study, by Ordination Decade, in Percentages



Catholic priesthood just prior to the peak in the abuse crisis. The *Loyola* study data include no information about sexual contact with minors and are thus used only to provide a context in the present study for understanding the psychological state of a random sample of priests in the early 1970s.

The *Loyola* study data are important to the *Causes and Context* study for two reasons. First, they provide a snapshot of the priesthood just prior to the peak of the abuse crisis. The majority of men with allegations of abuse were ordained prior to the 1970s, and these data allow for an assessment of the priesthood at that time. It would not be possible to retrospectively collect psychological information from this cohort regarding their experiences some forty years previously, particularly since the sample of priests included in the *Loyola* study would now be in their eighties and nineties. Second, the *Loyola* study provides a comparative baseline for the analysis of the data collected for the *Causes and Context* study from priests with allegations of abuse.

## *Causes and Context* Clinical Data

The clinical component of this study was designed to explore psychological explanations of abuse and examine them in cultural and historical context. The researchers considered whether there were distinct patterns of sexual misconduct that distinguished clergy who perpetrated abusive acts against children from those who engaged in other forms of sexual misconduct with adults and those who had not engaged in any form of sexual misconduct or abuse. Through use of a case-control methodology, the priest perpetrators of child sexual abuse were compared with (1) clergy who engaged in universally defined sexual "misconduct" with adults (such as those who breached professional role boundaries by sexually exploiting adults); (2) clergy who had received general mental health treatment for behavioral or psychological problems of a nonsexual nature; and (3) "normal" candidates for seminary or other vocational service for the Catholic Church. The objective of this comparison was to discern individual or situational risk factors that heightened the likelihood of engaging in sexual perpetration and whether there were also identifiable protective factors that reduced this likelihood.

Staff at three facilities that provided residential psychological treatment for members of the Catholic priesthood completed a lengthy and detailed survey based on the extensive data in their clinical files. The data collection instrument included questions about the priest's demographic and social history, seminary and ordination data, experience in ministry, a detailed history of sexual experience, history of psychological problems and treatment, and psychological test results. No identifying information was recorded, and the files were given a case number and conveyed to the research team at John Jay College. From one treatment center, survey instruments were completed for all priests treated and priest-candidates evaluated between 1984 and 1999, a total of 715 individuals. From the second center, survey instruments were completed for all priests treated after 1999, a total of 401 priests. From the third center, data on a targeted sample of 170 priests treated for sexual abuse of a minor, primarily during the 1990s, were used to confirm the descriptive findings from the larger samples.

## Identity and Behavior Data

The objective of the Survey of Identity and Behavior was to compile information from two groups: (1) priests accused of sexual abuse with a minor but who were still in contact with their dioceses; and (2) a matched sample of priests of similar age and parish assignments who were not the subject of an abuse accusation. In early February 2008, letters that explained the study and its purposes and procedures were sent to all diocesan or eparchial bishops in the United States. At the same time, a box of surveys and consent forms, along with the request that they be distributed to accused priests were delivered to the vicar for clergy or the vicar general in each diocese.[218] The packages were sent in advance of any commitment to participate in the *Causes and Context* study. The surveys were designed to help the researchers understand what these priests, most now "inactive" as a result of an accusation, thought about themselves, their lives as priests, and their parish experiences. The survey contained 120 variables, of which 108 yielded close-ended responses. The close-ended variables included demographics of race, age, education, ordination year, and seminary type, as well as family, self-esteem, and role commitment variables. Surveys were completed and returned by 119 priests who had allegations of sexual abuse of a minor.

It was desirable to identify as close a comparison group of nonaccused priests as possible. To this end, an initial analysis of the priest-abuser data was conducted prior to distribution of the second wave of surveys. A second box of surveys and consents was sent to the dioceses that had agreed to participate with a request to recruit a comparison group of priests in active ministry who were at least fifty-five years of age and who had substantial parish experience. Like the survey for priest-abusers, this survey measured perceptions of dimensions of the self and the priest role, relationships to others, understanding of and attitudes about sexuality, and details on one's seminary learning. Surveys were returned by 361 priests in active ministry. These samples cannot be said to be formally

representative of all priests in ministry at this time, or of priests who had allegations of abuse, but the comprehensiveness of the distribution and the participation by more than 120 dioceses reduce the likelihood of any systemic bias. The surveys and interviews provide valuable insight into the priests' perceptions of themselves, their characteristics and behaviors, and their roles as men and as priests. The group of accused priests is a specific sample, who may be more deeply connected to the Catholic Church than those accused priests who chose to separate themselves. Additionally, the priest-abuser sample is likely to include some less-serious abusers than the group of priest-abusers as a whole, since they have not gone through the criminal justice system or been laicized. The group of priests in active ministry who do not have allegations of abuse is valuable for being a true comparison group or "normal sample" of the Catholic priesthood.

### *Identity and Behavior Sample Characteristics*

The final sample for the Identity and Behavior survey consisted of approximately one-quarter accused priests and three-quarters nonaccused priests. The sample was almost entirely white (99.5 percent). Both priest subgroups were largely educated in the United States (91 percent accused and 95 percent nonaccused). At the time of survey completion, the average age of respondents was sixty-six years old, and nearly three-quarters of the sample distribution were between fifty-eight and seventy-three years old. Comparatively, the accused were older on average (sixty-nine years) and had a slightly larger and more positively skewed age range (forty-one to ninety-two years) than the nonaccused priests. Although accused priests were older and slightly more dispersed, within each subsample the priests were homogeneous. Most of the accused priests included in the Identity and Behavior sample had allegations of behavior occurring six years or more before the survey distribution in the current study (conducted in 2008). Most of the priests came to priesthood about forty-five years before they completed the survey. The overall sample decided to enter priesthood at age seventeen (on average) and actually entered the seminary about a year after such decision; no average differences were found by clerical subgroup. One notable difference between survey groups was in ordination year, particularly as this was relative to the end of the Second Vatican Council and the implementation of the resultant changes. About one-third of the overall sample was ordained by 1965, but upon comparison of the priest groups, nearly half of the accused group was ordained by that year, compared to just over one-quarter in the comparison group.

## Etiology of Sexual Offending: Understanding the Pathology of Sexual Disorders

One of the key research questions in the *Causes and Context* study is whether priest-abusers' behaviors can be explained by psychological or sexual disorders. Sexual pathology is an abnormal or misplaced erotic response; erotic arousal is connected, for example, to an object or a child's body rather than to another person of the same age. The abnormal manifestation in behavior and on psychological tests is what makes a clinical diagnosis of sexual pathology possible. These diagnoses are generally for paraphilias, which are considered Axis I disorders in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR* (*DSM IV-TR*). The features of paraphilias include recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies or urges involving either nonhuman objects, suffering or humiliation of oneself or one's partner, children, or other nonconsenting persons.[219] For some paraphiliacs, these fantasies or stimuli are necessary in order to achieve erotic arousal, while for others they are episodic, and the individual can be stimulated otherwise. The behavior, urges, and fantasies cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning.

There are eight primary paraphilias listed in the *DSM IV-TR*: exhibitionism, voyeurism, frotteurism, sadism, masochism, fetishism, transvestic fetishism, and pedophilia, as well as paraphilia not otherwise specified (NOS). As with other mental disorders, the understanding of paraphilias developed throughout the century and became more refined through each edition of the *DSM*. In the late nineteenth century, Kraft-Ebing was one of the first researchers to highlight sexual dysfunction and develop specific names for different types of dysfunctions, including pedophilia.[220] Freud referenced pedophilia briefly in his 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, but vaguely described it as a situation that could occur if an adult is unable, for whatever reason, to have sexual relationships with other adults; but Freud considered pedophilia rarely preferential or habitual.

Various organizations and agencies attempted to classify mental disorders beginning in the nineteenth century, but it was not until 1952 that the American Psychiatric Association created the first edition of the *DSM*. Prior to this time the majority of psychologists understood mental illness simply in terms of different types of psychoses and neuroses. The need of the Army and Navy for a formal system of diagnoses to better understand the conditions of men returning from World War II appears to have been a

large influence on the publication of the first *DSM*. Sexual deviance and sexual disorders were mentioned only briefly in this first edition, and the term "paraphilia" was not used until 1954. Sexual deviance at this point was considered only one of a host of "reactions" to sociopathic personality disturbance along with alcoholism.[221]

The second edition of the *DSM* (*DSM-II*, 1968) was virtually unchanged from the first edition.[222] However, specific "sexual deviations" (that is, paraphilias) were, in the second edition, listed under the category "Personality Disorders and Certain Other Nonpsychotic Mental Disorders."[223] As the *DSM* continued to follow a psychoanalytic perspective in the 1960s, behaviorists at this time theorized that paraphilias developed as a result of learning; in other words, certain objects, people, or situations could easily become associated with sexual arousal and could later serve as objects of sexual fantasies.[224] Presumably, treating these paraphilias would mean reconditioning sexual arousal to be associated with other, innocuous objects, people, or situations. However, this theory was not reflected in the *DSM*.

A major turning point in the understanding of paraphilias came in 1970 when Masters and Johnson published *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, which prompted an interest in sex-specific therapy methods and also a change in attitude toward sex disorders.[225] Instead of paraphilias being a result of deficient intrapsychic development, Masters and Johnson suggested that these disorders were the result of certain interactions between people. To treat the paraphilia, one had to focus on the interaction as well as the person's unique psychological development. Masters and Johnson not only influenced the general public with their new ideas and attitudes, but they were also instrumental in the third revision of the *DSM*.[226]

The *DSM-III*, published in 1980, represented a significant change in diagnostic methodology as it incorporated an atheoretical approach that emphasized observable behavior.[227] Also in the third edition, conditions were officially called "disorders," and the manual included the implementation of the multiaxial (Axis I, Axis II) diagnostic system. Furthermore, in this edition, personality disorders were separated from major clinical disorders, and medical and social influences were taken into account when assessing a person's overall level of functioning.[228] Under this system, paraphilias were first listed by the names that are still used today, and the diagnostic criteria stated that paraphilic fantasies were necessary for sexual excitement. These changes were an attempt to establish the diagnostic criteria as more reliable and to distinguish between occasional paraphilic behavior and chronic paraphilia.[229] However, because the *DSM-III* was written with an atheoretical approach, diagnoses of paraphilias did not hint at their causes or what kind of treatment may have been best. Quite simply, a diagnosis was made if an individual displayed enough of the essential observable behaviors that were considered symptoms of that specific paraphilia. The *DSM-III-R*, published in 1987, was similar to the *DSM-III* but incorporated two changes to the diagnoses of paraphilias. First, the criteria in this edition specified that the individual in question must have acted on his or her paraphilic fantasies in some way and could no longer be diagnosed solely based on private thoughts and fantasies. Secondly, the criterion was added in this edition that these paraphilic fantasies must cause the individual subjective distress.[230]

In 1994, the *DSM-IV* was published, and its revision followed in 2000 (*DSM-IV-TR*). One modification to the diagnosis of paraphilias in the *DSM-IV* was a further elaboration on the matter of subjective distress; in the *DSM-IV-TR*, not only did the individual have to be experiencing distress for an official diagnosis, but the individual must have experienced "clinically significant distress." This addition further complicated the diagnostic criteria by requiring a high level of stress and ongoing impairment related to the paraphilia or the paraphilic fantasy. In other words, a man who was sexually attracted to children and who molested prepubescent children could not have been officially diagnosed as a pedophile unless his behavior and his attractions were distressing him enough to cause disruptions in other areas of his life.

Media reports about Catholic priests who sexually abused minors often mistakenly have referred to priests as pedophiles. According to the *DSM IV-TR*, pedophilia is characterized by fantasies, urges, or behaviors about sexual activity with a *prepubescent* child that occurs for a significant period of time. Yet, the *Nature and Scope* data indicated that nearly four out of five minors abused were at least eleven years old at the time of the abuse. Though development happens at varying ages for children, the literature generally refers to eleven and older as an age of pubescence or postpubescence. Because of the large numbers of adolescents abused, some media reports also refer to the presence of ephebophilia.[231] Although not considered a formal diagnosis in the *DSM IV-TR*,[232] many researchers consider those with recurrent sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors regarding adolescents to be a unique group that displays the characteristics of paraphilias. A diagnosis of pedophilia or a characterization of ephebophilia indicates that the etiology of the abusive behavior is the result of a particular psychological pathology.[233] Researchers in the field of criminal justice have found that many sex offenders who have been processed through the criminal justice system are not motivated by such pathologies. For instance, criminologists Stephen Smallbone and Richard Wortley studied a group of 362 child sexual offenders in Queensland, Australia, and found that few had diagnosable

paraphilias—less than 12 percent had any given paraphilia other than pedophilia. [234] Recent studies have shown also that few sex offenders are "specialists" at all; they are likely to commit more nonsexual offenses than sexual ones, and those who do primarily commit sexual offenses usually do not target a particular type of victim.[235]

Based on this information on sex offenders in the literature, it was hypothesized that priest-abusers would be similar to nonclergy abusers. Specifically, they would not be motivated primarily by sexual pathologies and would be more likely to be "generalists" than "specialists."

## Data Analysis and Results

Two of the four sources of data discussed in this chapter have information about sexual pathology: the *Nature and Scope* data and the data collected from clinical files for the *Causes and Context* study.

### *Nature and Scope* Data

The *Nature and Scope* data provided information about the behaviors of abusive priests, though they did not provide diagnostic information about them. An analysis of data on accused priests and victims of sexual abuse from the *Nature and Scope* study revealed that, if pedophilic behavior was defined as the exclusive presence of two or more victims under the age of eleven, then ninety-six priests, or 3.8 percent of those who were reported to have had two or more victims, could be classified as pedophiles.[236] Psychologists Pam Cantor and Peter Cimbolic worked with the John Jay College researchers to determine the appropriate definition for, and presence of, behavior that could be characterized as ephebophilic. If ephebophilic behavior was defined as the exclusive presence of two or more male victims between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, then 474, or 18.9 percent of the accused priests who had multiple victims could be classified as ephebophiles.[237] If these psychologically defined groups are considered in relation to the overall count of accused priests from the *Nature and Scope* study, then the pedophile group represents 2 percent and the ephebophile group 10.8 percent of the 4,392 priest-abusers described in the *Nature and Scope* study. The remaining priest-abusers committed an offense against a single victim or targeted victims of different ages and/or genders.

These data, as shown in Table 3.1, support the findings of Smallbone and Wortley in several ways. It is particularly notable that few priests with allegations of sexual abuse exhibited behavior consistent with paraphilic activity. Furthermore, the large group of priest-abusers labeled "generalists" (those whose victim selection was varied by age and gender) confirms research indicating that offenders least likely to specialize in victim type would have the most sexual offenses of all groups.

To better understand differences between "specialists" and "generalists," independent sample t-tests were used to examine whether they differed with regard to priest characteristics, grooming behavior, abusive acts, contact with the criminal justice system, and types and number of incidents.[238] Significant differences between the groups were evident:

- Age of onset. Specialists were significantly older than generalists at the time of their first sexual offense ($t(1,458) = 5.24$, $p < .001$). Additionally, pedophilic-interest priests were significantly older than ephebophilic-interest priests ($F(3, 645) = 13.34$, $p <. 001$).
- Number of victims. Generalists had significantly more victims than specialists ($t(936.82) = -9.39$, $p < .001$) and also had more male victims ($t(973.150) = -8.05$, $p < .001$).
- Duration of abuse. Generalists had a significantly longer duration of abuse, or longer "criminal careers," than specialists ($t(3,063.19) = -2.27$, $p = .023$).
- Socialization. Generalists were significantly more likely to socialize with the families of their victims than specialists ($t(1,546) = -3.09$, $p = .002$).

### *Causes and Context* Clinical Data

Treatment center staff completed a comprehensive data collection instrument and recorded information from clinical files to allow analysis of the following characteristics of individual priests: (1) mental illness or personality disorder; (2) developmental trauma; (3) history of sexual interest and experience; and (4) general social adjustment. Information on mental illness and personality disorders was based on written records of clinician observation, recorded *DSM* diagnoses, and results of personality tests. The remaining characteristics were determined from written records of clinical interviews and self-report narratives located in treatment files. Data from the clinical files of priests who received residential treatment included not simply the current *DSM* diagnosis but the history of diagnoses and treatment for major mental illness. The comparative samples of priests for whom clinical data were available were those treated in residential facilities for psychological or behavioral problems. As such, this sample should not be considered representative of all priests in ministry in the United States.

Behavior is thought to arise from a combination of many factors including biology, genetics, psychology, environment, and life experience. Inherited dispositions or vulnerabilities for abnormal behavior may be either

exacerbated or facilitated through the natural process of maturation, which includes influences from the environment and life experiences. In terms of both criminal and noncriminal everyday behavior, past behavior is often the best predictor of future behavior.[239] Psychological functioning also influences behavior; the way in which a person thinks about himself or the world will affect the way that he behaves and interacts with others. While it is not possible to distinguish completely between something that has its source in psychopathology or past behavioral experiences, a distinction can be made between clinically relevant pathological behavior and behavior that is solely deviant. The *DSM* diagnostic criteria were established for this purpose; behavior is required to reach a certain threshold where it becomes significantly distressing and disrupts several areas of one's life, including interpersonal and occupational functioning. Abnormal behavior that does not reach this threshold is considered deviant but presumably is not as deeply influenced by psychological factors. Therefore, both psychological and behavioral explanations are often examined when investigating the causes and contexts of deviant behavior.

## Psychological Explanations: *DSM* Axis I Clinical Diagnoses

The psychological component of the *Causes and Context* study focuses on the Axis I and Axis II disorders of the *DSM IV-TR*. Axis I disorders include major mental and developmental disorders such as affective (mood) disorders, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, and autism, whereas Axis II includes personality disorders. For the purposes of this research, individual treatment files were examined for the presence of Axis I diagnoses of affective disorder, anxiety disorder, and psychotic disorder. Priests who were in treatment for the sexual abuse of a child, or who had revealed such behavior during treatment, were not significantly more likely than those without allegations to be diagnosed with an affective disorder, anxiety disorder, or psychotic disturbance. The prevalence of the individual-level psychological factors are shown in Table 3.2 along with the chi-square and probability that the presence of the disorder could distinguish those priests who abused minors from all who were treated.

The formal *DSM* diagnosis of pedophilia was applied to approximately 5 percent of the priests treated, and the term "ephebophilia" is present in the diagnostic notes of less than 20 percent of the cases. These results from the treatment center data are not significantly different from the percentages of abusers classified as pedophiles or ephebophiles from the *Nature and Scope* data (see Table 3.1).

### *Personality and Psychological Testing Data*

Beginning in the 1970s, Catholic seminaries used personality tests, notably the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), to evaluate candidates for the priesthood. The MMPI was used by all three treatment centers providing data for the *Causes and Context* study. Several multivariate techniques were applied to the data supplied with the objective of discovering whether any major clinical scale or subscale could be found to identify those priests whose histories included sexual abuse of minor. While psychological testing should not be used in isolation to diagnose Axis I or Axis II personality disorders, these tests can

**Table 3.1** *Nature and Scope* Study: Priest Offenders with Two or More Allegations

| Category of Priest-Offender | Count | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **"Specialist" offenders** | | |
| **Pedophiles**—only victims 10 and younger (male and female) | 96 | 3.8 |
| **Ephebophiles**—only male victims between the ages of 13 and 17 | 474 | 18.9 |
| Priests with female victims between the ages of 13 and 17 | 127 | 5.0 |
| **"Generalist" offenders** | | |
| Priests with at least one victim 12 or younger and at least one victim 15 or older | 761 | 30.2 |
| All other "generalists" with victims of various ages and genders | 1054 | 42.1 |
| **Total** | **2512** | **100 %** |

*Table 3.1 is based on all priests, diocesan and religious, for whom a survey was submitted for the* Nature and Scope *study.*

provide evidence of the presence of relevant traits or characteristics that might contribute to such a disorder.

The MMPI was first published in 1943. The authors, Starke Hathaway and J. Charnley McKinley, expected the MMPI to be useful in routine diagnostic assessments. The original version of the MMPI contained 504 true/false statements which were designed in order to differentiate between a normal group (predominantly visitors and family members of University of Minnesota hospital patients) and a clinical group (predominantly an inpatient psychiatric group).[240] The MMPI-2 was published in 1989, and this revision sought to improve some criticisms of the original standardization sample (for example, that the sample was entirely white, around thirty-five years of age, married, and residing in a small town or rural area near Minneapolis, Minnesota). The new sample corresponded to the demographics of the 1980 census and included special populations such as military personnel and Native Americans. Item content was also modified to eliminate language and references that were archaic, obsolete, or sexist. The MMPI-2, as it currently stands, consists of 567 questions distributed across ten clinical scales and eight validity scales.[241]

According to Pearson Assessments, publisher of the MMPI-2, this version of the test can be used to help assess major symptoms of social and personal maladjustment, identify suitable candidates for high risk public safety positions, and support classification, treatment, and management decisions in criminal justice and corrections settings, among many other uses.[242] The MMPI was developed in a psychiatric hospital setting, and most of the research conducted with it has been in clinical settings. [243] However, use of the test in nonclinical settings increased dramatically before the revision. According to Graham's 2005 work, using the MMPI-2 to screen for psychopathology among job applicants is most justified when positions involve susceptibility to stress, personal risk, and personal responsibility. Graham states that, despite benefits associated with using the test in very specific instances, routine use for personnel selection is not recommended.

The MMPI-2 is one of the assessments used in a variety of forensic applications including "profiling" that involves specifying the typical MMPI-2 scores of a particular group, such as sex offenders, and determining the probability that a person matches or does not match the prototype. Literature on the use of this profiling approach, however, suggests that currently insufficient empirical evidence is available to support the use of this approach, as persons known to have committed a specific offense are not likely to produce a specific set of MMPI-2 scores.[244] In his work reviewing forensic applications of the MMPI-2, Otto points to a line of judicial decisions excluding a defendant's profile based on MMPI-2 scores because the technique does not meet evidentiary standards.[245] Furthermore, Otto cautions test administrators that they must not irresponsibly use the MMPI-2; administrators must not conclude that a person did or did not commit a particular act based on the scores obtained. Otto reminds professionals that "child molesters produce widely discrepant MMPI-2 profiles."[246]

Similarly, the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI) assesses the presence of personality traits and symptoms of psychopathology. Unlike the MMPI, which measures general personality and symptom domains, the MCMI was specifically developed to measure the diagnostic criteria of both Axis I and Axis II disorders found in the fourth edition of the *DSM*. The test consists of 175 true/false questions, has a large representative normative sample, and yields ten clinical syndrome scales and fourteen personality disorder scales.

Several researchers have tested the MMPI and other inventories (such as the MCMI) on sexual offenders, and studies have produced mixed results. Marshall notes that some studies have found marginal differences with MMPI scores between sex offenders and nonoffenders, while others have found no differences.[247] Based on his extensive research with sex offenders, Marshall argues that the MMPI is not a useful screening tool for predicting sexual offending, because any differences found between offenders and nonoffenders were marginal. Marshall's argument is in contrast to Langevin and others who claim that both the MMPI and the MCMI can differentiate between sex offenders and control groups and therefore may be a useful screening tool.[248] Some researchers have explained that the MMPI may be useful at screening out some, but not all, sex offenders. For instance, Erickson found that 19 percent of sex offenders had MMPI profiles within normal limits, but that the test was useful in distinguishing between biological and nonbiological intrafamilial offenders and also between first-time and recidivist offenders.[249] A summary of literature on psychological tests indicates that the MMPI can detect some distinctions, often with the more serious sex offenders, but does not appear to be a reliable tool for discriminating between or identifying all potential abusers.

### *Psychological Test Results*

Data for the *Causes and Context* study included scores from both the MMPI and the MCMI for 75 percent of the clergy who had been in treatment. Psychological testing data were provided by three treatment centers, the first of which included three comparison groups for the priests who abused minors (information from priests who had sexual relationships with other adults, priests who were being treated for nonsexual mental health or substance abuse issues, and men with no known problems who were being evaluated for acceptance as seminarians or missionaries).

**Table 3.2** *Causes and Context* Study: Prevalence of Major Psychological Disorders in Clinical Samples of Priests with Allegations of Abuse

| PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Factor | Treatment Center Sample 1 | Treatment Center Sample 2 | Treatment Center Sample 3 |
| *Affective Disorder: Any mood disorder, including depressive and bipolar illness.* | | | |
| Affective Disorders Percent Affected | 47.8 % | 40.4 % | 17.9 % |
| Affective Disorders Distinguishes Abusers? Chi-square * | No p = .114 | No p = .238 | n/a** |
| *Psychotic Disorder: A mental state often described as involving a "loss of contact with reality."* | | | |
| Psychotic Disorders Percent Affected | 2.4 % | 3.7 % | 0 % |
| Psychotic Disorders Distinguishes Abusers? Chi-square | No p = .395 | No p =.137 | n/a** |
| *Anxiety Disorder: A condition characterized by extreme, chronic anxiety that disturbs mood, thought, behavior and/or physiological activity.* | | | |
| Anxiety Disorders Percent Affected | 24.5 % | 15.5 % | 10.0 % |
| Anxiety Disorders Distinguishes Abusers? Chi-square | No p = .107 | No p = .352 | n/a** |

** The Chi-Squared statistic yields a probability of finding the cell differences in the groups being compared in the samples by chance if there were no true differences. In this comparison, the comparison is of those priests who abused minors with all others who did not abuse a minor, but were in treatment for other reasons.*

*** Treatment center sample 3 only included data on priests who abused minors, so no comparison can be conducted.*

The second center provided data only on priest-abusers and two comparison groups of priests in treatment; the third center's data describe only priest-abusers. The majority of analyses, therefore, were run on data from the first treatment center with four comparison groups, including the important sample of those with no behavioral or psychological problems.

The data from the third treatment center were compared with data from priests who had abused children from the first treatment center. Few major differences were found between these groups. Priests who abused minors from the second treatment center had higher average scores on some MMPI scales in comparison with priests who abused minors from the first treatment center; such scales included Social Introversion, Post-Traumatic Stress (PK), MacAndrew Alcoholism Scale-Revised, and the Addiction Potential Scale. However, none of these average scores reached clinically significant levels. Priests from the second treatment center also had significantly more clinically elevated scores on the following MMPI scales: Psychopathic Deviate, Psychasthenia, Schizophrenia, Hypomania, Post-Traumatic Stress (PK), and the Addiction Potential Scale. Priest-abusers from the first treatment center had significantly greater average scores on Hysteria and Overcontrolled Hostility and significantly more clinically significant elevations on the Overcontrolled Hostility score as compared to priest-abusers from the second treatment center. Even fewer differences were found on the MCMI, with priest-abusers from the second treatment center scoring significantly higher than priest-abusers from the first treatment center on the Drug Dependent scale and the Dependent Personality traits scale. Finally,

priest-abusers from the second treatment center had significantly greater IQ scores than priest-abusers from the first treatment center, although both groups were within normal, average limits of intellectual functioning.

For each of the two assessment instruments, binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to identify personality-based risk markers for the sexual abuse of minors. In each statistical model, one of eleven comparisons among clergy groups (Table 3.3 below) was included as the outcome variable, and scores from each personality or clinical subscale were included as the sole predictor variable. Thus, measures of relative risk, in the form of odds ratios, were available to quantify clergy risk for sexual abuse of minors. Subscale scores from each instrument have been presented descriptively and analyzed in two ways: (1) as continuous scores (*T*-scores [M = 50, *SD* = 10] for the MMPI and Base Rate [*Mdn* = 60] scores for the MCMI); and (2) as binary variables indicating the presence/absence of psychopathology (>=70 for the MMPI I, >=65 for the MMPI II, and for the MCMI >=75 for Trait/Presence or >= 85 for Disorder/Prominence). Data from continuously scaled measures were transformed to a Standard Deviation (SD) metric by dividing by ten, which was performed in order to enhance the interpretability of estimates from the binary logistic regression models. Thus, the odds ratios for continuously scaled measures of personality and clinically relevant symptoms would represent increased risk (odds) of child sexual abuse for every one SD unit change in the personality or clinical subscale.

Based on the clergy classification at *referral to treatment*, six clergy group comparisons were selected *a priori* (planned) based on the interest in determining whether scores from personality measures indicated risk for the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. Three of these comparisons were simple (direct) and contrasted clergy accused of sexually abusing a minor to each of the following: (1) clergy who had an inappropriate sexual relationship with another adult; (2) clergy who had a mental health/substance abuse problem; and (3) clergy with no known problems. Three of these comparisons were complex (multigroup) and contrasted clergy accused of sexually abusing a minor to each of the following: (4) clergy who had an inappropriate sexual relationship with another adult or who had a mental health/substance abuse problem; (5) clergy who had a mental health/substance abuse or no known problems; and (6) all three groups combined (inappropriate sexual relationship with another adult, mental health/substance abuse problems, or no known problems).

Five additional clergy comparisons were created based on information *obtained during treatment*: (7) reports of any post-ordination sexual activity versus none; (8) reports of any post-ordination sexual activity with a minor versus none; (9) reports of any homosexual activity versus none, and two additional contrasts where clergy reporting sexual activity were removed from the comparison group;[250] (10) any sexual activity with a minor versus no sexual activity; and (11) any homosexual activity versus no sexual activity. Because these groups were not fully mutually exclusive across these five comparisons, they were not used to stratify the sample in order to compute and present descriptive statistics, but were included in logistic regression analyses as outcomes.

Thus, for each assessment instrument subscale, eleven comparisons were made among the clergy groups defined above (see Table 3.3 for summary). This approach was advantageous as it provided multiple lines of evidence for identifying risk markers for the sexual abuse of minors by clergy. The strongest evidence for the specificity of elevated personality-based risk markers for clergy who sexually abused minors would come from comparisons of this group with clergy who had engaged in inappropriate sexual activity with another adult or mixed groups of clergy who represented clergy who had not abused minors.

The above groups were compared on the MMPI scales and subscales. The MMPI contains ten main clinical scales, each of which has subscales. The group of priests who were referred for treatment because of mental health or substance abuse issues showed higher average scores on all of the main clinical scales except Scale 4 (Psychopathic Deviate) and Scale 6 (Paranoia). For these two scales (as well as Scale 9 [Hypomania], although this difference was not statistically significant), the group of priests referred to the facility for reasons of inappropriate sexual behavior with a minor showed the highest average scores.

In addition to the ten main clinical scales, six of the clinical scales also contain Harris-Lingoes subscales, which were designed to provide additional details of symptomology for the heterogeneous clinical scales. Each clinical scale describes numerous symptoms of psychopathology or abnormal personality functioning, and therefore many different combinations of symptoms can result in the same scale score. For example, an individual with an elevated score on clinical Scale 2 (Depression) can have predominantly physical and somatic symptoms, whereas another individual with the same elevated score on clinical Scale 2 can have predominantly emotional or cognitive symptoms. Examination of the Harris-Lingoes subscales for clinical Scale 2 will clarify this differentiation.

Clinical scales 2 (Depression), 3 (Hysteria), 4 (Psychopathic Deviate), 6 (Paranoia), 8 (Schizophrenia), and 9 (Hypomania) all contain Harris-Lingoes subscales. These subscales were developed through close examination of the content of each questionnaire item contributing to overall scores on clinical scales 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9. Questions that seemed to address the same type of content or represent the same basic symptoms were grouped

together and designated as a single subscale. When any of these six clinical scales are significantly elevated, corresponding Harris-Lingoes subscales can then be evaluated to determine what specific aspects or symptoms of each scale were endorsed most frequently. Table 3.4 lists the Harris-Lingoes subscales for each clinical scale.

The first treatment center provided scores for the Harris-Lingoes subscales, and after evaluating these scores it was found that the group referred for mental health or substance abuse issues again showed the greater level of psychopathology in the form of higher average scores. Those referred for sexually abusing a minor had higher scores on Hy1 (Denial of Social Anxiety), Hy5 (Inhibition of Aggression), Pd2 (Authority Problems), Pd3 (Social Imperturbability), Pa1 (Persecutory Ideas), Ma1 (Amorality), and Ma3 (Imperturbability). Priests referred for post-ordination sexual relationships with adults had higher average scores on Pd4 (Social Alienation), and those priests who were referred for non-mental health reasons (that is, the "No Problem" group) had higher average scores on Pd1 (Family Discord). Generally, subscales are used only when the parent scale (one of the ten main clinical scales) is significant (that is, Harris-Lingoes subscales D1 through D5 are examined only when an individual obtains a high score on clinical Scale 2), so it is difficult to interpret the appropriate meaning of these elevated scores.

Similar to these subscales, the MMPI also contains a series of Supplementary Scales, which describe more broad personality characteristics such as the presence of Anxiety, Repression, or a sense of Social Responsibility, as well as general states of distress or lack of behavioral control such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, Overcontrolled Hostility, and Addiction Potential. Data from the first treatment center suggested that, where significant differences in scores occurred on the Supplementary Scales, the group referred for mental health or substance abuse issues once again showed the greater level of psychopathology in the form of higher average scores. Those referred for sexually abusing a minor had higher average scores only on the Do (Dominance) Supplementary Scale, which measures the extent to which an individual shows initiative, confidence, and resourcefulness in social relationships.

When considering only scores that reached clinical significance, priests referred to treatment centers for mental health or substance abuse showed the highest percentage of significantly elevated Clinical Scales scores. The priests accused of sexually abusing minors had the highest percentage of clinically elevated scores on Scale 6 (Paranoia). It is difficult to determine, however, whether this paranoia was a long-standing quality of these clergy members or whether it was a symptom brought on by possible embarrassment and shame over their actions.

No significant differences were found on the MCMI among any of the groups of priests for whom clinical data were available.

### *Personality Subscales Generalized*

Collectively, results from analyses using clergy classifications based on referral information, as well as analyses based on information obtained during treatment, suggested that the strongest (though not statistically significant) personality-based risk markers for clergy sexual abuse of minors included elevations on the following MMPI subscales: Denial of Social Anxiety, Authority Problems, Persecutory Ideas, Amorality, and Overcontrolled Hostility. Other possible risk markers for sexual abuse of minors included elevations on the following MMPI subscales: Need for Affection, Social Imperturbability, Imperturbability, and Inhibition of Aggression. If these subscale results, taken without any elevation of the primary clinical scales, can be sensibly interpreted, they would describe a sizable fraction of the adult population. Ultimately, none of the primary scales show significant risk factors for those who abused minors, and as such any elevation on the subscales should be interpreted with caution. This is an important finding, indicating that the priests who had abused minors could not be differentiated on psychological tests from priests who had not abused minors.

## Behavioral Explanations: Causal Factors Based on Individual Experience

Clinicians and behavioral theorists observe the impacts of childhood experience and learned behavior on adult lives. One premise in this field is that if a youth or child is the victim of sexual abuse by an adult, his capacity for emotional attachment and sexual response as an adult may be impaired. Early sexual experience is thought to have an influence on subsequent sexual behavior. Additionally, low self-esteem and social isolation are considered to be associated with child sexual abuse.[251] The clinical data and the Identity and Behavior data collected for the *Causes and Context* study are the basis of the analysis of behavioral explanations of abuse behavior.

### Causes and Context *Clinical Data: History of Abuse or Family Trauma*

Empirical research shows that one of the few individual-level factors associated with subsequent sexual abuse is the experience of being sexually abused as a youth. As early as 1972, A. Nicholas Groth reported that many of the men incarcerated for sex crimes at Somers State Prison in Connecticut were sexually involved with adults when they were children. He found this increased likelihood

**Table 3.3** *Causes and Context* Study: Comparison Groups of Clergy for Analysis of MMPI and MCMI Results

| Classification Type | Risk Group | Reference of Comparison Group |
|---|---|---|
| **Based on Referral to Treatment Classification** | | |
| 1 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | Inappropriate Adult Sexual Activity |
| 2 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | Mental Health/Substance Abuse Issues |
| 3 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | No Known Problems |
| 4 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | Inappropriate Adult Sexual Activity + Mental Health/Substance Abuse Issues |
| 5 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | Mental Health/Substance Abuse Issues + No Known Problems |
| 6 | Sexual Abuse of Minors | Inappropriate Adult Sexual Activity + Mental Health/Substance Abuse Issues + No Known Problems |
| **Based on Information Obtained During Treatment** | | |
| 7 | Any Sexual Activity | All Other Clergy |
| 8 | Sexual Activity with Minors | All Other Clergy |
| 9 | Same Sex Activity | All Other Clergy |
| 10 | Sexual Activity with Minors | All Other Clergy Not Participating in Any Sexual Activity |
| 11 | Same Sex Activity | All Other Clergy Not Participating in Any Sexual Activity |

both for men whose victims were adults and for those whose victims were children.[252] As illustrated in Table 3.5, the *Causes and Context* study shows divergent results for the predictive efficacy of the variable of being a victim of sexual abuse as a youth. The figures indicate results from data for 715 priests and priest candidates evaluated between 1985 and 1999 at the first treatment center and show statistically significant results. The divergent results for priests treated between 2000 and 2009 at the second treatment center may be based on greater alertness on the part of clinicians in eliciting a thorough history of sexual experience. The experience of having been sexually abused by another youth or by an adult during childhood or adolescence was reported by more than a third of the priests in treatment for sexual abuse of children at the third treatment center.

### *Clinical Data: Developmental Factors*

The clinical data show that a substantial percentage of priests in treatment had experienced family difficulty during their childhood and adolescence. These factors, however, are present for those who would later abuse a minor as well as those who did not ever commit abuse.

### Causes and Context *Clinical Data: Sexual History and Experience*

Clinicians at the treatment centers elicited detailed developmental histories from the priests they treated together with a detailed history of sexual experience from each priest. Whether or not the priests were referred for treatment of problems with sexuality, three-quarters of the priests about whom we have data had sexual relations with

**Table 3.4** Harris-Lingoes Subscales

| MMPI Clinical Scale | HARRIS-LINGOES SUBSCALES |
|---|---|
| Scale 2: Depression | D1: Subjective Depression |
| | D2: Psychomotor Retardation |
| | D3: Physical Malfunctioning |
| | D4: Mental Dullness |
| | D5: Brooding |
| Scale 3: Hysteria | Hy1: Denial of Social Anxiety |
| | Hy2: Need for Affection |
| | Hy3: Lassitude-Malaise |
| | Hy4: Somatic Complaints |
| | Hy5: Inhibition of Aggression |
| Scale 4: Psychopathic Deviate | Pd1: Familial Discord |
| | Pd2: Authority Problems |
| | Pd3: Social Imperturbability |
| | Pd4: Social Alienation |
| | Pd5: Self-Alienation |
| Scale 6: Paranoia | Pa1: Persecutory Ideas |
| | Pa2: Poignancy |
| | Pa3: Naiveté |
| Scale 8: Schizophrenia | Sc1: Social Alienation |
| | Sc2: Emotional Alienation |
| | Sc3: Lack of Ego Mastery, Cognitive |
| | Sc4: Lack of Ego Mastery, Conative |
| | Sc5: Lack of Ego Mastery, Defective Inhibition |
| | Sc6: Bizarre Sensory Experiences |
| Scale 9: Hypomania | Ma1: Amorality |
| | Ma2: Psychomotor Acceleration |
| | Ma3: Imperturbability |

an adult and/or a minor after ordination. The review of the extensive sexual experience data yields the following findings about pre-seminary, in-seminary and post-ordination sexual behavior (those that are significant are indicated as such [$p < .05$]).[253]

- Priests who participated in sexual behavior prior to entering the seminary were significantly more likely to participate in post-ordination sexual behavior, though the sexual partner was more likely to be an adult than a minor.
- Priests who participated in sexual behavior while in the seminary were more likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior than those who did not participate in any in-seminary sexual behavior, though the post-ordination sexual partners were more likely to be adults than minors. Priests with in-seminary sexual behavior and priests without in-seminary sexual behavior were equally as likely to have minor victims.
- Priests who masturbated more frequently post-ordination were also more likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior; however, there was not a significant relationship between post-ordination masturbation frequency and whether the post-ordination sexual behavior involved minors or adults.
- Priests who used pornography post-ordination were more likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior. These priests were also more likely than priests who did not use pornography post-ordination to participate in sexual behavior with both adults and minors.
- Priests who used paper, video, or multiple types of pornography post-ordination were more likely than those who only used cyber pornography to have post-ordination sexual behavior. Priests who used more than one type of pornography post-ordination were the only group that was significantly more likely to have child victims than adult victims (although the overall number of clergy files reporting this information was low [$n = 72$] for all post-ordination pornography activity).
- Priests who, as minors and/or in a family context, were involved in discussions about sex as a "taboo" subject or who never discussed sex at all as minors or in a family were more likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior. However, there was not a significant relationship between how sex was discussed in the home and whether the post-ordination sexual behavior involved a child or an adult. The majority of all priests in the sample reported having sex described to them in a negative context (sex was introduced either as taboo or was not discussed at all).

Because of the large number of sexual abuse victims who were male minors, the role of homosexuality in the abuse of minors by priests has been a notable question. In this context, it is necessary to differentiate between sexual *identity* and sexual *behavior*, and questions about sexual identity are complex and difficult to measure. To this end, the data in this investigation were evaluated by considering the sexual *behavior* of men prior to entering seminary in order to determine whether men who exhibit certain behaviors had a higher likelihood of committing post-ordination sexual behavior. It is important to note that sexual behavior does not necessarily correspond to a particular sexual identity.[254] The data show the following about priests who experienced same-sex sexual behavior before entrance into the seminary (findings that are statistically significant are indicated as such [$p < .05$]):

- Priests with pre-ordination same-sex sexual behavior were significantly more likely to participate in post-ordination sexual behavior, but these priests were more likely to participate in sexual behavior with adults than minors. Same-sex sexual behavior prior to ordination did not significantly predict the sexual abuse of minors.
- After analyzing pre-seminary and in-seminary same-sex sexual behavior separately, only in-seminary (not pre-seminary) same-sex sexual behavior was significantly related to post-ordination sexual behavior. Priests with in-seminary same-sex sexual behavior were more likely to have sexual experiences with adults than minors, and they were not significantly more likely to sexually abuse minors than priests with no same-sex sexual behavior in-seminary.
- However, pre-seminary and in-seminary sexual behavior were significantly related to each other, such that the majority of priests who had pre-seminary same-sex experiences also often had in-seminary same-sex experiences and vice versa.
- Priests with pre-ordination same-sex sexual behavior who did sexually abuse a minor after ordination were more likely to have a male child victim than a female child victim.
- However, after considering pre-seminary and in-seminary sexual behavior separately, only in-seminary (not pre-seminary) same-sex sexual behavior was significantly related to the increased likelihood of a male child victim.
- Priests with pre-ordination same-sex sexual behavior and post-ordination sexual behavior with adults were significantly more likely to have sexual encounters with adult males than females.

**Table 3.5** *Causes and Context* Study: History of Childhood Sexual Abuse of the Priest by an Adult

| HISTORY OF SEXUAL ABUSE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Treatment Center Sample 1 | Treatment Center Sample 2 | Treatment Center Sample 3 |
| Experienced Sexual Abuse as a Youth / Percent affected | 17.2 % | 17.4 % | 37.0 %** |
| Experience of Sexual Abuse as a Youth / Distinguishes Abusers? Chi-Square* | Yes P = < .0001 | No P = .412 | n/a*** |

** The Chi-Squared statistic yields a probability of finding the cell differences in the groups being compared in the samples by chance if there were no true differences. In this comparison, the comparison is of those priests who abused minors with all others who did not abuse a minor, but were in treatment for other reasons.*
*** Treatment center 3 considered all sexual abuse of a priest while a youth, not simply sexual abuse by an adult.*
**** Treatment center sample 3 only included data on priests who abused minors, so no comparison can be conducted.*

- After analyzing pre-seminary and in-seminary sexual behavior separately, both pre-seminary and in-seminary same-sex sexual behaviors were significantly related to the gender of an adult partner post-ordination:
  - Priests with pre-seminary same-sex sexual behavior were much more likely to choose male adult sexual partners, whereas priests without pre-seminary homosexual behavior were more evenly split between female and male adult sexual partners.
  - Priests with in-seminary same-sex sexual behavior were much more likely to choose male adult sexual partners, although in this case, priests without in-seminary homosexual behavior were more likely to choose female adult sexual partners.

With respect to sexual *identity* (referring to the gender of the person to whom someone is sexually attracted), the clinical files showed the following information. Findings that are statistically significant are indicated as such [$p < .05$]:

- Priests who identified themselves at the time of treatment as gay/homosexual, bisexual, or confused, were more likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior than those who considered themselves to be heterosexual, though the nonheterosexual priests were more likely to participate in sexual behavior with adults than with minors. Those who identified themselves as bisexual or confused were significantly more likely to have minor victims than priests who identified as either homosexual or heterosexual, although the number of priests who identified themselves in this manner was very small in comparison to the number of priests who labeled themselves as either homosexual or heterosexual.
- Priests with positive views toward homosexuality were most likely to have post-ordination sexual behavior, followed by those with a negative view and then those with a neutral view. Priests with positive views toward homosexuality were also more likely to have adult sexual partners, whereas priests with negative views toward homosexuality were more likely (but not significantly) to have minor victims than those with positive or neutral views.
- Priests who identified as gay/homosexual or confused while in seminary were more likely to have adult male sexual partners while in seminary. Priests who identified as heterosexual were more likely to have adult female sexual partners while in seminary.
- There was not a significant relationship between in-seminary sexuality identification and post-ordination sexual behavior with adults or minors.
- There was not a significant relationship between in-seminary sexuality identification and whether the sexual behavior post-ordination was with an adult or a minor.

**Table 3.6** *Causes and Context* Study: History of Significant Developmental Trauma as a Youth

| MAJOR DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA (PRE-SEMINARY) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Developmental trauma includes experience of major family restructuring, family break-up, substance abuse (in family), mental illness (in family), extended physical illness (in family), and report of child abuse or neglect pre-seminary.*** | | | |
| **Factor** | **Treatment Center Sample 1** | **Treatment Center Sample 2** | **Treatment Center Sample 3** |
| **Major Family Stress—percent affected** | **54.3 %** | **52.2 %** | **60.6 %** |
| **Distinguishes Abusers?*** | **No** | **No** | n/a** |
| **Physical Abuse—percent affected** | **10.6 %** | **12.2 %** | **13 %** |
| **Distinguishes Abusers?** | **No** | **No** | **n/a** |
| **Substance Abuse in Family—percent affected** | **36.3 %** | **39 %** | **76 %** |
| **Distinguishes Abusers?** | **No** | **No** | n/a |
| **Mental Illness in Family—percent affected** | **19.5 %** | **28.3 %** | **20 %** |
| **Distinguishes Abusers?** | **No** | **No** | n/a |

** The Chi-Squared statistic yields a probability of finding the cell differences in the groups being compared in the samples by chance if there were no true differences. In this comparison, the comparison is of those priests who abused minors with all others who did not abuse a minor, but were in treatment for other reasons.*

*** Treatment center sample 3 only included data on priests who abused minors, so no comparison can be conducted.*

In summary, the clinical files show that the majority of priests who were treated participated in post-ordination sexual behavior. Also, participation in pre-ordination sexual behavior predicted post-ordination sexual behavior, though the post-ordination sexual behavior was more likely to be with adults than minors. The data do not support a finding that homosexual identity and/or pre-ordination same-sex sexual behavior are significant risk factors for the sexual abuse of minors. The only significant risk factor related to sexual identity and behavior was a "confused" sexual identity, and this condition was most commonly found in abusers who were ordained prior to the 1960s.

If the sexual behavior variables for the clinical cases are arranged by the decade or by date of ordination ("ordination cohort"), the results show substantial change over time.

### *Identity and Behavior Data: Sexual History*

While clinical files provided valuable information about the sexual behavior of priests who were treated, the Identity and Behavior survey allowed for additional questions about the general sexual, social, and dating experiences of the men in the sample. In particular, the survey focused on issues of self-esteem, both internal (personal self-esteem) and external (professional esteem), levels of pre- and post-seminary social bonding and interactions, understanding of sexual identity, and sexual behavior and experience.

One of the factors measured in the Identity and Behavior survey was pre-seminary sexual exposure/experiences

and pre-seminary sexual identity. Data from this survey indicate minor differences between accused priests and those without allegations of abuse. Priests without allegations of abusing minors were more likely to have had pre-seminary romantic and dating experiences (50 percent compared to 41 percent, respectively). Over one-third of all priests who responded to the survey (38 percent) had sexual experiences prior to entering the seminary, and there were no significant differences between nonaccused and accused priests. Accused priests were, however, more likely to have had same-sex and/or bisexual experiences than nonaccused priests.

Over three-fourths of the priests who responded to the Identity and Behavior survey had a clear sense of their own sexual identity prior to coming to seminary, although accused priests (63 percent) were less likely than nonaccused (83 percent) to have had a clear articulation of sexual identity. Of the priests who understood their sexual identity before seminary, about one-quarter understood their identity as homosexual or bisexual (though only a small percentage of the sample identified as bisexual). The interviews with the respondents indicated that confusion about sexual identity was an important issue, and several noted that their understanding of their sexual identity changed over time. Confusion about sexual identity was particularly notable for those priests ordained before the 1970s; this finding was supported by the clinical data as well.

### *Identity and Behavior Data: Internal and External Esteem*

Another objective of the Identity and Behavior study was to explore the variables that may have been associated with a Catholic priest's understanding of his professional role and self-identity, and how these factors may be different for those accused of the sexual abuse of a minor compared to those with no allegations of abuse. In particular, the survey provided data on the relationships between the professional role identity and the personal self-identity, and the tension or conflict between these identities for priests. Specifically, the goal was to determine whether priest-abusers could be distinguished from non-abusers in regard to: (1) the priests' consciousness of their personal identity within their role as a priest (do they separate their personal thoughts and actions from their priestly role); (2) the priests' perception of how others value them in their role as a priest (external esteem measures); (3) their perceived social worth (internal self-esteem); and (4) identity management in the context of temptation, lapse, contrition, and forgiveness (managing their personal desires with their priestly role).

From the early works of George Mead and Erving Goffman to present sociological frameworks, identity is understood to be formed in a process of social interaction; individuals present themselves, and society reflects back some image of that self.[255] The biographical details of personal identities are, in part, shaped by roles in the collective culture. As an individual takes on one or another role (chosen or imposed) and is attributed a positive or negative stigma, the individual "becomes" the role in response to external cues marking formal and informal steps along the way and establishes his or her place in the social structure.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used as a framework for developing assessments of priest perceptions of himself as a man and as a priest (internal esteem measures) as well as his perceptions of how superiors, peers, and parishioners see him in his role as a priest (external esteem measures). Accused and nonaccused priests were compared on an overall esteem score as well as on individual measures. Overall, priests had high internal and external levels of esteem, and there were no significant differences between the accused and nonaccused priests. On individual internal measures of esteem, more often than not the priest subgroups were equivalent in their distribution of high esteem. When there was low esteem, accused priests were slightly more likely to have a lack of positive attitude about themselves and their priestly roles. Although the results are statistically significant, the sample sizes are very small and should be interpreted cautiously. The key finding in this data is that the *Loyola* sample was more normally distributed, or showed a greater range, on the measures of esteem compared to those analyzed in the Identity and Behavior survey. This finding is consistent with the body of work on priest satisfaction. Priests' views of their role and overall level of happiness were lowest in 1970, at the time of the *Loyola* research, and have been rising steadily since that time.[256]

### *Identity and Behavior Data: Social Bonding*

The literature on sexual offenders shows that the ability to develop pro-social relationships with age-appropriate partners is important and that sex offenders have higher levels of intimacy deficits than nonoffenders. It was expected that accused priests would therefore show more social interaction deficiencies than nonaccused priests. The Identity and Behavior survey measured social interaction deficiencies through questions about pre- and post-seminary social interactions and levels of disconnect. Socialization was measured as being an only child, entering seminary without familiar peers, and unwillingness to have candid conversations with clergy and nonclergy peers, superiors, family, or spiritual advisors.

Very few priests in the sample were only children. Priests with allegations of abuse were significantly more likely to be only children, with 11 percent of accused priests being only children and 6 percent of nonaccused

**Table 3.7** *Causes and Context* Study: Behavioral Predictors of Post-Ordination Sexual Abuse of a Minor

| Predictors of Post-Ordination Sexual Abuse of a Minor *Statistically significant at p < .05** Yes or No | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ordination Cohort—priests in treatment | Priest was sexually abused as a child | Priest had pre-seminary dating experience | Priest has pre-seminary sexual experience | Priest has pre-seminary same-sex experience | Priest had in-seminary sexual experience |
| 1943-1959 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 1960s | No | No | No | No | No |
| 1970s | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| 1980s | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No |
| 1990 & later | No | No | No | No | No |
| Total from Treatment Centers 1 & 2 | Yes | No | No | No | No |

** Statistical significance is a quality of a statistical result that is not likely to have occurred purely by chance. The probability that the result could be a result of random variation is given by the "p-value." If the probability is less than .05, we conclude that the association of the variables indicates dependence.*

priests. However, the numbers of priests who are only children are small and caution should be shown interpreting this result. Just about half of all priests entered seminary with friends, with no significant differences between accused and nonaccused priests.

Overall, bonding socialization measures did not yield notable differences between accused and nonaccused priests. These were measured as the negative perception of work or personal relationships with peers and superiors and unwillingness to seek help for either work or personal problems from peers or superiors. There were no subgroup differences relative to perceptions of work relationships or friendships with peers and superiors. Priests, overall, saw work relationships and friendships favorably. When differences between accused and nonaccused priests were observed, it was in their willingness to reach out to peers for advice. Although a majority of priests were willing to seek advice from peers, accused priests reached out less often than nonaccused priests; approximately three-quarters of accused priests reached out for work role advice and two-thirds reached out for personal advice, while about 90 percent of nonaccused priests were willing to consult peers for either work or personal advice. Both the *Loyola* and Identity and Behavior samples were comparably distributed on equivalent measures of social disconnectedness. Even though the measures were not exactly the same, the priests in the Identity and Behavior sample are no more or less likely to display disconnectedness than priests in the *Loyola* sample, particularly as they report themselves interacting with others. The *Loyola* sample is a representative sample of priests in ministry in 1971; the age composition of the Identity and Behavior sample is almost identical (Figure 3.1), thus the consistency of results is not surprising.

### *Narratives about Identity and Behavior*

To understand whether priest-abusers are distinct in their self-perceptions from priests without allegations of abuse, the personal narratives about how they became priests and understood their roles as priests were examined. Given that the abusers had been accused of engaging in behavior that is inconsistent not only with Catholic expectations

**Table 3.8** *Causes and Context* Study: Priest Participation in Various Forms of Sexual Behavior, by Ordination Cohort, in Percentages

| ORDINATION COHORT | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1940s & 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990-2005 |
| **PRE-SEMINARY DATING AND SEXUAL EXPERIENCE** | | | | | |
| Dating—all in treatment | 61 % | 61 % | 69 % | 78 % | 86 % |
| Dating—sexual abuse of a minor | 60 % | 59 % | 79 % | 77 % | 88 % |
| Pre-seminary sex —all in treatment | 44 % | 34 % | 36 % | 58 % | 70 % |
| Pre-seminary sex —later sexual abuse of minor | 57 % | 33 % | 37 % | 77 % | 57 % |
| Pre-seminary same-sex activity —all in treatment | 14 % | 8 % | 9 % | 13 % | 15 % |
| Pre-seminary same-sex activity —later sexual abuse of a minor | 27 % | 6 % | 8 % | 26 % | 5 % |
| **SEXUAL EXPERIENCE WHILE IN SEMINARY** | | | | | |
| In–seminary sexual activity— all in treatment | 10 % | 11 % | 24 % | 36 % | 30 % |
| In seminary sexual activity— later sexual abuse of a minor | 28 % | 14 % | 23 % | 40 % | 36 % |
| **SEXUAL EXPERIENCE AFTER ORDINATION** | | | | | |
| Post-ordination sexual activity with adults—all in treatment | 70 % | 65 % | 65 % | 65 % | 48 % |
| Post-ordination sexual abuse of a minor—all in treatment | 39 % | 32 % | 26 % | 21 % | 15 % |
| Post-ordination sexual activity with adults—of those with sexual abuse of a minor | 80 % | 57 % | 65 % | 57 % | 42 % |

of celibate chastity but also with societal norms of age-defined sexual consent, it would follow that priest-abusers would be different from non-abusers in their perception of self-concept and how they explain their "life course." While a traditional life-course narrative has a linear form (exposition, rising action, climax, and resolution) that is consistent with the expectations of the role, differences in narrative structure were expected from the priest-abusers. It was hypothesized that the life-course narratives of accused priests would be more disjointed so as to explain, excuse, and justify their behavior.

The narratives, however, did not support this hypothesis. Accused priests did not provide a different narrative structure for their life course than nonaccused priests. They provided similar narratives of coming to the priesthood, whether they were internally motivated by the call of God, or externally nudged in the direction of the priesthood by priests and sisters in the ministry or by other family members or friends. Their narratives were not fractured or nonlinear, and they did not evade the recounting of the abuse incident or incidents. This narrative was told within the context of their relationship to God, their own sin, and their having failed God. Accused and nonaccused priests provided similar narratives about the process of being ordained (experiencing the ontological shift) and how the resolution of coming to the priest role is one of negotiating the shift to a new master status and living the life of a priest. The priest-abusers saw themselves as able to fulfill the role of priest even as they lived the life of an abuser.

Priest-abusers managed to stay content with the sinner-self until they were confronted with their abuser-self. It was not until they were identified as an abuser by a victim that they began to come to an understanding of the trajectory of their story. Within the Catholic cultural context of fallibility and the possibility of forgiveness based on confession and remorse, the priest-abuser was often able to use a particular vocabulary of stigma management. Vocabularies of motive, or how actions are explained, underlie cognitive patterns and are sensitive to cultural references. The social understanding of the behaviors of sexual abuse and the language used to describe the acts developed in the late twentieth century. These men had learned a language to describe and manage their identity in relation to acts of abuse and only came to understand the impact of their behavior on victims many years after the acts themselves took place.

## Sexual Deviance and Vulnerability

As is true with nonclergy, some percentage of priests will be vulnerable to sexually abuse children. Although a vulnerability or predisposition may exist in general, this situation does not imply that it is possible to either identify specific "causes" of the abusive behavior or identify specific individuals who will commit acts of abuse. Rather, it means that some factors may be correlated to the abuse of children, though these are often multifaceted and complex in that they interact and lead to a greater level of vulnerability in some men.

Finkelhor identifies three factors that leave men vulnerable to commit acts of abuse.[257] First, Finkelhor suggests that adults who sexually abuse children may experience "emotional congruence" to children or adolescents. "Emotional congruence" describes the relationship between the adult abuser's emotional needs and the child's characteristics. For example, if an abuser's emotional needs are not fully mature, he or she may relate better to children than adults. These immature emotional needs may be exacerbated if the abuser has low self-esteem and inadequate social skills, thus making the abuser more comfortable in relationships with children where he or she is able to exert more power and control. Second, Finkelhor argues that many adults who abuse children have some level of sexual arousal to the children, either innate or learned. Whether explained through social learning theory (through conditioning and imprinting, the abuser begins to find children arousing later in adulthood) or poor psychosexual development, sexual arousal to children is a necessary component of the motivation to abuse. Third, Finkelhor posits that child sexual abusers may experience some type of blockage, or an inability to have sexual and/or emotional needs met in adult relationships. The abuser's blockage may be developmental or situational. In the case of developmental blockage, the abuser is prevented from moving into the adult sexual stage of development (termed internal blockage), while situational blockage occurs when the abuser is unable to attain or maintain an adult relationship due to external factors, such as frustration from a relationship with an adult.

In addition to these factors and often as a direct result of the second or third factor, according to Finkelhor, many child sexual abusers will experience "cognitive dissonance"; this cognitive dissonance allows for the abuser to persist with the abusive behavior. Cognitive dissonance is the disconnect between the abusers' perception of norms of behavior, potential harms, and motivations for their own behavior, and the reality of the impact of their behavior. This uncomfortable tension comes from holding two conflicting thoughts in the mind at the same time. Dissonance is often strong when individuals believe something about themselves and then act in a manner contradictory to that belief. If an abuser believes he is good but then commits an act that is bad, the resulting feeling of discomfort is an example of cognitive dissonance. This undesirable state of dissonance motivates a person to change his or her cognitions, attitudes, or behaviors to reduce or relieve

dissonance. As such, this state can be considered a theory of motivation. How persons deal with cognitive dissonance differs. To release the tension that is caused by the cognitive dissonance, individuals can change their behavior, justify their behavior by changing the conflicting cognition, or justify their behavior by adding new cognitions. These adaptations, or adjustments, are not mutually exclusive; rather, multiple adaptations can occur simultaneously.

Cognitive dissonance is relevant to decision making and problem solving and can help to explain an offender's actions. For example, generally speaking, sexual abuse of children is considered "bad" or wrong. According to the cognitive dissonance theory, some offenders may halt or cease the activity following the initial encounter. Others may rationalize the behavior and focus on the positive aspects of the relationship (for example, offering the child love and affection or teaching the child about sex) and thereby add more consonant beliefs to counteract the dissonance felt. Still other offenders may introduce new information (for example, assisting the child with homework) to help minimize the dissonance felt as a result of their actions.

### *Intimacy Deficits: An Overview*

Some research on what differentiates sexual offenders from both nonsexual offenders and nonoffenders in general revolves around the idea of intimacy deficits. Many sexual offenders report a lack of close adult relationships as well as a lack of intimacy in their relationships generally.[258] Due to the widespread reporting of intimacy deficits among sex offenders, researchers have sought to develop overarching theories to explain a possible pathway between intimacy deficits and sex offending behaviors. Marshall first argued that early attachment disturbances (that is, the failure to establish a secure attachment bond in childhood) result in the inability to develop the interpersonal skills required to form successful intimate relationships in adulthood. [259] According to this argument, these insecurely attached individuals may then try to overcome feelings of loneliness through sexual activity, which runs the risk of involving inappropriate and unwanted advances given the overall level of inexperience with such behavior. Ward, Hudson, Marshall, and Siegert furthered this idea by suggesting that a lack of experience with intimate relationships may result in empathy deficits, which may, in turn, lead to sexual offending in certain individuals. [260] Yet another theory focuses on the sexual offender's ability to attribute appropriate thoughts and feelings to others. Keenan and Ward stated that sexual offenders may have deficits in their theory of mind, which is the awareness and understanding of others' beliefs, needs, and particular perspectives. [261] These broad deficits lead to more specific deficits in intimacy, empathy, and cognition, which together put these individuals at risk for inappropriate interpersonal relations and behavior.[262]

Regardless of the framework that most accurately describes the root and pathways of the relationship, empirical studies have shown that there does appear to be a link between intimacy deficits and sexual offending. In terms of romantic and sexual intimacy, Garlick[263] and Seidman, Marshall, Hudson, and Robertson[264] found that both incarcerated and nonincarcerated rapists and child molesters reported higher levels of loneliness and lower levels of intimacy in adult relationships as compared to both nonsexual offenders and nonoffender controls from the community. More recent work has focused on intimacy across different types of adult relationships including friendship, family, romantic, and sexual relationships. In one such study, Bumby and Hansen found widespread intimacy deficits in both incarcerated rapists and child molesters, suggesting that these individuals experience a lack of intimacy in many different types of relationships including friendships with males, friendships with females, and relationships with family members.[265] Rapists and child molesters reported significantly more loneliness than nonsexual offenders and community control subjects, and child molesting behaviors were the best single predictor of degree of fear of intimacy.[266]

Review of the preceding studies describes sexual deviance and vulnerability in a variety of populations while the *Loyola* psychological study data and the Identity and Behavior surveys and interviews provide information about priests and their vulnerabilities. The *Loyola* study data can be understood to apply to the lives of priests generally, while the Identity and Behavior data offer information about abusers compared to non-abusers.

### Loyola *Psychological Study Data*

A primary conclusion of the *Loyola* psychological study conducted by Eugene Kennedy in 1971 was that priests were "ordinary men," vulnerable as are all humans.[267] The term "ordinary" as it was used in this context means that priests were psychologically similar to the general population of American men at that time. Nearly forty years later, after a lifelong engagement as a psychologist treating priests in distress, Dr. Kennedy continues to find support for his initial conclusion.[268] Although the researchers on the *Loyola* psychological study classified 8.7 percent of priests in their sample as "maldeveloped," they described more than two-thirds of their subjects as "underdeveloped." A major area of underdevelopment is that of psychosexual maturity, a vulnerability shared by many Catholic priests in the mid-1970s.[269]

There are many other ways in which this lack of personal development is manifested in underdeveloped

> priests. Perhaps chief among these is the fact that so many of the underdeveloped have not achieved an integrated psychosexual maturity. For whatever reasons, these priests have not resolved the problems that are ordinarily worked through during the time of adolescence. Sexual feelings are a source of conflict and difficulty and much energy goes into them or the effort to distract themselves from them. . . . This uncertainty about their sexuality affects their sense of personal identity and makes it difficult for them to accept and deal with the challenge of intimacy.[270]

This summary conclusion, based on the clinical interviews conducted by the *Loyola* study psychologists in 1971, presages what clinicians in treatment centers recorded in their file notes more than twenty years later. This *Causes and Context* study provides a detailed set of tables from the *Loyola* data, because the data exemplify feelings among men in Catholic priesthood just as the incidence of sexual abuse of youth was reaching its highest point. The individual frequency distributions describing the psychosexual maturity data are listed first, followed by cross-tabulations by ordination cohort.

### *Identity and Behavior Data: Situational Stressors*

Men coming to the priesthood are trained in a communal and regimented environment with clear guidelines for behavior covering schedules of study and prayer as well as social interaction; such guidelines include avoiding "particular" friendships with other males in the seminary and not dating while in seminary or during summers, when they are often away from the seminary. The transition to this environment from a home environment, or the transition from the communal environment to parish life, may induce high levels of stress in some men. These situational stressors can lead to higher levels of vulnerability to abuse, and though they do not "cause" abuse, they may serve as "triggers." These stressors may also lead to reactive behavior to alleviate stress, such as high levels of alcohol use, which could in turn act to decrease inhibitions that allow abuse to occur. A primary purpose of the Identity and Behavior survey was to identify and better understand these stressors. What follows are conclusions about situational stressors drawn from these surveys. This information is not a quantitative assessment of priests' experiences, but instead provides a richer understanding of their experiences, feelings, and behaviors as they related to the factors that could have led to stress associated with their work. The factors identified from the survey and interview data are consistent with the research findings on priest satisfaction and sources of stress.[271]

#### *Transition to Parish Life*

Many of the participants who responded to the Identity and Behavior survey and participated in interviews indicated that they attended seminaries specifically designed to educate men for the priesthood. These communal environments provided a level of socialization and friendship for the seminarians. Some priests had difficulty making the transition from the communal and structured environment of seminary to the responsibilities and administrative challenges of daily parish life. They noted the lack of structure as well as limited opportunities for social interaction with other priests.

#### *Negative Early Parish Life*

According to the data analyzed for this study, assignment to a particular parish kept priests busy early on with learning and practicing the ministerial functions of the vocation, with little time to adjust to parish living. Some priests indicated that they were assigned tasks for which they had no skill, or tasks that no one else wanted. Some indicated that they felt "thrown in" to a parish with a sick pastor (for example, having physical ailments or alcoholism) or one that was verbally abusive. The lack of close proximity and daily exposure to their seminary colleagues seemed to contribute to the development of problems later on. These problems were expressed through the priests' own alcoholism, overeating, overwork, or sometimes sexual misconduct.

#### *Uprooting*

Some priests expressed concerns about how they were moved to new parishes without being asked. The move was an "uprooting" from an established routine, occasionally one to which they had just adapted. Sometimes this change did include an assignment as pastor, but in many of these cases priests were sent to problematic parishes (for example, those that were financially poor, had a waning congregation, were in run-down facilities, or lacked diocesan support). The priests often did not object to the transfer, because questioning a transfer may have been perceived as acting against God's will (or the bishop's), but choosing silence often led to higher levels of stress for priests in these situations.

#### *Distance Ministry*

Another situational concern is what might be called "rural" or "roving" ministries. In these situations, priests would be disconnected from the people they served and would only be with them for a few days at a time. Priests in this situation reported developing an intense affection for a given set of parishioners, but the exposure was limited and they were not able to spend extended time with them.

According to the surveys, this isolation intensified their feelings of loneliness.

### *Family Stress*

Another concern for some priests was the lack of connection with family, particularly their parents. Some priests were assigned to parishes far away from any family, and they were so busy that when there was a need to reach out, they simply did not have the time to do so. These feelings of being disconnected were particularly pronounced in cases where the priests had an ailing parent. Their responsibilities to the church, as well as for family members, often left little time or energy for self-care.

### *Poor Self-Care*

Many priests indicated that they never took days off, either because their pastor did not allow it or because the parish was understaffed. Priests were required to attend many events (for example, weddings, baptisms, and funerals) because of too few priests available to share the tasks. When they did travel, it may have been on sabbatical to a seminary elsewhere to further their theological learning or on a spiritual retreat. As such, there was no real break from "work." For some priests, the constant and never-ending set of demands led to poor eating habits and lack of exercise (and often obesity). Such priests may have developed health issues compounding the stress of administering a parish.

**Table 3.9** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Sexual Feelings

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Feel Very Sexually Inactive | 9.7 |
| Feel Somewhat Sexually Inactive | 14.4 |
| Feel Slightly Sexually Inactive | 5.6 |
| Feel Slightly Sexually Active | 16.4 |
| Feel Somewhat Sexually Active | 37.9 |
| Feel Very Sexually Active | 15.9 |
| **Total** | 100% |

**Table 3.10** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Feeling Sexually Attractive or Unattractive

| *Survey response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Sexually Unattractive | 4.0 |
| Somewhat Sexually Unattractive | 4.0 |
| Slightly Sexually Unattractive | 7.5 |
| Slightly Sexually Attractive | 18.1 |
| Somewhat Sexually Attractive | 52.3 |
| Very Sexually Attractive | 14.1 |
| **Total** | 100% |

**Table 3.11** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Ease of Showing Feelings

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Difficult to Show Feelings | 8.0 |
| Somewhat Difficult to Show Feelings | 17.6 |
| Slightly Difficult to Show Feelings | 5.6 |
| Slightly Easily Show Feelings | 5.0 |
| Somewhat Easily Show Feelings | 36.7 |
| Very Easily Show Feelings | 27.1 |
| **Total** | 100% |

**Table 3.12** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Feelings of Worthiness

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Unworthy | 3.0 |
| Somewhat Unworthy | 5.5 |
| Slightly Unworthy | 6.5 |
| Slightly Worthy | 13.6 |
| Somewhat Worthy | 58.3 |
| Very Worthy | 13.1 |
| **Total** | 100% |

**Table 3.13** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Feeling Loved

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Unloved | 1.5 |
| Somewhat Unloved | 4.5 |
| Slightly Unloved | 4.0 |
| Slightly Loved | 6.0 |
| Somewhat Loved | 47.7 |
| Very Loved | 36.2 |
| **Total** | **100%** |

**Table 3.14** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Feelings of Being in Control

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Overwhelmed | 1.0 |
| Somewhat Overwhelmed | 4.0 |
| Slightly Overwhelmed | 4.5 |
| Slightly In Control | 10.6 |
| Somewhat In Control | 56.1 |
| Very In Control | 23.7 |
| **Total** | **100 %** |

**Table 3.15** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Question about Loneliness and Belonging

| *Survey Response* | **Percent** |
|---|---|
| Very Lonely | 7.5 |
| Somewhat Lonely | 12.1 |
| Slightly Lonely | 16.1 |
| Slightly Belonging | 3.5 |
| Somewhat Belonging | 40.7 |
| Very Belonging | 20.1 |
| **Total** | **100 %** |

**Table 3.16** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Questions about Feeling Sexually Attractive/Unattractive, by Ordination Cohort

| DECADE OF ORDINATION (in percents) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1910-1939** | **1940-1949** | **1950-1959** | **1960-1969** | ***TOTAL %*** |
| **Very Sexually Unattractive** | 11.1 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | *2.8* |
| **Somewhat Sexually Unattractive** | 7.4 | 0.0 | 3.8 | 1.5 | *2.8* |
| **Slightly Sexually Unattractive** | 11.1 | 8.8 | 5.7 | 4.6 | *6.7* |
| **Slightly Sexually Attractive** | 25.9 | 29.4 | 15.1 | 15.4 | *19.6* |
| **Somewhat Sexually Attractive** | 37.0 | 52.9 | 56.6 | 55.4 | *52.5* |
| **Very Sexually Attractive** | 7.4 | 2.9 | 18.9 | 23.1 | *15.6* |

**Table 3.17** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Questions about Feeling Sexually Inactive/Active, by Ordination Cohort

| DECADE OF ORDINATION (in percents) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1910-1939 | 1940-1949 | 1950-1959 | 1960-1969 | TOTAL % |
| Very Sexually Inactive | 26.9 | 8.8 | 7.5 | 3.2 | 9.1 |
| Somewhat Sexually Inactive | 7.7 | 14.7 | 22.6 | 7.9 | 13.6 |
| Slightly Sexually Inactive | 7.7 | 5.9 | 7.5 | 4.8 | 6.3 |
| Slightly Sexually Active | 23.1 | 14.7 | 11.3 | 17.5 | 15.9 |
| Somewhat Sexually Active | 26.9 | 32.4 | 35.8 | 50.8 | 39.2 |
| Very Sexually Active | 7.7 | 23.5 | 15.1 | 15.9 | 15.9 |

**Table 3.18** *Loyola* 1970: Responses to Questions about Short-Lived/Enduring Relationships, by Ordination Cohort

| DECADE OF ORDINATION (in percents) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1910-1939 | 1940-1949 | 1950-1959 | 1960-1969 | TOTAL % |
| Very Short-Lived | 0.0 | 2.9 | 1.9 | 3.1 | 2.2 |
| Somewhat Short-Lived | 3.7 | 8.8 | 11.3 | 10.8 | 9.5 |
| Slightly Short-Lived | 0.0 | 2.9 | 5.7 | 9.2 | 5.6 |
| Slightly Enduring | 3.7 | 2.9 | 3.8 | 12.3 | 6.7 |
| Somewhat Enduring | 44.4 | 55.9 | 35.8 | 36.9 | 41.3 |
| Very Enduring | 48.1 | 26.5 | 39.6 | 27.7 | 34.1 |

**Table 3.19** *Loyola* Study, 1970: Responses to Questions about Loneliness/Belonging, by Ordination Cohort

| DECADE OF ORDINATION (in percents) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1910-1939 | 1940-1949 | 1950-1959 | 1960-1969 | TOTAL % |
| Very Lonely | 0.0 | 5.9 | 7.5 | 10.8 | 7.3 |
| Somewhat Lonely | 11.1 | 11.8 | 15.1 | 12.3 | 12.8 |
| Slightly Lonely | 7.4 | 14.7 | 15.1 | 23.1 | 16.8 |
| Slightly Belonging | 7.4 | 2.9 | 0.0 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Somewhat Belonging | 40.7 | 44.1 | 37.7 | 40.0 | 40.2 |
| Very Belonging | 33.3 | 20.6 | 24.5 | 10.8 | 20.1 |

*Parishioner Interactions*

Some priests developed relationships with specific parish families and became socially intertwined with these families (for example, travelling with them, joining them for meals, staying overnight). Sometimes these families had their own stressors, such as divorce, illness, or job loss, which led to an overreliance on the pastor. Such interactions further compounded his duties and may have led to additional stress.

## Conclusion

The four sources of data analyzed in this chapter provided rich information about priests who sexually abused minors compared to those who were not abusers. The most significant conclusion drawn from this data is that no single psychological, developmental, or behavioral characteristic differentiated priests who abused minors from those who did not. Most abusers did not exhibit characteristics consistent with paraphilias with specific clinical characteristics,[272] and most importantly there were very few "pedophile" priests. Personality tests did not show statistically significant differences on major clinical scales between those priests who abused minors and others with no allegations of abuse. Clinical assessments showed that mood and thought disorders were not significantly higher in priests who sexually abused minors. While some of the abusers exhibited higher scores on subscales, the impact of these elevations is not clear given that the abusers did not show clinically elevated levels on the associated parent scales. The differences on the subscales, however, should be further investigated in future research.

There has been widespread speculation that homosexual identity is linked to the sexual abuse of minors by priests, largely because of the high number of male victims identified in the *Nature and Scope* study. However, the clinical data do not support this finding. Treatment data show that priests who identified as homosexual, as well as those who participated in same-sex sexual behavior prior to ordination (regardless of sexual identity), were not significantly more likely to abuse minors than priests who identified as heterosexual. Priests who were ordained prior to the 1960s who had a "confused" sexual identity prior to ordination were more likely to sexually abuse minors than those who clearly identified with a particular sexual identity from those cohorts. This finding was not consistent with priests ordained in later cohorts; as such, it is important to conceptualize this finding within the appropriate historical context.

The data do indicate that pre-ordination sexual behavior is significantly related to post-ordination sexual behavior, but the majority of men who participated in pre-ordination sexual behavior were more likely to have an adult partner post-ordination than minor victims. One factor that was linked to the sexual abuse of minors was a history of sexual victimization. From the most comprehensive of the three clinical samples, data showed that men who were sexually abused themselves when they were minors were significantly more likely to commit acts of abuse than those who were not abused.

Data from the *Loyola* psychological study provide information about a sample of priests in the early 1970s, a time when the abuse of minors by Catholic priests in the United States peaked. The data indicate that many of these priests, who were in seminary in the 1960s and earlier, had some level of psychosexual vulnerability. The clinical data confirm the difficulty that many priests ordained between 1930 and 1970 had with sustaining a celibate life; 80 percent of those who received psychological treatment had been sexually active after ordination (though primarily with adults). The Identity and Behavior qualitative data illuminate the stressors in the life as a priest that compounded such vulnerabilities.

Taken together, the data from the clinical files, the Identity and Behavior surveys and interviews, the *Nature and Scope* data, and the *Loyola* psychological study confirm about priest-abusers what is known about non-priest abusers: there is no single identifiable "cause" of sexually abusive behavior towards minors, and there are few individual characteristics that would make abusers identifiable prior to the commission of their abusive acts. Although some general risk factors were present in the priests who abused minors, this group was not distinguishable from priests who were treated for other reasons. This is consistent with a recent meta-analysis, which showed that few risk factors differentiated men who sexually abused children and men who committed sexual offenses against adults.[273]

Screening tools are still critically important; these can be used to identify other psychological problems not necessarily related to the abuse of minors. However, because of the lack of identifiable psychological characteristics associated with potential abusers, it is very important to pay careful attention to the situational factors associated with abuse and prevent potential abusers from having the opportunity to abuse minors. It is also crucial to recognize that the abuse was concentrated in the 1960s and 1970s and that those generations of Catholic priests were vulnerable without having had either a careful preparation for a celibate life or the understanding of the harm of sexual abuse that is now part of the overall culture.

## Chapter 4

# Organizational Response to Incidents and Reports of Sexual Abuse of Minors

Following on data already presented relative to the *causes* of sexual abuse by priests, this chapter provides data on the Catholic Church's *responses* to allegations of sexual abuse of minors. The historical divergence between the period of time when abuse incidents took place and the time period when those incidents were reported both frames and complicates the understanding of what came to be known as the "crisis" of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. This chapter focuses on the diocesan response from 1985 onward, because by that year all diocesan leaders can be expected to have been engaged in a discussion about the abuse of minors. The year 1985 was chosen because the national media coverage of the case of Gilbert Gauthe, a former priest who was a pedophile, had brought attention to the issue[274] and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) had begun a discussion about the sexual abuse of minors. The chapter concludes with a comparative examination between the Catholic Church's response to abusive priests and the institutional responses of police organizations to deviant behavior by officers.

The historical development of diocesan responses to the reports of sexual abuse can be placed within a "diffusion of innovation" framework. This framework offers a model of the pace of institutional innovations; that is, it models adaptive structural changes within an organization. The framework is helpful in addressing how changes gradually became accepted and realized by the majority of members—in this case, within the Catholic Church. This model predicts or anticipates varying degrees of innovation implementation within different organizational levels and membership groups.

The "diffusion of innovation" framework is helpful in understanding how changes, such as policies relating to allegations of the sexual abuse of minors, were adopted, known, and accepted within the institution of the Catholic Church in the United States and how efficiently and thoroughly members of the organization adopted such changes. The initial modality of the general organizational response to sexual abuse was a focus on the individual priest and on the use of psychological treatment for sexual abuse. The organizational change required for implementation of the innovation analyzed here—the "Five Principles"[275]—includes not only a response to priests with allegations of abuse but also a response to victims, victim advocates, and affected parishes.

## Disclosure of Abuse and Diocesan Response

As discussed in Chapter 2, the incidence of sexual abuse by priests in the Catholic Church was highest in the 1970s, after a steady rise in the 1960s, and was followed by a decline in the mid-1980s. The substantial delay in the reporting of cases of abuse meant that most cases were not known to individual dioceses before the 1990s. Widespread publicity about individual priests in 1985 and again in 1992 prompted "spurts" of disclosure of abuse and reports to dioceses, but often such reports related to abuse that had happened many years in the past.

The extraordinary media attention given to Catholic clergy abuse in 2002 created a singular and influential general framework for summarizing the American Catholic response to allegations of sexual abuse of minors.[276] Daily news coverage of the reports and the intense media scrutiny of the responses by leaders of the Catholic Church were interlaced with expressions of support and sympathy for victims of abuse. These media reports also brought attention to an overall sense of outrage at priest-abusers and those perceived to have been protecting them. In that one year alone, individual Catholics brought forward information about more than 3,300 incidents of sexual abuse. In the 1980s and 1990s, when there were shorter periods of media coverage of individual priests who abused children, the public response focused on the offending priest. In 2002, the public response was focused on the leaders of individual dioceses and then on the collective hierarchy of the Catholic Church. What this outpouring of pain and indignation failed to accommodate was the temporal disjunction between the historical occurrence of these incidents of abuse and the emerging knowledge by Catholic leaders of the extent of the abuse.

By 1985, almost all of the dioceses in the United States had experienced cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests.[277] Not surprisingly, the responses of recently appointed Catholic bishops to a survey about causes of the crisis as part of the *Causes and Context* study are very different from those of the bishops who were in leadership positions between 1985 and 2000. Bishops who held positions through the early 1990s pointed to the actions they had attempted but that did not succeed as causes of the 2002 crisis; such attempted actions included ineffective psychological treatment, inadequate processes to help priests leave the priesthood, and complex canon law processes for suspension.

Those bishops who were not in position in the late 1990s were far more likely to place sexual abuse committed by Catholic clergy in a far wider and evolving framework. These individuals' survey answers point to similar societal patterns and causes and to faulty seminary teaching and formation programs as contributors to the crisis of sexual abuse. Bishops not in position in the late 1990s were far more likely to acknowledge that the earlier diocesan protective focus on the priest-abuser eclipsed the most serious dimension of clergy abuse: harm done to the victim. The failure to recognize the harm of physical or sexual abuse was not atypical in American society generally in the late 1970s and 1980s; this was a time when the understanding of the rights of women and children was just developing. Although neglect or blame of victims was commonplace, the Catholic laity would not be able to accept this behavior from church leaders.

The *Causes and Context* researchers worked retrospectively to gather information about the sexual abuse of minors, together with information on the Catholic priesthood, from the period between 1985 and 2002. The fundamental question addressed is why the harm of sexual abuse to a child or adolescent was not understood and how this lack of understanding could have persisted. The problem of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests was recognized by Catholic leaders in the United States by 1985. The questions of how to understand the act of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest and how to respond to the victim, the family, and the parish, were presented for regular discussion in bishops' meetings from that point onward. Legal advisors and insurers counseled the development of explicit policies, but in many dioceses, there was not a thorough recognition of the problem or implementation of policies. In many, if not most, dioceses, there was a failure to grasp what should be done in response to the harm to victims. Some individual bishops and other church leaders did recognize the problem early on and responded to remove abusers; however, these actions were rarely recognized outside of the church or in the media. The post-2002 confusion about what actions should have been taken, what actions were taken, and the lack of transparency about what was actually being done led to confusion about both the type and extent of sexual abuse and the diocesan leaders' responses to it. The goal of this chapter is to disentangle what was known about the occurrence of sexual abuse, when it was known, and what responses were undertaken by church leadership.

## Development of Diocesan Response to Sexual Abuse by Priests

The history of the Catholic Church provides ample documentation of weakness and human failing on the part of some of its priests, including deviant sexual behavior with adults and with minors.[278] It is clear that diocesan leaders are responsible for the care of priests whose ability to carry out their responsibilities in ministry is impaired by physical or psychological illness. Sexual behavior by a priest that violates the expectations of chaste celibacy would, at mid-century, have been seen primarily as a moral failing or a problem requiring spiritual direction. In 1947, the Servants of the Paraclete opened a spiritual retreat center for troubled priests, and later, in 1959, a second such center. At the same time, in the 1950s and 1960s, as the discipline of psychology developed and psychological testing became more of an accepted form of screening for psychological disorders, psychological treatment began to be used to address the behavioral problems of priests. After 1960, several centers were either founded specifically for the psychological treatment of Catholic priests and religious community members or had incorporated psychological treatment into their regimens.[279]

The challenge faced by bishops who received a report of sexual abuse of a minor by a priest of the diocese was how to respond to the victim and family and how to make choices about a course of action for the priest involved. The responses to reports of sexual abuse of minors made before 1985 differed greatly from reports brought to dioceses in 1995 or in 2002. More than 80 percent of pre-1985 reports of sexual abuse were made to the diocese within a year of the incident, and three quarters of the reports were made by the victim or a family member. The most common request was that help be provided for the priest-offender. Often, the families did not want publicity nor did they wish to confront the priest; in other cases, families were pressured by church leaders to keep the incident confidential. Under such circumstances, a course of action toward a canonical trial or a criminal indictment was not very likely. One priest recalled in an interview that, as a newly ordained priest in the 1970s, he had heard rumors about priests being sexual abusers and had

asked the diocesan chancellor about such rumors. He was assured that these few cases were handled quietly and that the reports never became public knowledge. This account is echoed in the survey responses by individual priests and reports by victim assistance coordinators collected for the purpose of the *Causes and Context* study. Prior to 1984, the common assumption of those who the bishops consulted was that clergy sexual misbehavior was both psychologically curable and could be spiritually remedied by recourse to prayer.

## The Case of Gilbert Gauthe

On October 18, 1984, a Louisiana grand jury indicted Gilbert Gauthe, a former priest of the Diocese of Lafayette, for a long list of sexual crimes against children. The Diocese of Lafayette had received multiple reports of Gauthe's abusive acts for seven years before he was indicted but had not managed to control his behavior. Gauthe had been repeatedly cautioned about his behavior but was not removed from ministry until 1983, when, following another report of abuse by a parent who demanded action, he was sent to the House of Affirmation in Massachusetts for treatment. The specifics of the Gauthe case were shocking: Gauthe had not only raped and sodomized dozens of boys, he had used the "cloak" of his status as a priest to justify his actions to the victims and to intimidate them into silence. Harm to Gauthe's victims was profound, requiring hospitalization for some and psychotherapy for many. The criminal case and related civil litigation filed by the families of the victims drew national and international press attention. Despite the sensational press coverage and extensive discussion of the case, the failures of the leaders of the Diocese of Lafayette were many. Diocesan leaders hesitated to remove Gauthe from ministry even after he admitted to the abuse, and they failed to redress the harm to the child victims and their families. They were preoccupied with controlling negative publicity and so were not forthcoming with information to the affected parishes. Such failures on the part of the Diocese of Lafayette were to be repeated by leaders of some other dioceses in the coming years.

## NCCB Action on Sexual Abuse

In 1984 and 1985, disclosure about the Gauthe case, combined with information emerging in dioceses in other parts of the United States about incidents of sexual abuse of youth by priests, prompted the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) to address as a body the issue of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. The bishops' first formal discussion of sexual abuse of minors by priests that followed the indictment of Gilbert Gauthe took place at the summer meeting of the NCCB in Collegeville, Minnesota, in 1985. The issue would be revisited annually for almost ten years. Prior to the 1985 meeting, a resource paper and proposal for action on the issue, entitled "The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy: Meeting the Problem in a Comprehensive and Responsible Manner," was written by Father Michael Petersen, a psychiatrist at the Saint Luke Institute, Father Thomas Doyle, a canon lawyer on the staff of the Apostolic Delegation ("Vatican Embassy") in Washington, DC, and Raymond Mouton, Esq., the attorney who had represented Gilbert Gauthe.[280] These three men, acting from specific and detailed knowledge of the accusation of abuse in the Gauthe case, worked collaboratively to craft a document that would provide a basis for understanding the problem of sexual abuse of minors. They also proposed an action plan that would designate a response team, track all cases, and work from a uniform strategy in all dioceses. Specifically, the proposal advocated for the formation of a committee, which would then elect four bishops with knowledge of civil or canon law to serve on the Group of Four. This Group, supervised by committee members, would be charged with implementing all necessary aspects of the project. Additionally, the Group of Four would also be responsible for recruiting a variety of consultants with legal, clinical, and religious expertise to form two subgroups, the Crisis Control Team, and the Policy and Planning Group. The authors included several clinical articles about pedophilia along with the resource paper. This background information about the problem of sexual abuse of minors was to be supplemented by a series of presentations made directly at the bishops' meetings by clinical psychologists. Though the document and proposal presented by Petersen, Doyle, and Mouton was distributed to all bishops in the United States, the proposed action plan was not adopted.[281]

In the years after 1985, the staff counsel for the NCCB worked with diocesan leaders to promote a direct and responsible course of intervention when reports of incidents of sexual abuse were made, with a particular emphasis on psychological treatment for the priest accused of abuse. The NCCB began training programs for vicars, encouraged the development of explicit policies, and distributed strategies for responding to litigation. In addition to being called on to respond individually to cases of their own priests whose sexual behavior involved the abuse of minors, diocesan leaders then had access to information from professionals and academics regarding options in response to this behavior. Overall, prompt psychological treatment for the priest was seen as the best course of action and became the primary intervention.

## Development of Treatment for Sex Offenders

Knowledge of treatment responses to sexual abusers has developed substantially over the last forty years. In a 1996 article summarizing the history of assessment, treatment, and theories of sexual offending, William Marshall stated that there were few acceptable methods of assessing and treating sex offenders prior to the 1970s. [282] Most early research was based on the assumption that child sexual abusers were motivated by deep-seated psychological problems or pathologies. Early models of treatment for sexual offenders were organic (castration or chemical treatments) or psychoanalytic, with later treatments focusing on behavioral and then cognitive behavioral techniques.

### Early Treatments for Sex Offenders: The Medical Models

In the early twentieth century treatments for sex offenders were either psychoanalytic or medical in nature. Prior to the 1940s, many habitual sexual offenders were physically castrated, and this practice continued throughout the century to a lesser degree for those sexual offenders who did not respond to psychotherapy.[283] Castration seemed to be the most effective way to reduce the hypersexuality of the sex offenders, though as Sturup noted, it did not affect "perversion," but rather reduced the libido. [284] Edward Tauber also noted that castration did not seem to affect the sexuality of the adult male on a purely biological basis. [285]

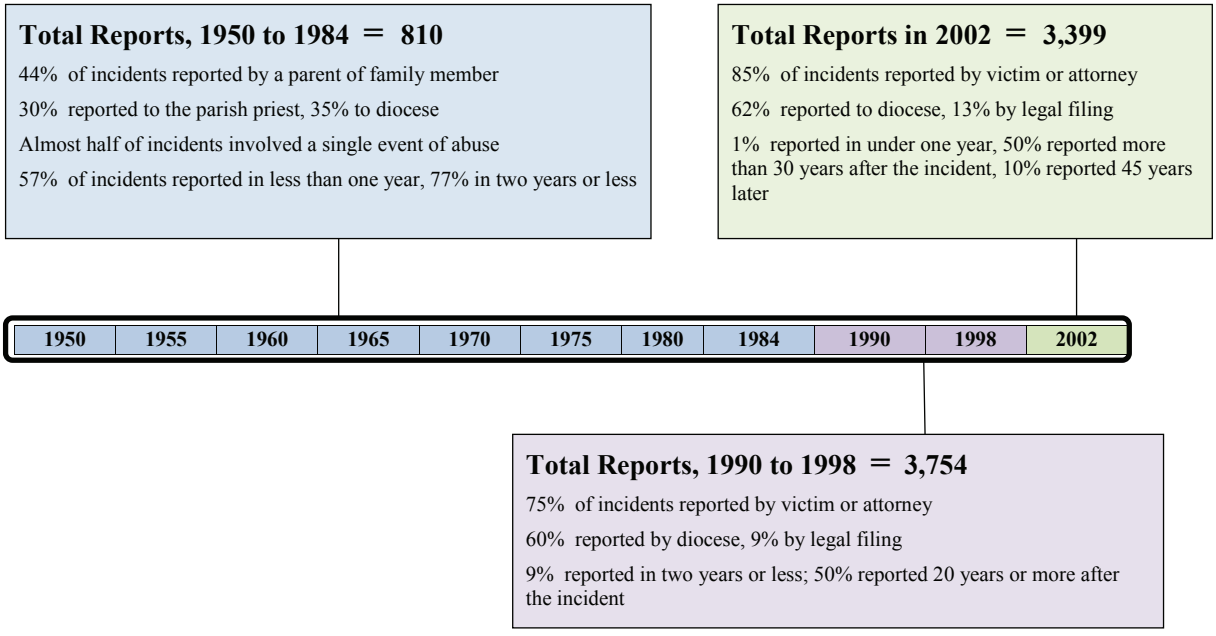
Hormonal treatments, or "chemical castration," began to surface in the 1940s.[286] The first hormonal treatment used was an estrogen called stilboestrol, which was fairly effective but caused several side effects (such as vomiting and feminization). In the 1960s, a number of new medical treatments were used to control sexual behavior, such as the tranquillizers thioridazine[287] and fluphenazine.[288] The two most common medical treatments for deviant sexual behavior, also developed in the 1960s, were cyproterone acetate (CPA) and medroxyprogesterone acetate (MPA). These are still the most common hormones used for chemical castration today. Antiandrogen treatments also help many sex offenders regulate their behavior,[289] though they are best used in a combination of treatments that also include some form of psychological therapy.[290]

### Behavioral Treatment

Behavioral methods of treatment began emerging in the 1950s and 1960s. The impetus for this was largely Eysenck's criticism of traditional psychotherapy.[291] Many researchers at this time believed that deviant sexual practices resulted from deviant sexual arousal, and therapeutic practices were therefore developed to modify deviant fantasies. Such therapeutic practices took various forms, such as operant conditioning,[292] aversion therapy,[293] orgasmic reconditioning,[294] and shaping.[295] The focus was not only on modifying serious sexual fantasies, such as those about children, but also on eliminating homosexual desires.

Many clinicians continued to utilize these behavioral techniques through the 1970s, though the research

**Figure 4.1** Timeline for Changes in the Timing and Type of Report of Abuse



that was conducted on the efficacy of these techniques was often on small samples of patients. For example, Wijesinghe studied four male patients who were each treated with six sessions of massed electrical aversion therapy in a single day. He found that with subsequent support, all four patients showed stable treatment effects at follow-up more than eighteen months after treatment.[296] Quinsey, Bergersen, and Steinman used classical conditioning aversion therapy on ten child molesters and noted that after these techniques were used the child molesters showed a marked increase in sexual preferences for adults.[297] Vernon Quinsey,[298] who is one of the leading researchers in the use of the penile plethysmograph (PPG), discussed how penile volume is not an infallible method of predicting a child abuser's dangerousness. He stated that, just because an individual undergoes aversion therapy, it does not necessarily mean decreased dangerousness. Quinsey suggested that much more research is needed to determine the relationship between penile volume and recidivism/dangerousness.

## Cognitive Behavioral Models of Treatment

Behavioral models of treatment were limited in their scope and concentrated on single elements of deviant behavior. Two groups of researchers in the early 1970s, Gene Abel[299] and William Marshall[300] and their colleagues, expanded on these treatments and made the programs multimodal in nature by adding components such as social skills training. Abel, upon recognizing the prevalence of cognitive distortions (CDs) in sex offenders, modified behavioral treatment programs so that they were cognitive-behavioral in nature so as to address these distortions. In the 1980s, Pithers et al. adapted the therapeutic technique of relapse prevention (RP) to help sex offenders, which Marshall called the most important development for sex offender research of that decade.[301] Marshall noted that the relapse prevention program trained offenders to recognize and manage their fantasies and behaviors.[302] Other developments in the 1980s involved cognitive restructuring, victim empathy training, the refinement of sexual arousal monitoring, and an increased validity of phallometric testing (a measure of arousal assessment).[303] The most significant addition to treatment in the 1990s was the use of the polygraph, which provided insight into the acts of offenders and indicated whether or not they were being truthful during the treatment programs.[304]

## Professionalization of Treatment

The current state of understanding about the treatment of sexual offenders is that sexual offending is the result of a complex matrix of social, psychological, and developmental problems. Additionally, recent research has focused on the role of opportunity in offending, particularly in situations where abusers have developed mentoring or nurturing relationships with those whom they abuse.

Most indicative of how much the knowledge about treating sex offenders has progressed in the last three decades are the sentiments of experts in the field of sex offender treatment and research. In the early 1980s, the first version of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) was formed (formerly called ABTSA, Association for the Behavioral Treatment of Sexual Aggressives). The ATSA website provides an overview of the history of that organization and its founders (see www.atsa.com/atsaHis.html). Jim Haaven,[305] one of the founding members of ATSA, states that these founders were "a group of people with a common interest and need to learn more about sex offending issues, realizing we knew little to nothing, willing and able to be curious, collaborative, and inclusive of ideas and opinions." Roger Little,[306] another founding member, is quoted as saying: "I might add, almost everything we thought we knew at that [first] meeting has proved to be not true." Similarly, Ron Langevin, the founding editor of *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment* (published by ATSA), commented on the need for more information about this population in his opening editorial in 1988. Langevin stated,

> Child sexual abuse is also a deep concern at present, in part, a response to the efforts of Women's Rights groups and changing social legislation requiring professionals to report abuse of children. On many important questions, we lack information. . . . Sex offenders against children and women have also received limited research attention. The bulk of treatments for the offenders have been tried out on homosexual men. There is little convincing evidence that these methods are effective at rehabilitating sex offenders. New directions are being explored to help them to adjust to their sexual anomaly and to prevent relapse.[307]

It is meaningful that ATSA leaders openly admit that their initial understanding of the problem of sexual abuse of minors was incomplete or even erroneous. Although interest in sexual offending and treatment had developed substantially by the mid-1980s, rigorous research had yet to be done, and effective treatment and relapse prevention strategies were still in their infancy. The objective situation of those seeking treatment for priest-abusers in the late 1980s was that 94 percent of the incidents of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests that are now known to have occurred between 1950 and 2010 had already taken place by 1990.

# Sex Abuse Treatment for Catholic Priests

## *Nature and Scope* Data on Treatment of Priests

Data from the *Nature and Scope* study showed that 1,624 priests received treatment between 1950 and 2002 for sexually abusing minors, and most of those priests received more than one type of treatment. In total, there were 3,041 instances of treatment. The peak decade for treatment was the 1980s, though there was a sharp decline in treatment thereafter. This rise in the use of treatment in the 1980s, particularly in sex-offender specialized treatment programs, is consistent with the response to sex offenders in the general population. It was also in the 1980s that there was a rise in cognitive-behavioral treatment programs for sex offenders, particularly those employing relapse prevention techniques.

Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 show data from the *Nature and Scope* study about the diocesan response to priests accused of sexual abuse of minors. The data can only describe actions taken with priests who were alive and not retired at the time of the report of the abuse. The Tables show the type of action clustered by the decade in which the report was made so that the change over time is clear. In other words, these Tables show the course of action taken after a priest was reported to have sexually abused a minor, and the data are presented according to when the Catholic Church had knowledge of the report. Before 1980, a reprimand and return to duty was as likely as a referral for evaluation by a professional. From the 1980s forward, the likelihood of a reprimand and quick return to duty decreases, and the likelihood of being put on administrative leave or suspended increases. Treatment was not the first course of action. The elevated percentages for the category of "No action taken" would be expected as the time between the incident and the report increase; the accused priests are less likely to be in active ministry.

When specifically considering post-1985 treatment, the most common type of treatment for accused priests was specialized sex offender treatment programs. A number of facilities provided such programs, primarily through residential treatment lasting six to twelve months. The three facilities participating in the clinical component of the *Causes and Context* study are specialized sex offender treatment programs. Table 4.2 shows the types of treatment use after 1985.

Table 4.3 shows the severity of the abuse behavior for those priests who were placed in psychological treatment, clustered by the type of treatment. More than 75 percent of priests who were sent to a specialized treatment center for residential treatment had previously participated in outpatient forms of therapy. The likelihood of a priest being reprimanded and returned to the parish or reinstated after an accusation changes from 35 percent for priests first accused before 1985, to 18 percent for reinstatement and 5 percent for reprimand-and-return for those first accused after 1985. If only priests accused after 2000 are considered, 8.5 percent were reinstated. The use of spiritual retreat and medical leave also decline by more than 50 percent after 1985. These trends may reflect the growing understanding of harm caused by the problem of sexual abuse to children and also may reflect the effect of policies implemented as the extent of the problem was becoming known.

The use of treatment declines in the 1990s, and this decline reflects concerns about relapse and re-offense. During the 1990s, when the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse was meeting to discuss types of evaluation and treatment in the various treatment facilities, some optimism about the value of treatment had waned. Though this committee had reasonable intentions for identifying appropriate paths to evaluation and treatment for priests with allegations, fewer priests were actually being treated by the mid-1990s than had been treated previously.

## Reassignment and the Understanding of Relapse

When church leaders discovered that priests who had received psychological treatment had subsequently committed new offenses, they began to challenge the premise that psychological treatment could address and change the behavior of priests who had sexually abused minors. As Table 4.3 indicates, the priests who were sent to residential treatment facilities specializing in sex offender treatment were more likely to have longer histories of offending. If all priests sent to specialized sex offender treatment before 1990 are considered, their average number of victims is six, and three out of four had four or more victims. In comparison, if all priests who were *accused* of sexual abuse before 1990 are considered, their average number of victims is three, and a majority (60 percent) had one or two victims. These statistics are drawn from the *Nature and Scope* data and include all victims known by 2002, not simply those known by 1990. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference in the abusive behavior of the priests who were sent to specialized sex offender treatment when compared to all priests accused of abuse by the end of 1990.

Thus, the pressing question of whether or under what circumstances a priest should be reassigned to a parish after treatment for sexual abuse of a child prompted members of the NCCB to seek professional guidance from recognized experts in the treatment of sexual abuse. These presentations, made in Executive Session (closed to all but NCCB

members) at General Meetings, included discussions of pedophilia and related behaviors, the prospects for treatment, the question of reassignment and canonical options, the risks of liability resulting from failure to supervise a priest with a history of abusive behavior, and theological and pastoral considerations. Many bishops offered their firsthand experiences with supervision and perspectives on response to victims and affected parishes. In June of 1992, a commission of the Archdiocese of Chicago established by Cardinal Bernardin released its report and recommendations for an adequate diocesan response to the issue of sexual abuse by priests. The commission recommended that a priest involved in sexual misconduct with minors not be returned to parish ministry or other ministry with access to minors, although it left open the possibility of other nonparochial work following administrative leave and aftercare. Other recommendations included a review board to assist the bishop in the evaluation of cases of abuse, a lay case manager to initiate an immediate process following an accusation, and a 24-hour hotline for victims to report incidents of abuse. The 1992 Policy on Priests and Sexual Abuse of Children released by the Office of Media Relations of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) stated: "[W]hen there is even a hint of such an incident, investigate immediately; remove the priest whenever the evidence warrants it; follow the reporting obligations of the civil law; extend pastoral care to the victim and the victim's family; and seek appropriate treatment for the offender."[308] The USCC/NCCB as a body lacked authority to direct the actions of dioceses, but the terms of the recommended actions were clear.

In tandem with these statements from the NCCB in 1992 was the media coverage of the case of James Porter, a former Catholic priest whose sexual abuse of an estimated two hundred boys and girls was featured in an ABC television newsmagazine, Primetime Live. Ordained in 1959, Porter was repeatedly hospitalized for treatment following reports of abuse of children but then returned to ministry in parishes in several different dioceses. He finally asked to be released from the priesthood in 1973, and when that request was granted, he married. In 1990, Porter was publically accused by a male victim for acts of abuse that occurred in the 1960s; then he was indicted for a different sex crime against a young woman in 1994 and imprisoned. He died in 2005, before he could be assessed for civil commitment as a sex offender.

**Table 4.1** *Nature and Scope*: Initial Diocesan Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors

| INITIAL DIOCESAN RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR (in percent of abuse cases) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *This table shows the initial action taken with an individual priest by a diocese after receiving a report of sexual abuse of a minor, by the time period of the report.* | | | | | |
| **Initial Diocesan Action** | **1950-1979** | **1980-1989** | **1990-1999** | **2000-2003** | ***TOTAL*** |
| **Reprimanded & returned** | 34.8 | 12.4 | 4.8 | 3.8 | 8.8 |
| **Referred for evaluation** | 33.0 | 50.7 | 45.6 | 28.0 | 40.4 |
| **Suspended** | 6.4 | 7.6 | 6.8 | 8.1 | 7.3 |
| **Administrative leave** | 6.0 | 8.9 | 11.9 | 16.3 | 12.0 |
| **Resigned or retired** | 5.2 | 4.8 | 8.7 | 11.6 | 8.5 |
| **Reinstated** | 3.0 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 1.7 |
| **Treatment** | 2.2 | 4.6 | 3.6 | 2.2 | 3.2 |
| **Other** | 5.7 | 6.9 | 10.5 | 13.9 | 10.4 |
| **No Action Taken** | 3.7 | 2.4 | 6.5 | 14.7 | 7.7 |

**Table 4.2** *Nature and Scope*: Sex Offender Treatment (after 1985)

| Sex offender treatment for Catholic priests | |
|---|---|
| *Treatment Type* | **Percent** |
| **Specialized S.O. treatment/clergy offenders** | 39.9 |
| **Specialized S.O. treatment/all offenders** | 11.2 |
| **General treatment program** | 14.5 |
| **Individual psychological counseling** | 14.1 |
| **Psychotherapist** | 5.5 |
| **Relapse prevention program** | 0.1 |
| **Evaluation (without treatment)** | 10.8 |
| **Spiritual counseling** | 0.7 |
| **Other** | 3.2 |
| **Total** | **100 %** |

## Development and Implementation of the "Five Principles"

Bishops confronted difficult issues when faced with accusation of abuse against a priest. Such challenges included investigating the scope of the abusive behavior, discerning a response to victims, determining the extent of disclosure of the abuse, and addressing issues regarding the suitability of reassignment following treatment for sexual abuse. All such challenges provoked continuing discussion at annual bishops' meetings. In a public statement made in 1988, the General Counsel of the NCCB defined "affirmative activities" for dioceses to undertake as a proactive response to the issue of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. These activities included the education of diocesan personnel about the prevention of abuse of children, the development of policies to guide responses to a report of abuse, and the importance of working to mitigate the harm to victims and families. These general recommendations were codified into five formal principles. At the Bishops' Meeting in June of 1992, the Five Principles to guide the response of a diocese to a report of sexual abuse by a priest, as listed below, were announced and discussed. The Five Principles listed below were adopted by a resolution of the bishops on November 19, 1992, as the recommended course of action in response to an allegation of sexual abuse by a priest.[309]

1. Respond promptly to all allegations of abuse where there is reasonable belief that abuse has occurred.
2. If such an allegation is supported by sufficient evidence, relieve the alleged offender promptly of his ministerial duties and refer him for appropriate medical evaluation and intervention.
3. Comply with the obligations of civil law as regards reporting of the incident and cooperating with the investigation.
4. Reach out to the victims and their families and communicate sincere commitment to their spiritual and emotional well-being.
5. Within the confines of respect for privacy of the individuals involved, deal as openly as possible with the members of the community.

## Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse

In furtherance of this work was the appointment of Father Canice Connors as chairman of a Priestly Life and Ministry subcommittee on Sexual Abuse by Priests in November of 1992. Connors organized a two-day workshop of a group of experts and church leaders called the "Think Tank" in early 1993 and brought their recommendations back to the NCCB. In June of 1993, at the release of the report by the "Think Tank," the Ad Hoc Committee of Sexual Abuse was announced. Led by Bishop John Kinney, this committee had a wide mandate: to assist the US dioceses with incidents of clergy sexual abuse, to promote healing for victims and their families, and to improve the screening of candidates for the priesthood and of lay volunteers. The Ad Hoc Committee would undertake several initiatives in the mid-1990s to provide an empirical basis for a policy on reassignment; most notably, a study of the treatment centers with an emphasis on posttreatment options and a survey of dioceses to collect data on their experiences with priests reassigned after treatment for sex abuse. In 1994 and 1995, the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse compiled reports about clinical facilities that provided treatment for priests with allegations of sexual abuse of minors. As stated at the outset of the 1994 report, the objective of this exercise was:

> To compile descriptions of sexual abuse evaluation and treatment centers, church-related and others—for priests and lay employees—including their specialties, style of contact with referring bishops, and type of client information shared; to collate a series of key questions their professional staff expect to be asked by bishops on the occasion of a referral along with a list of questions the bishops themselves may be asked; and to provide bishops with suggested criteria for looking at evaluation and treatment centers. [310]

Ten facilities participated in the 1994 request for information, and eight additional centers participated in 1995. The reports included factual descriptions and histories of

**Table 4.3** *Nature and Scope*: Comparison of Priest Behavior, by Types of Treatment

| Average number of victims and abuse duration all priests sent to treatment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reporting Interval | | Number of Victims | Abuse Duration (in years) |
| 1950-1979 | Sex offender specific | 13* | 13.59 |
| | General psychological | 5 | 9.98 |
| | Evaluation only | 3 | 9.75 |
| | Other | 3 | 2.88 |
| | | | |
| 1980-1989 | Sex offender specific | 4 | 7.60 |
| | General psychological | 3 | 6.59 |
| | Evaluation only | 3 | 6.18 |
| | Other | 3 | 2.36 |
| | | | |
| 1990-1999 | Sex offender specific | 3 | 6.55 |
| | General psychological | 3 | 4.99 |
| | Evaluation only | 2 | 4.73 |
| | Other | 2 | 3.82 |
| | | | |
| 2000-2003 | Sex offender specific | 3 | 5.52 |
| | General psychological | 2 | 3.51 |
| | Evaluation only | 2 | 1.62 |
| | Other | 2 | 4.35 |

* *This statistic is inflated by the time lapse between abuse and treatment. Priests ordained in the 1950s and 1960s may not have been sent to treatment until it became widely available in the late 1970s.*

each of the facilities, the types of treatment they provided, and any specializations they had within the facilities. The reports raised key questions about sex offender treatment for priests (such as which treatment facility was best for different types of offenders), but they did not provide any type of evaluation of the centers. They also offered general advice to bishops, but there was no empirical research summarizing recidivism rates of offenders leaving the facilities, descriptions of best practices for offenders, or directions on who should or should not have been returned to ministry. A survey of the diocesan experience with fifteen centers reported an overall positive evaluation of the experience with the assessment and treatment and an appreciation of the care and compassion afforded the priests. The diocesan respondents noted that the treatment centers were generally optimistic about the results of treatment and not helpful in making determinations about the "truth of the allegations."

The Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee and two additional committee members met with representatives from five of the treatment centers in 1995 to discuss post-treatment follow-up, research on sex offender treatment,

the continuum of care for priests with allegations of abuse, the cost of treatment, standards of care, and prevention. Of note from the meeting was the discussion regarding the need for a database of information on priests who had been treated. The group felt it would be useful to understand the common measures taken by the centers, testing instruments, posttreatment data, and what was or was not working.[311] They suggested the possibility that local research staff could encode the data, and outside researchers could analyze and present "credible conclusions."[312] The Committee continued to suggest that tracking posttreatment data would allow them to "get a profile of the kinds of individuals who are likely to re-offend," and that the information "could also be helpful in assessing seminarians and standardizing entrance into the seminary."[313] Although research staff at some of the centers continued to publish using their own data, it is not clear that any academic research was done through the collaboration of multiple centers.

### Survey of Diocesan Practices

Although a comprehensive national survey was not carried out, thirty-two dioceses responded to surveys presented by the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse, with a majority of respondents reporting reassignment of priests after treatment for sexual abuse. Responses were highly varied, with some reflecting diocesan policy and some the decision and judgment of diocesan leaders. At the conclusion of the survey, the Ad Hoc Committee stated again the importance of removing from ministry anyone with an "enduring attraction to children," encouraging bishops to communicate with one another to share experiences and urging diocesan leaders to provide careful limits on conditions of residence and supervision for any priest returned to ministry. The five guidelines for action, as noted above, were supported and developed in much greater detail by the members of the "Think Tank" in their 1994 reports, *Restoring Trust*, Volumes I and II. Despite the unanimous affirmation of these guidelines for action, their development in the *Restoring Trust* documents, and the establishment of written policies that encoded them, the promise of these principles were not uniformly fulfilled.

## Understanding the Pace of Institutional Change

In the 1970s, a framework for understanding how change takes place in institutions was developed by Everett M. Rogers in a work now in its fifth edition, *The Diffusion of Innovations*.[314] The analysis it suggests contains some apt terms for describing, and perhaps even understanding, the post-1992 American Catholic Church's degree of adoption and implementation of the "Five Principles." At the outset, it should be noted that Rogers acknowledges that comparatively few studies exist dealing with "the effects of a system's structure on diffusion, independent from the effects of the characteristics of individuals that make up the system."[315] Historically, the Catholic Church, too, has functioned in a way that gives evidence of a close relationship between the church's structures and leaders. Over time, Roman Catholicism has been more likely to focus publically on tradition than on innovation, and when innovation occurs, leaders present it as completely continuous with what preceded it. Some structural characteristics of Catholicism impede innovation, especially when they appear to clash with key dimensions of its identity, while others allow for change of a dramatic nature, as evidenced by the Second Vatican Council, for example, relative to liturgical celebrations and to relationship with other churches and religions.

Rogers's "diffusion of innovation" model of organizational change can be directly applied to observed shifts regarding the responses to sexual abuse of minors in the Catholic Church. Given the introduction of widely circulated reports, establishment of committees, and peripheral information relative to sexual abuse, the organization was undergoing observable changes in both policies and culture, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. According to Rogers's model of organizational change, five characteristics typify the perceived attributes of innovation, four of which are relevant to the Catholic Church:

- **Relative advantage**—the perceived degree of relative advantage over the status quo. Rogers notes the significance of "social prestige factors" concerning this attribute. As it pertains to the sexual abuse crisis, this factor may have affected the way bishops weighed concern for victims against their expectation of institutionally damaging publicity.
- **Compatibility**—the degree to which an innovation is perceived to be "consistent with the existing values . . . and norms of a social system." The "identity" of Catholicism is one that adheres closely to its values and norms, offering stability and certainty to its members and to society. The defining characteristics of Catholicism, for example, have been understood as *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic*.[316] If these characteristics seem to be contradicted, hierarchical authorities would resist, as might be the case if the "holiness" of the church were questioned in light of sexual abuse among clergy.
- **Complexity**—innovations that are difficult to understand and use are adopted more slowly. In responding to the sexual abuse of clergy, the lack of experience of

the hierarchy in using structures of accountability and transparency made the commitments in the USCCB policy and the Five Principles more difficult to understand and adopt and, thus, more likely to be implemented slowly.

- **Observability**—"The easier it is for individuals to see the results of an innovation, the more likely they are to adopt."[317] In the case of clergy sexual abuse, the hierarchy was slow to act on the problem, possibly out of concern about damaging press coverage or fear of parishioners being confused and troubled over the situation, and thus did not "observe" the benefits of adherence to the "Five Principles."

Thus, four of the factors Rogers identifies as conducive to "innovation" may have been somewhat attenuated by the culture and social structure of the Catholic Church in the United States.

After the Five Principles were affirmed in the early 1990s, there was general consensus that a response to sexual abuse was necessary; yet diocesan implementation varied considerably. This pattern is consistent with innovations in organizations in general, as Rogers identified five categories of responders: innovators, early adopters, early majority, later majority, and laggards. Most innovations have an S-shaped rate of adoption, with the innovators and early adopters being small groups that lead to an eventual peak at the later majority—but who are often system outsiders and *heterophilic* regarding local norms and networks.[318] Rogers estimates the percentages generally seen in each category: innovators would constitute 2.5 percent, laggards 16 percent, and the vast majority of system members would comprise either early (34 percent) or late (34 percent) majorities. This pattern of change is consistent with the adoption of the Five Principles by diocesan leaders—a few innovators moved forward in the 1990s, most responded to the urgency of the 2002 Dallas meeting, and a few are still "lagging."

In Rogers' discussion of the innovation model, he describes several types of innovation decisions. The most significant of these are the *authority innovation-decisions*, which "are choices to adopt or reject an innovation that are made by a relatively few individuals in a system who possess power, status, or technical expertise."[319] In a distributed authority structure of dioceses where bishops are autonomous and answer only to the Pope, no assigned resonant authority was in place to articulate an innovation-decision that would conclusively resolve the questions of response to sexual abuse by priests. The policies articulated in the report released by Cardinal Bernardin in 1992 would have been the closest analogy to an authority-innovation decision. The *centralization* and *formalization* of organizational structure as opposed to *system openness* is an additional consideration for implementation of innovation. Rogers argues, "The more that power is concentrated in an organization, the less innovative the organization is," and notes that leaders who are distant from the operation tasks are not in the best position to support innovation.[320] Rogers's use of the term "*champion*" suggests a comparison to the central Roman Catholic role of *pope*: "A *champion* is a charismatic individual who throws his or her weight behind an innovation, thus overcoming indifference or resistance that the new idea may provoke in an organization."[321]

Commentary by church insiders has documented the delay and resistance shown by Vatican authorities to the problem of clergy sexual abuse and that this lack of response was considered by many bishops to be a major obstacle.[322] Father Thomas Doyle, whose role in the response to the Gauthe case is outlined above, worked as a canonist at the Vatican Embassy in Washington, DC, in the 1980s. During the period from 1983 to 1984 the Embassy was explicitly challenged by the details and widespread publicity attracted by the Gauthe case in the Diocese of Lafayette. In a 2007 meeting with the *Causes and Context* researchers, Doyle said that Gauthe's bishop in the early 1980s, Bishop Frey, and other church authorities were aware of at least seven other sexually abusing priests in the dioceses about whom they had done nothing but maintain secrecy and transfer the priests. Doyle recalled that when informed, the head of the Vatican Embassy, then Archbishop Pio Laghi, "was shocked, perplexed, and mystified by the entire phenomenon. It was a problem he had never faced before, at least not in such numbers." But the numbers of allegations soon increased. Doyle reported that between October 1984 and March 1985 the Vatican Nuncio and the Papal Ambassador had received reports of about forty different cases of clergy sexual abuse in the United States. In some instances, bishops themselves reported cases brought to their attention, and in other cases the reports were given directly by the victims themselves. Doyle further said that in May 1985 he "delivered a face-to-face briefing for nearly two hours to Silvio Cardinal Oddi, then the Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy. My oral report was accompanied by a written report. I also wrote Pope John Paul II." "But," he added, "neither the Pope nor any Vatican office responded or issued any kind of written or oral statement between 1984 and 1993. . . . At no time has either Pope John Paul II or his successor ever directed critical comments to the bishops for the way they mishandled the matter."

The media attention to Pope Benedict XVI's public apologies in 2010 serve to illustrate the validity of the more general "role of champions" finding in innovation research. After Pope Benedict XVI's highly publicized support for accountability and transparency regarding abuse victims and hierarchical neglect, Rogers's theory predicts

that the Catholic diocesan social systems will follow a five-stage sequence.[323] First, there would be an acknowledgment of "a performance gap" leading to the *agenda-setting* implementation of structures of accountability and transparency. Second, there would be a more efficient *matching* of diocesan agenda with the accountability and transparency structures. Third, there would be observed a more continuous *redefining/restructuring* of diocesan structure as dioceses *reinvent* accountability-transparency structures for their own geographical and subcultural contexts. Fourth, as dioceses better implement these now centrally championed structures, they could be expected to engage in ongoing acts of *clarifying* their meaning to church members, especially as misunderstandings and unwanted side effects inevitably occur. And, finally, the transparency-accountability innovations will have achieved some degree of *routinization*, that is, they will have become institutionalized as part of the ordinary practice and culture of the diocese.

## Documenting Institutional Change

In an effort to understand why these steps for addressing abuse were not systematically put into practice in many dioceses, the *Causes and Context* research team developed and distributed a survey concerning diocesan and personal response to allegations of abuse. This Diocesan Response Survey was sent to the vicar for priests or vicar general and the victim assistance coordinator in each diocese in the United States. This survey included detailed questions about diocesan actions put in place after 1985 and also included a series of questions about individual knowledge of child sexual abuse and individual actions taken. Responses have been received from more than 130 dioceses, and the results are shown in Tables 4.4 through 4.7.

The data show that the majority (80 percent) of dioceses did respond to the Five Principles in some way. However, there was a diversity of type and speed of response, and some dioceses did not grasp the urgency of the need for change. One notable change was the immediate response to an accusation against a priest: no longer was it acceptable to "reprimand and return to the parish." Following the creation of the Five Principles, a response to a sexual abuse allegation was much more likely to be a referral to a treatment center for evaluation and then possible residential treatment. Survey data indicate that the dioceses who did respond took the issue seriously. However, change based on the major thrust of the principles toward transparency and remediation for victims was not uniformly evident.

## Mid-1990s Diocesan Response

Barbara Balboni's unpublished doctoral dissertation of 1998 analyzed data from twenty Catholic bishops' responses to questions about their handling of accusations of sexual abuse.[324] In this work, the bishops' explanations of their management of sexual abuse allegations mirror the survey and interview data collected from bishops in the *Causes and Context* study ten years later. Data from both studies indicate that the act of abuse was perceived as a sin, and the appropriate response was confession and prayer. Balboni's data show that, although bishops praised the work of the Ad Hoc Committee and clearly appreciated the information provided at the bishops' meetings, they still needed to return to their dioceses to find individual solutions to the problems of abuse. Balboni's research indicated that the difficulty of establishing the facts in a case of sexual abuse was exacerbated by the reticence and concern about scandal on the part of young victims and their families. If an accused priest did not admit to the allegation, the canonical process of determination of guilt was lengthy and cumbersome.

In 1991, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of the Archdiocese of Chicago commissioned a report on clerical misconduct with minors and the response by the archdiocese. The report, with its recommendations, was made public in 1992. *The Cardinal's Commission on Clerical Sexual Misconduct with Minors* included detailed recommendations for the establishment of a diocesan review board and procedures for handling the allegations of abuse, as well as for the care of victims and priests, screening, and return to ministry.[325] The bishops in this study were divided in their response to Cardinal Bernardin's call for open dialogue about sexual abuse. The unassailable authority of the church and the permanency of a vocation as a priest limited the bishops' understanding of their choices in response to a priest whose ability was impaired—whether by abuse of alcohol, sexual behavior, or other vice.

Balboni's interview data indicate that the bishops made significant advances in their response to incidents of sexual abuse through the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee but that the knowledge of the impact of abuse and prospects for return to ministry were still basic. She concluded that "pastorally inclined bishops have been emphatic and have tried to redress past abuses."[326]

### Policies and Practices

In 1993-1994, the Ad Hoc Committee surveyed dioceses and eparchies about the responses to allegations of sexual abuse. The Committee received replies from 179 dioceses, with 108 (60 percent) reporting that they had developed and implemented a policy for cases of sexual abuse by priests.[327] A further inquiry from the Ad Hoc Committee in 1997 gathered more detailed information about diocesan policies on sexual abuse. Of the 193 dioceses then in existence, 128 (66 percent) replied, and 124 sent copies of their policies.[328] Of the responding dioceses, 117 (90 percent) had designated a person to be responsible

for cases of clergy sexual abuse and 99 (77 percent) had established a review board, with most such boards including members who were not diocesan employees. Background checks for candidates for incardination and training for staff and volunteers were in place in the majority of dioceses with policies.

The Ad Hoc Committee commended dioceses on these elements of their policies:

- An emphasis on education with provisions for continuing education of priests and for periodic evaluation and revision of the policies by an consultative, independent body;
- A call for fairness and responsiveness to victims and their families, as well as insurance to cover treatment of victims;
- Encouragement to the bishop to consider placing an accused priest on leave and never returning a priest credibly accused of child sexual abuse to ministry that includes children;
- Encouragement to cooperate with the local media while safeguarding the identities of the victim and the accused.

A survey by the National Review Board, conducted in August and September of 2002 (following the Dallas *Charter*) found that 188 dioceses (96 percent) had a policy of sexual abuse that was available to the public and that 157 (81 percent) had a review board with lay members. In 132 (68 percent) of the dioceses, state regulations included clergy among those defined as mandatory reporters of sexual abuse of youth.[329]

## Treatment in the 1990s: Relapse Prevention

Although in the late 1980s the potential for treatment of sexual abusers appeared positive, this perception was tempered by the experience in some dioceses of a new incident of abuse following treatment. The experience of re-offense following treatment prompted the clinicians to anticipate relapse and develop "aftercare" programs. However, the negative impact of a reassigned priest with a new offense had already been felt in many dioceses.

The timeline for disclosure complicated the issue of treatment. In the mid-1990s, as awareness in dioceses was growing, priests who had allegations of abuse many years earlier in their files were sent for assessment and/or treatment. In such cases, many years had passed since the abuse occurred. Such men were often returned to ministry. However, when subsequent allegations were made about the priest—again going back many years and prior to the treatment—the dioceses were often blamed for allowing a "recidivist" priest to continue in service. Therefore, the timeline of events in many sexual abuse cases became obscured because of reporting delays.

## Failures of Institutional Response

The failure of a significant number of diocesan leaders to carry out the Five Principles or comply with their own polices is evident in a variety of documentary records, including priests who attempted to address individual cases, victims who made their accounts public, and records from state courts.

The experience and voice of victims was evident primarily from 1985 on and was generally found in

**Table 4.4** *Causes and Context*: Responses to the Gilbert Gauthe Case by Dioceses

| *Question: Was there an organized response to the case of Gilbert Gauthe in your diocese?* | Vicars for Clergy/ Vicars General | Victim Service Coordinators |
|---|---|---|
| Internal diocesan response | 75% | 75% |
| Professional training by a clinician | 22.5% | 38.4% |
| Response with lay participation | 15% | 26% |
| **Any organized response to Gauthe case?** | **44%** | **53%** |

**Table 4.5** *Causes and Context*: Actions Taken in Response to the Gilbert Gauthe Case

| *Question: What actions were taken by your diocese in response to the Gilbert Gauthe case?* | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Vicars for Clergy/ Vicars General | Victim Service Coordinators |
| Workshops/conferences/discussion | 34% | 38% |
| New policies, Review Board | 50% | 28% |
| Actions with priests, screening | 19% | n/a |
| **Any action taken after Gauthe case** | **80%** | **79%** |

**Table 4.6** *Causes and Context*: Implementation of the New Policies about Sexual Abuse

| *Question: How was information about the new policies on sexual abuse shared in the diocese?* | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Vicars for Clergy/ Vicars General | Victim Service Coordinators |
| National meetings | 15% | 9% |
| Bishop introduced in diocese | 43% | 67% |
| Collaboration on the implementation | 17% | 8% |
| Priests gatherings | 9% | n/s |

**Table 4.7** *Causes and Context*: Promulgation of the New Policies in the Diocese

| *Question: How was information about the new policies on sexual abuse shared in the diocese?* | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Vicars for Clergy/ Vicars General | Victim Service Coordinators |
| In Priests Council/Priests Senate | 77% | 69% |
| In diocesan newsletters | 43% | 75% |
| Through the local media | 40% | 43% |
| Directly to parishes | 60% | 50% |

presentations about and in working groups on the subject of sexual abuse. However, victims and their advocates were kept "at a distance" and, in many dioceses, not given a constructive role in the response to reports of abuse. Persistence by victims and advocates in their attempts to participate in diocesan efforts often were not welcome. Victims began to organize for support and connect into organizations. The process undertaken by dioceses to provide for and then select a victim assistance coordinator was often drawn out. Victims were frustrated and confused by the delays and lack of response on the part of the diocese. Civil litigation by victims became more common after the mid-1980s, and such legal action further complicated the diocesan response to victims.

### *Actions of Diocesan Leaders*

The survey of bishops and the interviews conducted during the *Causes and Context* study offer insight into how church leaders were conceptualizing the harm of sexual abuse by priests in the mid-1990s. However, archival data—documents, interviews, and texts recorded during this period—were also analyzed for the purposes of this research. Such archival data suggested that, during the 1990s, the extent of the incidence of sexual abuse was not known, and the historical dimension of it also was unknown. The archival data further suggest that the 1993 accusation against Cardinal Bernardin, later recanted, had left an impression that perhaps a significant number of other accusations were actually false. [330] These limits of knowledge, combined with a sense of some that the sexual abuse problem had been resolved, left the leaders of the church unprepared for the storm of publicity in 2002.

The failure of some diocesan leaders to take responsibility for the harms of the abuse by priests was egregious in some cases. The points below are drawn from documents introduced into evidence and civil court transcripts from the 1990s that have been made public. These documents reveal actions taken in response to behavior that is in direct opposition to expectations outlined in the Five Principles. These are examples of some of the most egregious actions of some bishops and dioceses and are not representative of all diocesan leaders.

- Some bishops transferred known abusers to other parishes, and occasionally to other dioceses, where their reputations were not known. This option was undertaken in some cases on the advice of the clinicians and sometimes in direct conflict with that advice.
- Parishioners were not told, or were misled about, the reason for the abuser's transfer. The failure to provide specific information was prompted in part by the difficulty of the canonical requirements for a definitive resolution of the case or incident.
- Diocesan leaders rarely provided information to local civil authorities and sometimes made concerted efforts to prevent reports of sexual abuse by priests from reaching law enforcement, even before the statute of limitation expired.
- Diocesan officials tried to keep their files devoid of incriminating evidence. The exercise of the episcopal prerogative to maintain "secret archives" was at odds with the advice of counsel and the guidelines of the Five Principles.
- Diocesan leaders attempted to deflect personal liability for retaining abusers by relying on therapists' recommendations or by employing legalistic arguments about the status of priests.
- The response of diocesan officials to civil litigation by victims was often vigorous and perceived as aggressive and intimidating.
- Diocesan leaders failed to understand the importance of direct contact with victims, thereby giving the impression that they felt no personal responsibility for the harm sustained by victims.

Although these actions are described in court documents entered into evidence in civil litigation from the mid-1990s to the present, very similar actions on the part of diocesan leaders inspired complaints from leaders of organizations of victims in a meeting held on July 19, 1993. The Survivors Network for those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and LinkUp leaders protested the lack of pastoral response from bishops, failure to pay for treatment for victims, aggressive action on the part of diocesan attorneys taken against victims, and lack of understanding of the fragility of victims and their need for "safe space." [331]

By the mid-1990s, the diocesan leaders and the victims and their advocates had reached an impasse in many parts of the country. The church leaders felt confident that they had done what was needed in response to incidents of abuse that took place many years earlier. Yet, the victims and victim advocates sought immediate recognition and remediation of the harm that they had experienced. Again, the complexity of events and the disjointed timeline of disclosure clouded an understanding of both perspectives.

### *Priestly Advocacy for Victims*

The sample of priests who took direct and explicit action to notify a diocesan official—most often the bishops—that a fellow priest was violating his vow of celibacy is a purposive sample: A survey was distributed to a selection of priests known for their explicit action in support of victims and/or acknowledged for their support by the Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) organization. Twenty priests responded. Their dates of ordination ranged from 1957 to 2002, with the majority reporting ordination in the 1960s. All served

in parishes, most became pastors, and a few reported experience as teachers. Their dioceses were mostly in the Midwest and North of the United States, with none from either coast. In most cases they say that they "observed behavior of another priest or priests that [they] found troubling, with respect to his vow of celibacy" and the rest "were told of behavior on the part of another priest or priests that [they]found troubling, with respect to his vow of celibacy." A majority also reported that they were informed about clergy sexual misconduct by the priest's victim. Two indicated that they had been victims themselves.

All priests responding to the survey reported the known or suspected misbehavior to his bishop. Two indicated that, in the late 1990s, the bishop responded and acted appropriately by removing the priest in question from active ministry. However, the majority reported no episcopal action, a lack of episcopal follow-up, or sometimes that the priest in question received an episcopal admonishment. Some representative responses are as follows:

- The bishop refused to speak with me and told me to knock it off. Then the director of personnel said to leave the priest alone, we were ruining his reputation.
- The bishop wondered about the victim's credibility and did not want this in the press, which the victim was threatening.
- I met with the bishop; afterwards I heard him speaking about the abusing priests on several occasions, dismissing the accusations.
- I was told that the matter was being handled internally, but never got any follow-up.
- The bishops did whatever they felt like doing and whatever they could to avoid tarnishing their image.
- In the late 60s we had heard of it. But up until then such behavior was, at least to me, inconceivable. . . . The late 1960s and 1970s seem to have unhinged a lot of people, including priests.
- The three folks I contacted were: The Bishop, Vicar General and Review Board Administrator. I found that all three responded appropriately by following up on the allegations and getting them to the Review Board. By this time (1998) they had grown to understand the magnitude of the issue.

Only a minority of respondents reported that they felt supported in their actions by other priests, the priest senate, or parishioners of the priest's parish. Only one indicated that he reported the behavior to civil authorities; the majority indicated that in retrospect they should have. Only two answered "yes" to the question of whether there was an explicit response to the Gauthe case in their diocese, and three of the four who had known about the Five Principles said there had been no implementation within their dioceses.

### *Organization of Victims*

The research team conducted an extensive unstructured interview with one of the priest-respondents to this survey; the subject was one of the two reporting that he had been abused by a priest. Among his remarks, the priest described the institutional barriers that he met while trying to locate the priest who had abused him when he was fifteen years old. After his own ordination in 1991, the priest-victim spent many years tracking down the whereabouts of the man who had abused him; he eventually found his abuser's location and diocese. The abusive priest was removed from the parish but found an assignment in another diocese. After joining with other victims in 1993, the priest-victim made additional efforts to communicate his extensive history of abuse to the leaders of the dioceses who had employed his abuser but received no response. Five years later, he discovered the same priest still practicing ministry in a parish near where he had grown up.

When the priest-victim first came forward in 1991, it was after his own diocese discouraged him from doing so. He was told that he could not charge the abusive priest without a formal complaint and that canon law rejected anonymous complaints, which he later found out was not necessarily the case. Persisting in his efforts to make the complaint, he faced a series of responses from diocesan officials: "You must be mistaken; you're the only one; you're going to ruin this priest's life; you're lying; why now after all these years? Their first response was denial; the second, you're the only one; if they didn't work, then obfuscation. Last was the appeal to guilt: It's your fault; you seduced Father. You'll ruin his life."

Dioceses, the interviewee reported, would intimidate priests who brought charges against other priests; he reported that the law firm hired by the diocese wiretapped his phone and went through his trash. "There was fierce intimidation. Once you went public, it was all over. Before I went public, I thought long and hard about it. Could I sustain these losses? I had to accept that after Dallas in 2002, I might not be able to remain a priest." He characterized the Five Principles as pure public relations: "Mere formality. They were following lawyers' advice to have a written position. They didn't change operating procedure at all. They say, 'We didn't know.' But I have a letter from my bishop from years earlier. They knew. Prior to 2002 they thought they could manage. Till 2002 they managed superbly—sealed arrangements, use of charitable immunity against civil threats, capping payoffs at $20,000, and anything above that is pure largesse. And victims signed a document saying their charges couldn't be used in court."

Despite the policies and presentations between 1990 and 1995 urging diocesan leaders to remove abusive priests from contact with youth, the efforts of this priest-victim during those years were met with resistance. He did finally

prevail, and the abuser is no longer in ministry. The priest-victim is still an active priest and remains involved in the fellowship of survivors.

### *Priests' Response to Their Peers*

Survey data and interviews collected for the *Causes and Context* study show that, by the late 1980s, many priests knew of others whose behavior was unsettling. However, priests uneasy about the possibility of sexually abusive behavior often found no clear way to share their concern, and many had an incomplete understanding of the diocesan policies and actions. The diocesan actions taken in a particular case were most often not shared with the affected parish. The lack of transparency motivated some priests into active resistance in some dioceses as those clergy members who wished to advocate for victims tried to press for specific actions.

## Comparison between the Catholic Church and Other Organizations

Rogers's "diffusion of innovation" model, as applied to the Catholic Church, is relevant to many types of organizations, groups, and situations. Rogers uses this model to describe issues as varied as public health (for example, stopping AIDS and drug use) and the development of technology (for example, laptop computers). While the diffusion of innovation framework is important in explaining how change happens within organizations, it is equally important to understand how the structure of organizations can affect the response to deviant behavior. The Catholic Church is unique in that it is a highly centralized, hierarchical organization, yet it generally functions as a decentralized organization for most matters. This pattern creates unique challenges to the organization in terms of how leaders can and do deal with problems within the dioceses.

The Catholic Church can be compared to many types of organizations, such as schools, hospitals, businesses, and the police. The police organization provides a useful analogy of how an institution can have both a centralized and decentralized structure, a unique culture, and also be best suited to respond to the problems and needs within. Both the police and the Catholic Church have responded to outside pressure to modify their responses to deviant behavior, forming external review boards and committees to evaluate those who are "rotten apples" within the organization. It is useful, then, to understand what lessons can be learned from the police as an organization, particularly as the Catholic Church works to improve its relationship to those in the community.

### Police Organizational Structure and Deviance

Police-citizen relationships are largely influenced by the organizational structure of the police department.[332] Law enforcement agencies as well as many other institutions or organizations routinely adhere to a vertical organizational structure,[333] which is characterized by rigid command layers in which directives typically flow from the top down.[334] This arrangement is also somewhat true in the Catholic Church, with directives to bishops and cardinals coming from the pope or the Holy See. In law enforcement agencies, this hierarchical design leaves little discretion for police officers who are "on the streets" interacting with community members.[335]

Empirical studies have suggested that the hierarchical structure of police organizations may encourage deviant behavior within the ranks as well as impede organizational reform.[336] The organizational culture stemming from the structure of the agency further hinders change.[337] The police subculture is such that officers are reluctant to report fellow officers for deviant or criminal behavior,[338] largely out of fear of ostracism by their peers.[339] While some officers do report their colleagues, many instances of police misconduct and deviance are revealed via a publicized scandal (for example, the 1994 Mollen Commission).[340] Often police administrators are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of criminal or deviant behavior prior to its public exposure.[341] This pattern is not unique to the police or other organizations and is quite similar to the behavior of priests in the Catholic Church.

Some police researchers have discussed the opportunity for deviance based on structural and organizational factors inherent in policing.[342] These factors include, but are not limited to: (1) the legitimizing of police deviance by virtue of the authority granted to them in the law; (2) the ability to insulate themselves by creating positive spins of any organizational digression in the media; (3) deviance often committed in isolation, unbeknownst to supervisors or witnesses; (4) limited supervision that further permits deviations from standard practices; and (5) oversight of police behavior by the police organization itself.[343] Supervision is more difficult, and exposure to different forms of deviance increases in isolated units where there is little oversight by supervisors.[344] While not all of these are directly relevant to the Catholic Church, they are at least indirectly related. In particular, diocesan priests often serve in an isolated environment with little oversight, and the response to deviant behavior goes through an accountability mechanism within the church itself (canon law and related procedures). Like the police, the Catholic Church has historically "policed" itself. External oversight has only emerged recently in the church, much

as it emerged in the police after high-profile incidents of deviance by officers.

Law enforcement agencies have utilized various structural, organizational, and cultural methods to facilitate departmental changes of policies, practices, and procedures to eliminate criminal activity among their officers.[345] In 1981, Turk discussed several organizational changes to combat deviance, including redefined organizational goals, closer formal monitoring, separating functions, and improving personnel management. [346] In a later study, Rothwell and Baldwin[347] found that clearly delineated mandatory reporting policies and officers who hold supervisory roles are consistent predictors of factors that influence the reporting of misconduct.

While research suggests that increasing and formalizing policies, rules, and procedures has limited some forms of police abuses of power and deviance among the ranks, these practices alone have not eliminated the problem.[348] Hence, scholars and practitioners have called for both internal and external mechanisms of control. Internal mechanisms may include commitment by police leadership to disciplining officers who engage in deviant or criminal behavior, holding managers accountable for the actions of their subordinates, introducing rigorous hiring practices and focused training for cadets, centralizing administrative controls, increasing the use of independent auditors, and changing the police culture.[349] External mechanisms most importantly include civilian oversight and Blue Ribbon Commissions.[350] The question then becomes whether the deviant behavior committed by police officers is the result of individuals who are acting out or whether it is symptomatic of larger problems within the police subculture.

The numerous cases of widespread and organized police brutality over the last several decades suggest that the "rotten apple" explanation is only partially capable of explaining deviant behavior. More importantly, the organization also plays a role in allowing objectionable behavior to occur. For example, Skolnick and Fyfe concluded that the Rodney King beating was indicative of an overall philosophy among the LAPD that tolerated abusive behavior: "Two or three cops can go berserk. . . . But when twenty-three others are watching and not interfering, the incident cannot be considered 'aberrant,' as Chief Gates initially suggested." [351] As a result, Kappeler et al. created a framework to explain police abuse of power that focuses not on the individual officer, but rather on the police working environment. [352] The core elements of the framework contributing to police brutality are broken down into two categories: opportunity structures (power and authority, public perception, isolation, lack of supervision and discretion) and organizational structures (specialization, career mobility, subculture, and maintaining the status quo). The organizational framework can be applied to the Catholic Church as well, which helps to explain how the abuse of minors was able to persist within the organization for so many years.[353]

## Organizational Structure and the Catholic Church

Child sexual abuse is often considered to be an individual problem, or the result of psychological or other abnormalities in the person who commits sexual offenses. Until the extent of sexual abuse by priests became known after 2002, the Catholic Church's response to the sexual abuse crisis paralleled the "rotten apple" assertions often made by police chiefs in the wake of a scandal—that the deviance resulted from a single, rogue officer (or, in this case, priest) who operated alone without organizational knowledge or support. While there is certainly some plausibility to the "rotten apple" explanation of police deviance, most scholars argue that the multifaceted nature of police deviance requires a more complex, organizational explanation. The shortcomings of the "rotten apple" theory are best illustrated by the numerous scandals in which the deviant behavior by police is widespread and organized (for example, the Los Angeles Police Department in the early 1990s), just as the most widely known cases of abuse by priests are high profile cases in dioceses with many accused priests (such as in Boston).

Theoretical discussions of the causes of sexual abuse of children by Catholic clergy have often focused on the individual's intolerable behavior (the "rotten apple"). While the police and the Catholic Church differ in several ways, they share some similar organizational principles and opportunity structures. Most officers do not enter policing to specifically engage in brutality, nor do most men enter the priesthood to sexually abuse children. Instead, distinct aspects of the working environment are shared by both professions that may promote or facilitate deviance, and complete understanding of the causes of such deviant behavior requires a structural theoretical framework. As such, White and Terry[354] argued that Kappeler et al.'s[355] framework of "opportunity structure" can be applied to the Catholic Church sexual abuse crisis. The opportunity structure for abusive behavior focuses on four factors: the authority of the priests, the public perception of them, the isolation of their positions, and the high level of discretion and lack of supervision in their positions.

### *Authority*

Like the police, priests have unique authority in the community. The police have the power to use force and have many opportunities to abuse this power without arousing suspicion.[356] Priests, on the other hand, have unique authority to forgive. Paragraphs 986-87 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explain the role of forgiveness for sins in the church and the need for forgiveness.

### *Public Perception*

Priests have traditionally been held in high regard in the community, serving as leaders and trusted to run agencies such as schools, hospitals, and orphanages. By the nature of their jobs, they are able to develop relationships of dependence, confidence, and trust. Trust is a foundation of Catholicism, and priests are entrusted to not only lead Catholics in their spiritual quests but also to take an active role in the development of children. In sexual abuse cases, the abuse is generally preceded by establishing a relationship of trust. These relationships involve the grooming of the child (enticement to allow the abuse to occur; see Chapter 5) and the violation of professional standards of boundaries and the social frames of behavior that govern how organizational agents manage trust and dependent relationships. Betrayal of these norms of behavior indicates an institutional breakdown, as exemplified in cases of sexual abuse of a client by a therapist or of a prisoner by a correctional officer. Though trust is a foundational element in the Catholic faith, the sexual abuse scandal in the church led to decreased levels of confidence in the leadership of the Vatican and, to a lesser extent, in the stewardship of the US bishops.[357] It is important to note, however, that Catholics who have been surveyed since 2002 show continued and consistent commitment to the church and avow trust and confidence in their parish priest.

### *Isolation and Lack of Supervision*

Like police officers, priests spend a considerable amount of time alone. This isolation increases the feelings of loneliness and enhances intimacy deficits that the priests may already exhibit. In addition to a high level of isolation with the job itself, priests also are unique in that they have no immediate family (spouses and children). These constraints on relationships are unique and are central to the isolation of the profession. Priests have little supervision in their daily lives, and therefore have ample opportunity to commit deviant sexual behavior. Diocesan priests often live alone in the parish residence or with a pastor/associate pastor, and it is in this residence that abuse has been most likely to occur.[358] It is worth noting that the *Nature and Scope* data reveal a higher rate of abuse among diocesan priests than religious priests, who are more likely to live in communities.[359] The absence of supervision and/or regular evaluation make it all the more important that newly ordained priests are well trained, or formed, in seminary for the life and the responsibilities they will have in a parish.

## Conclusion

By 1985, diocesan leaders knew that sexual abuse of minors by priests was a problem, even though they did not know the extent of the problem at that time. As a group, their responses to abuse allegations changed substantially through the last quarter century, and they moved much more quickly, decisively, and appropriately to deal with abusers. As individual diocesan leaders, they responded with varying levels of urgency to the abuse allegations. Some, the "innovators," understood the harmfulness of the acts and moved to implement policies to reduce abuse and remove abusers early on. Others' responses lagged behind, thus creating an image that the church generally was not responsive to victims.

Since the reports of abuse erupted in 2002, the Catholic Church has responded with a series of organizational policies and changes. It created a *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, commissioned two studies, mandated safe environment training for priests and Catholic laity, and created an audit system to ensure compliance with the regulations. However, as with most organizations, these changes came after a high-profile case of an extreme abuser (in this case, Geoghan) that was publicized extensively in the media. As such, the public perception was that the change came too late and only in response to the negative publicity associated with the crisis rather than a concern for the victims. This response pattern is similar to other organizations, particularly the police. The police often enact new policies for oversight on corruption and brutality after the formation of Commissions to evaluate police abuses of power. Like the police, the church also relied heavily on its internal mechanisms for review of behavior. The lack of external transparency, coupled with the lack of external accountability, further led to concern by the public about the church's response to this serious problem.

The church has now begun a system of change, but organizational changes take years, and often decades, to fully implement. To fully achieve change in the Catholic Church, all diocesan leaders must be committed to transparency about their actions, ensure that the immediate and appropriate responses to abuse become routine, and ensure that such actions are adopted on a national level by all church leaders. Most diocesan leaders have taken clear steps toward addressing this problem, yet some dioceses have continued to lag behind in their response to and transparency about priests known to have allegations of abuse against minors. Though the peak of the crisis has passed, sexual abuse of minors is a long-term societal problem that is likely to persist, particularly in organizations that nurture and mentor adolescents. As such, diocesan leaders must continue to deal with abuse allegations appropriately as more victims come forward.

## Chapter 5

# Sexual Victimization of Minors: Analyzing the Onset, Persistence, and Desistance from Abuse Incidents by Priests

## Sociocultural Development of the Concept of Victimization and the Harm of Abuse

Sexual victimization is a serious and widespread problem. The prevalence and impact of victimization has been studied extensively since the 1970s, and research shows that sexual abuse during childhood often causes extensive, irreparable harm to victims. Many victims continue to be affected long after the abuse has ended.[360] Studies show high rates of depression and anxiety among victims,[361] as well as an increased risk of suicide and suicidal thoughts.[362] Substance abuse is also a frequently reported response to child sexual abuse.[363] Many victims struggle with anger and resentment,[364] low self-esteem,[365] shame, and self-blame.[366] Moreover, victims often have difficulty trusting others,[367] exhibit antisocial behaviors,[368] and have strained interpersonal relationships.[369] The effects of child sexual abuse may also manifest themselves in behavioral problems, including disordered eating and delinquency.[370] Sexual problems, promiscuity, and confusion over sexual identity and orientation are also common effects among victims.[371] These psychological, emotional, physical, and behavioral effects can be debilitating to some survivors and permeate all aspects of their lives in both the short and long term.[372]

Child sexual assault by a clergy member may be particularly devastating given the position of trust that the clergy member holds.[373] Ethnographic work on the impact of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests has revealed a deep sense of betrayal felt by the victims.[374] Moreover, as a result of the abuse, many victims distanced themselves from God and the church or renounced Catholicism altogether.[375] This state of affairs is particularly distressing for victims who typically turned to religion or spirituality for support in times of need or crisis.[376] The limited empirical studies on abuse within other religious institutions have shown similar effects on victims.[377]

Research on the impact of victimization is critically important and has been extensively documented both in and outside the Catholic Church. The focus of this chapter is not the impact of victimization, but instead, how the abuse was able to occur at all. To understand the occurrence of abuse, it was necessary to investigate the onset of the abuse situations (how they began), the persistence of the abuse (how it was able to continue), and the desistance from the abuse (how and why it stopped). This information is derived from multiple sources, including the *Nature and Scope* study, 238 clinical files of priests who sexually abused minors, seventy-three surveys of victim assistance coordinators (VACs), a review of public legal documents (including court transcripts with victim statements about the abuse) that are accessible online, and a retrospective survey of a sample of survivors regarding the abuse situations.[378] Together, data from all of these sources provide information about the nature of the relationships between the priests and those they abused (before, during, and after the abuse), the nature of the activities with the priests (both appropriate and inappropriate), the development of the abusive relationships, the response to the abusive behavior, and the methods and timing of disclosure about the abuse.

## Overview of Research on Sexual Victimization of Children

Child sexual victimization is widespread, and it remains so despite the precipitous decline in abuse cases in the 1990s.[379] A meta-analysis summarizing prevalence studies found that overall rates of sexual victimization were approximately 30 percent for girls and 13 percent for boys in one's lifetime.[380] Children who experience sexual abuse often experience multiple types of abuse.[381] Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, and Hamby found that in 2002-2003, nearly half (49 percent) of the youth sampled in their study had experienced more than one form of direct (assault, maltreatment, sexual victimization) or indirect (witnessed) victimization.[382] The concept of "multiple

victimization" is consistent with findings from longitudinal studies by Widom et al.[383]

The high rate of sexual victimization is not simply a criminal justice problem but is also a public health problem.[384] Those who are victimized as youths show higher levels of mental health problems as adults.[385] Confounding this issue is the low rate of reporting of victimization, or when it is reported, the delay in disclosure. The literature shows that several factors are commonly associated with the delay in disclosure,[386] including the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator,[387] the severity of abuse,[388] the likely consequences of the disclosure,[389] age, developmental and cognitive variables,[390] and "grooming" behavior.[391]

Most studies indicate that, when compared with their male counterparts, females are more likely to have been sexually abused during childhood. Furthermore, females are more likely than males to disclose information regarding sexual abuse, and male victimization seems to be acutely underreported.[392] That being said, reports are beginning to emerge about high rates of sexual abuse of boys in particular institutions and organizations.[393] The lack of knowledge about male sexual victimization is striking; because so few males report, most information about their victimization is anecdotal or derived from studies with small sample sizes. As such, little statistical knowledge is available about males' long term physical, psychological, and emotional effects, or about abuse events themselves.

Whether they report or not, sexual abuse victims may experience a range of negative psychological reactions to the abuse. These include fear, anxiety and depression,[394] emotional deprivation,[395] and anxiety-related disorders, such as phobias, panic disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, eating disorders or other weight regulation practices, and sleep disturbances.[396] Many victims experience low self-esteem and self-blame, [397]and they may withdraw from social interaction. Sexual abuse has a variety of effects on children depending on developmental factors such as their particular physical and cognitive growth, socialization, and other such factors.[398]

Several researchers have studied the traumatic impact of child sexual abuse, both at the time of the abuse and later in adulthood. While some researchers have concluded that sexual victimization can lead to the development of symptoms like those associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,[399] others argue that traumatic reactions often develop later in adulthood. For instance, Clancy notes that many of the adults in her sample who had been sexually abused as children experienced confusion at the time of the abuse but later experienced negative psychological problems once the harmful nature of the behavior was understood.[400] In an analysis of forty-five studies of child sexual abuse, Kendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor did not find that trauma was a useful vehicle for understanding abuse.[401] Likewise, Clancy and Nash and West found that the most common reaction at the time of abuse was "unpleasant confusion" and "embarrassment." [402] Finkelhor notes that several developmental factors may impact the reaction to the abuse situation, such as the child's support system, coping strategies, and environmental buffers.[403] Despite the controversy over whether abuse is traumatic at the time it occurs, the literature consistently shows that abuse leads to negative long-term psychological and emotional consequences for many who experience it.

Some studies have shown a link between childhood victimization and future delinquency, including sexual offending.[404] In their longitudinal analysis of 1,292 participants and 667 control subjects, Widom, Schuck, and White found a direct path from early victimization to later violence for males, though not for females.[405] Weeks and Widom found that, among a sample of 301 convicted felons, perpetrators of sexual offenses reported higher rates (26.3 percent) of childhood sexual victimization than other offenders (12.5 percent).[406] In a meta-analysis of eighteen studies from 1965 to1985, Hanson and Slater found that adult sex offenders who had perpetrated offenses against a male child were more likely to have a history of childhood sexual abuse (39 percent) than those who had perpetrated offenses against only female children (18 percent).[407] Sexual abuse also seems to affect victims' "sexual trajectories,"[408] leading to sexual dysfunction,[409] an avoidance or loss of sexual satisfaction,[410] and increased sexual activity.[411] Smallbone and McCabe analyzed forty-eight written autobiographies of incarcerated offenders in Queensland, Australia, and found that offenders with a history of sexual abuse reported having begun masturbating at an earlier age than nonabused offenders. [412] They hypothesized that these images of sexual abuse may be incorporated into early masturbation and tied to the development of deviant interests through classical conditioning. For men in particular, sexual abuse can lead to confusion and anxiety about sexual identity and concern over gender identity.[413] As Coxe and Holmes note, factors such as victim age at the time of abuse, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, response to the report of sexual abuse, as well as the frequency and duration of abuse may be important regarding the development of deviant beliefs and/or offense; yet there is not a strong link between early sexual victimization and becoming an adult sex offender.[414]

Despite the myriad studies on the impact of sexual victimization, little was known about the harm of victimization prior to the 1970s. The victims' rights movement in the criminal justice system, which began in the late 1960s, consisted of three elements: guaranteeing victim

participation in criminal proceedings, securing financial benefits and services for crime victims, and securing more certain and harsher punishment for perpetrators. Research in the field of "victimology"—a term that appeared for the first time in 1940—developed on the same time scale. The early focus of this research was on typologies of victims and victim precipitation of abuse, later shifting to understanding structural elements of victimization. The key concerns of victimology were to understand individual vulnerability to victimization and the nature and impact of victimization. Figure 5.1 highlights significant developments in the historical understanding of victimization.

Researchers of crime and victimization in the nineteenth century dismissed the notion that victimization was common. For example, Freud claimed his patients' reports of abuse were a result of fantasy and unresolved Oedipal complexes.[415] His view was supported by others at the time, such as John Henry Wigmore who stated in his *Treatise on Evidence*, "Women and girls are predisposed to bring false accusations against men of good character . . . any female complainant should be examined by a psychiatrist to determine her credibility."[416]

The classification of victims into typologies began as early as 1907, when Karl Abraham classified victims into two categories: accidental (abuse is violent, perpetrator is a stranger, victim knows it is wrong) and participant victims (victim often knows perpetrator, victim does not fully understand and is often given a reward, often more than one experience).[417] An attitude of victim blaming continued through the 1930s; for instance, Lauretta Bender, one of the earliest to research adult-child sexual behavior, found that all victims she interviewed were "unusually attractive" children who acted in a seductive manner with the psychiatrists. She stated, "it is not remarkable that frequently we considered the possibility that the child might have been the actual seducer rather than the one being seduced."[418]

Despite the dearth of knowledge about victimization and its impact at the time, some early studies provided information that is similar to contemporary studies regarding prevalence of abuse. For instance, Lewis Terman conducted a study of married women in the 1930s and found that 32 percent had experienced a "shocking" or "disgusting" sexual experience before age fifteen.[419] Similarly, Landis spoke to children abused by "sex deviates" in a treatment clinic in San Francisco and found that 33 percent of girls and 26 percent of boys were frightened at the time of abuse. [420]

Research on victimization, including child sexual abuse, began to increase in the 1960s. Two federally funded studies showed that sexual abuse was common, and one of those was the first to report two significant findings: that most perpetrators were adults who knew the children they abused, and the long-term damage to children who were abused could be devastating.[421] In the 1970s, family systems therapists focused on an "ecological model" for understanding child sexual abuse, supporting feminist arguments that children were not to blame for their victimization. Despite this research, a perception on the part of professionals continued that children were often complicit in the abuse, which they explained as part of a dysfunctional interpersonal dynamic of the family.

From the mid-1970s onward, sexual abuse became a focus of child-protection professionals, and the activities of child-welfare organizations increased in frequency. At the same time, child sexual abuse, along with rape, was a major focus of the feminist movement. Feminists conceptualized child sexual abuse as a violent crime similar to rape, resulting from male political control subordinating women through terror, humiliation, and degradation; the abuse was the fault of the perpetrator and not the victim, and both rape and child sexual abuse were the result of women's inferior place in society as compared to men in a male-dominated society. Throughout the decade, federal funds were distributed for research on sexual victimization, and many of these studies investigated the impact of victimization.[422] By the mid-1970s, research on the topic was so prevalent that the journal *Child Abuse and Neglect* was launched in 1976.

A critical issue that emerged in the 1970s was the extent of intrafamilial abuse and abuse by those in a position of authority over the victims. Weber stated that sexual abuse was far more common than once thought and, importantly, occurs across social, economic, and ethnic boundaries.[423] She also found a correlation between child sexual abuse and adult psychological symptoms and disorders. Rush identified the same correlation and blamed mental health professionals for suppressing information and evidence of child maltreatment by men.[424] Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo explained abuse through a "lifestyle exposure model," focusing more on structural understanding of the process of becoming a victim, which in turn helped frame the development of the victimization survey.[425]

Despite the increased research on victimization, some researchers continued to downplay the resultant harm. In the late 1970s, Kempe stated, "Most sexual molestation appears to do little harm to normal children." [426] Conversely, researchers in the 1980s began focusing on the trauma of sexual abuse. In the early 1980s, the mechanism of "psychological trauma" was identified. Subsequently, the International Society for Study of Post-Traumatic Stress was formed, the *Journal of Traumatic Stress* was launched, the Traumatogenic Theory was proposed (stating that exposure to any event that caused psychological trauma could cause psychological damage), the *DSM-III* added

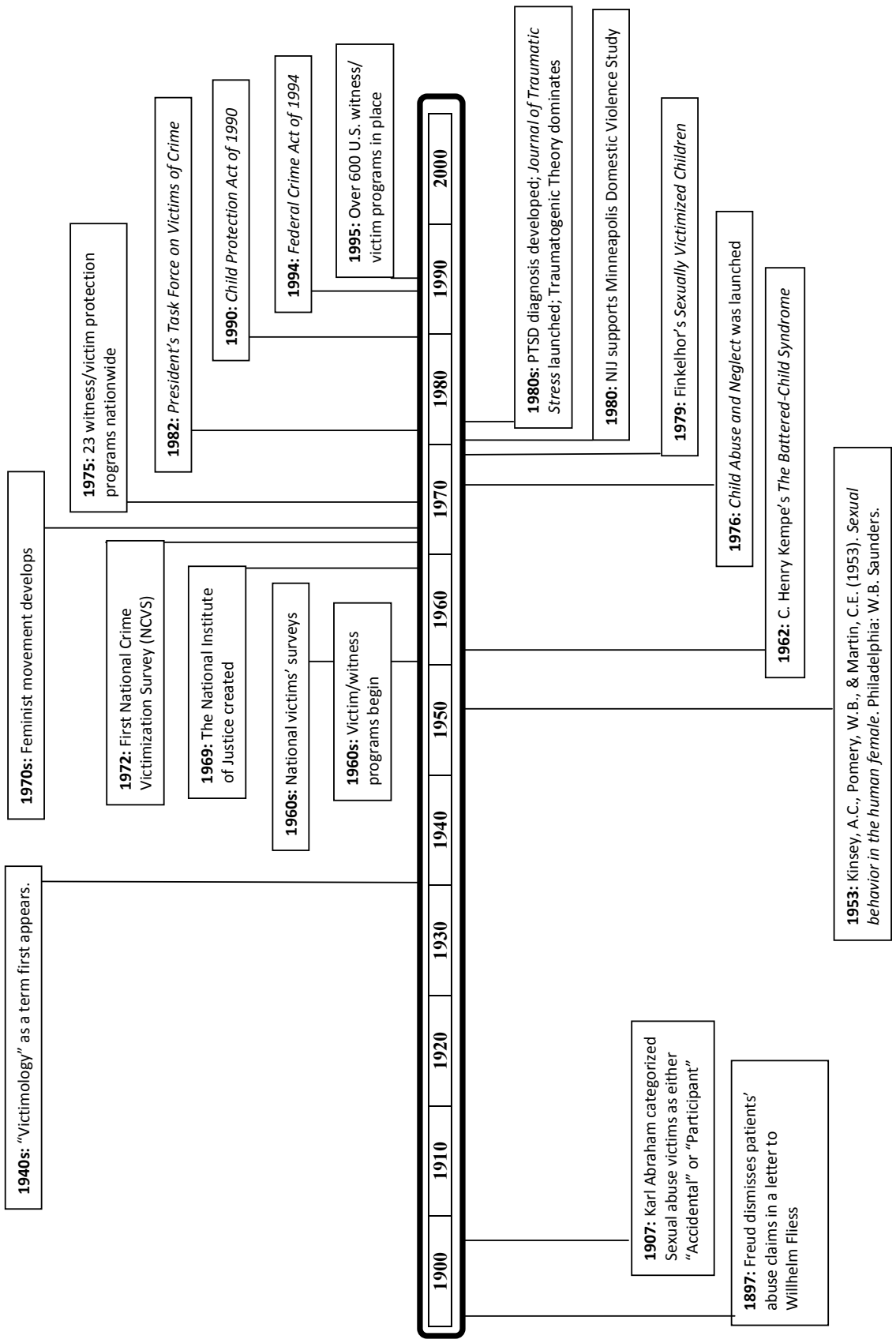



**Figure 5.1** Timeline for the Development of the Understanding of Victimization

PTSD as a diagnosis (in 1980), and, by 1983, the harm of sexual abuse was considered a form of post-traumatic stress.

By the 1990s, the victimization and child protection movements were in full swing, as evidenced by federal legislative initiatives such as the *Child Protection Act of 1990* and the recognition of crime victims to make victim impact statements in the sentencing phase of criminal trials. However, it was clear that the understanding of the impact of victimization was still in its early stages. In 1992, a two-volume publication on sexual abuse raised questions such as: How is sexual abuse to be defined? What are the effects of abuse? How can the victim be helped? How can abuse be prevented? Contributors to this publication included physicians, attorneys, psychologists, philosophers, social workers, and engineers, all of whom covered a wide spectrum of basic applied issues related to victimization.[427] The mid-1990s saw many additional contributions to the impact of child sexual abuse and prevention.[428]

## Victimization and the Catholic Church

The historical development of the concept of victimization and the understanding of the harmful impact of sexual abuse are critical to this study. Studies about harm and the prevalence of victimization began emerging in the 1970s but did not receive widespread media attention until the 1980s. High-profile cases such as the McMartin preschool case led those in the general public to consider that children were being abused by adults in positions of authority and in institutions that had been considered safe. The development of understanding is true, also, of the Catholic Church. In the 1980s, the high-profile case of Gilbert Gauthe led to media reports about priests sexually abusing children, a thought that had been largely unimaginable before that time. Like the general public, the leaders in the church did not recognize the extent or harm of victimization. The focus of the bishops until such time was on the priest-abuser. This focus paralleled that of the concurrent research, which was primarily on sexual offenders and their treatment. Sadly, this lack of recognition of victim harm is one factor that likely led to the continued perpetration of offenses.

One goal of the *Causes and Context* study was to understand how the abuse of minors by priests was able to occur and continue for a period of time. The questions the research team formulated were: (1) How was the priest able to initiate an abuse situation? (2) How was the abuse able to persist for a sustained period of time (for those cases that were not single incidents of abuse)? (3) Why was the abuse not recognized when it was happening? and (4) How did the abuse stop, particularly in cases where the abuse was not reported to authorities until many years later? To investigate these issues, it was necessary to look beyond the motivation of the priest to commit the acts of abuse, and instead to assess the ecological circumstances in which the abuse occurred.

# Onset of Abuse

Many researchers have studied the onset of child sexual abuse; most, however, have focused only on the individual characteristics or vulnerabilities of the abusers and/or the pathways that lead to the abuse of a child.[429] Finkelhor constructed an organizational framework consisting of four underlying factors that act as preconditions to sexual abuse.[430] This framework addresses the full complexity of child sexual abusers, including the etiology of the abuse, the situations that allow it to occur, and the excuses and justifications that allow it to continue. According to Finkelhor, abusers are able to excuse and justify their actions to themselves, thereby reducing the barriers of guilt and shame. Once these barriers are absent, abusers can act on the opportunities they have created.[431]

As explained in Chapters 1 and 3, Finkelhor's model of the preconditions of sexual abuse include: (1) the motivation to sexually abuse (for example, emotional congruence, sexual arousal, or blockage to "normal" sexual relationships); (2) the ability to overcome internal inhibitions; (3) the ability to overcome external factors that may prevent the abuse; and (4) the ability to overcome the child's resistance to the abuse.[432] Chapter 3 focused on the individual explanations of abuse by priests, including motivational factors related to personality, pathology, intimacy, and developmental issues. Though these individual characteristics will not be discussed again here in detail, it is notable that the VAC surveys supported the conclusions in Chapter 3. In an open-ended question, the VACs were asked to describe the factors they felt were most relevant to the sexual abuse of minors by priests. Their narratives were remarkably consistent with the data provided in the clinical files, the Identity and Behavior surveys, and the *Loyola* data. VACs discussed how priest-abusers may have experienced isolation, loneliness, insecurity, poor social skills, lack of identity, confusion over sexual identity, psychosexual immaturity, a history of sexual abuse, poor relationships with their parents when they were youths, and alcohol abuse. Like the other data assessing individual explanations of abuse, these factors indicate the vulnerability (if not motivation) of some priests to abuse.

According to Finkelhor's model, once motivational factors are in place that create a predisposition to sexually abuse, individuals must then overcome any internal inhibitions to abuse a child. To do so, the abusers employ "techniques of neutralization," which allow them to diminish their feelings of guilt, responsibility, and shame.[433] Individuals primarily neutralize feelings of wrongdoing through

excuses and justifications for their behavior.[434] Sykes and Matza described these rationalizations as "vocabularies of motive,"[435] which not only allow the individual to commit the act of abuse, but also allow the behaviors to persist.[436] The techniques of neutralization are discussed in greater detail below and can be considered part of an explanation of the persistence of abuse.

After overcoming internal inhibitions, the offender must overcome external factors that may prevent the abuse from occurring. Abusers often create opportunities for the abuse to take place, such as socializing and building up trust with the victim's family. Finally, the abuser must overcome the child's resistance to the abuse, which is generally achieved through grooming tactics. Grooming is a premeditated behavior intended to manipulate the potential victim into complying with the sexual abuse.[437] Pryor describes several methods by which child sexual abusers approach and engage their victims in sexual behavior, including verbal and/or physical coercion, seduction, games, and enticements.[438] He explains how they are able to manipulate their victims into sexual compliance and how offenders either continue the manipulation or adjust it in order to continue with the abuse.

To understand the third factor in Finkelhor's model, that of overcoming external factors, it is necessary to understand the situations in which the sexual abuse occurs. Several researchers have studied abuse from an ecological perspective, with the understanding that the risk of sexual abuse can be reduced by modifying the opportunities for the abuse to occur.[439] This perspective suggests that potential offenders will be less likely to sexually abuse a child if the situation presents too much risk, offers too little reward, or requires too much effort. Because potential offenders use the environment to their advantage in the commission of a crime, situational modifications may result in the reduction of criminal activity. Thus, situational crime prevention (SCP) strategies should be considered to reduce the opportunity for sexual abuse of children, particularly in institutional settings.

## Situational Influences and the Onset of Abuse

SCP theorists argue that crime is opportunity-based.[440] The core concept of SCP is "opportunity reduction," and investigations employing this theory focus on the immediate physical environment that makes particular crimes possible, as well as situational conditions that induce criminality.[441] This approach assumes that offenders have agency/free will and decide to commit a crime because, in their view (limited though it may be), it benefits them to do so. In other words, offenders evaluate costs and benefits of their actions based on specific situational circumstances.[442] The advantage of this approach is that it does not require an in-depth understanding of the offender's ultimate motive to commit a crime. All criminals seek to successfully complete their task at hand, which in this case is the crime of sexual abuse. Unlike most other criminological approaches that focus on criminal agents and seek to understand *why* people commit crimes, SCP focuses on examining the criminal event (as opposed to the offender). Importantly, SCP research focuses primarily on objective criminal behaviors rather than subjective offenders' perspectives to understand *how* crimes are successfully committed. The purpose is to discover the opportunity structure and situational factors that facilitate crime commission. SCP analysts then identify specific points to intervene with targeted prevention strategies that manipulate the situational factors to reduce crime.

SCP is a dynamic framework, and the number and type of intervention techniques has steadily increased over the years. Currently five general strategies encompass twenty-five techniques (see Table 5.1)[443] that are used to prevent crime.[444]

Crime-prevention techniques, as depicted in Table 5.1, range from "hard" to "soft" approaches. Hard strategies (such as blockading the cockpit on airplanes that make the pilots inaccessible to potential terrorists) incapacitate targets and make it impossible for the crime to be committed. In other words, the suspect desires to commit the crime, but the implemented SCP strategies prevent him or her from accomplishing the illegal act. Soft techniques (such humanizing potential victims) reduce situational prompts/cues that increase a person's motivation to commit a crime during a specific event. These techniques, in turn, prevent a crime from occurring at a particular time. To date, dozens of empirical studies (encompassing case studies, experiments, and other quantitative tests) have evaluated situational interventions.[445] These studies are highly supportive of SCP and found that most situational interventions lead to crime reductions. Importantly, most studies also found little support for the "crime displacement" critique of SCP (that is, that an offender thwarted in one situation will simply commit the same crime somewhere else or turn to another type of crime). The empirical tests of SCP find that displacement either does not occur, or if it does, there is, nevertheless, overall crime reduction.

Researchers traditionally studied the role of opportunities and the environment in the commission of property offenses. Recently, however, the role of opportunity has been studied in cases of sexual abuse, boundary violations, and sexual harassment in institutional settings.[446] Specifically, research has been published regarding sexual harassment in sports,[447] boundary violations in therapeutic relationships,[448] sexual abuse of students by professors,[449] sexual abuse in foster/residential child care,[450] and

sexual abuse within youth-serving organizations.[451] Celia Breckenridge and Marianne Cerise, the leading researchers who study sexual abuse of athletes, have suggested that increased risk occurs at the point of potential achievement, especially if this point coincides with or just precedes puberty.[452] This observation is consistent with studies of sexual abuse of adolescents by priests, whereby abuse typically occurs as the pre- or postpubertal boy becomes active in religious activity.[453] The studies of the sexual victimization of youths in state care in the United Kingdom also found that adolescents are at increased risk of abuse.[454]

In their study of sexual offenders in Australia, Wortley and Smallbone observed seven factors that are consistent with a situational explanation of child sexual abuse.[455] Specifically, they stated that child sexual abusers have (1) a late onset of deviant behavior; (2) a low incidence of chronic sexual offending; (3) a high incidence of previous nonsexual offenses; (4) a low incidence of stranger abuse; (5) a low incidence of networking among offenders; (6) a low incidence of child pornography use; and (7) a low incidence of paraphilic behavior. The authors also note that location is an important factor in the commission of sexual offenses, for sexual abuse almost always occurs in private and often in the home of the offender. LeClerc et al. studied adolescent sex offenders and noted that they abide by various "scripts" (coercive, manipulative, and nonpersuasive) and that they "can switch from one strategy to another according to situational factors, such as crime location, when committing crimes."[456]

Furthermore, Wortley and Smallbone theorized that SCP techniques could be applied to reduce opportunities for sexual victimization.[457] They postulated that it would be possible to do so by increasing effort (controlling access to facilities, target hardening and controlling tools); increasing risk (amplifying the threat of detection for a specific act); controlling prompts (reducing situational triggers); and reducing permissibility (clarifying the role the offender plays in the abusive behavior). The situational components associated with child sexual abuse, as noted by Wortley and Smallbone, are apparent also in the data collected for the *Nature and Scope* study. [458] The data indicate a situational component to sexual abuse by priests that is similar to abuse by nonclergy offenders, particularly those who abuse children with whom they have developed a nurturing relationship. As such, applying the SCP framework of increasing effort, increasing risk, controlling prompts, and reducing permissibility may reduce the occurrence of abusive behavior by priests or others who develop nurturing relationships with children and adolescents. The *Nature and Scope* data, the VAC surveys, and the survivor surveys provided information about the situations in which abuse occurred.

### Nature and Scope *Data*

The *Nature and Scope* data indicate that situational factors play a role in the onset of abusive behavior. Analysis of this data included the professional role of the priests who were abusers, where the abuse took place, during what types of activities the abuse occurred, and whether such circumstances differed depending on the gender of the victims.

Table 5.2 shows the gender of victims by five-year intervals. Interestingly, an increase in the number of male victims occurred during the peak years of the abuse crisis. Two explanations for this trend are possible: first, it can be hypothesized that priests would have been seeking out male victims to abuse, or alternatively, it can be hypothesized that priests would have been abusing the victims to whom they had access. If the first hypothesis is supported, an indication of this activity would be found in the clinical (individual-level) data. In other words, more men would be driven by pathologies related to the sexual abuse of minors. The clinical data do not support this explanation (see Chapter 3). If the second hypothesis is supported, then priests would have had more access to males and would have been committing more offenses with those to whom they had access. Though it is difficult to test this hypothesis with retrospective data, this assertion is supported by additional data, shown below in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2. The data show that the highest percentage of males were abused at the peak of the crisis. This finding also corresponds with the highest levels of alcohol/substance use during the abuse time period, which is consistent with the literature on "situational" abuse of minors.[459] Additionally, it should be noted that altar servers could only be male until the promulgation to the revisions of canon law in 1983 (and confirmed through letters from Pope John Paul II in 1992). The Table and Figure below show the substantial increase in the percentage of female victims in the late 1990s and 2000s, when priests had more access to them in the church.

The notion of the abuser's sexual identity is called to question when interpreting these data. If sexual identity and abuse of a minor by gender were linked, then an increase in homosexual men in the priesthood would have led to an increase in the abuse of male victims compared to female victims. Data on the sexual identity of priests and how it changed over the years were not collected for this study. However, other researchers have collected this data (as presented in Chapter 2), and these studies show an increase in the number of homosexual men in the priesthood over the time period of the *Nature and Scope* study. If it was the case that there were more homosexual men in the seminaries in the 1980s, this increase does not correspond to an increase in the number of boys who were abused. Therefore, the evidence does not support

**Table 5.1** Twenty-Five Techniques of Situational Crime Prevention

| Increase the Effort | Increase the Risks | Reduce the Rewards | Reduce Provocations | Remove Excuses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Target harden*<br>▪ Steering column locks and immobilizers<br>▪ Anti-robbery screens<br>▪ Tamper-proof packaging | 6. *Extend guardianship*<br>▪ Take routine precautions: go out in group at night, leave signs of occupancy, carry phone<br>▪ "Cocoon" neighborhood watch | 11. *Conceal targets*<br>▪ Off-street parking<br>▪ Gender-neutral phone directories<br>▪ Unmarked bullion trucks | 16. *Reduce frustrations and stress*<br>▪ Efficient queues and polite service<br>▪ Expanded seating<br>▪ Soothing music/muted lights | 21. *Set rules*<br>▪ Rental agreements<br>▪ Harassment codes<br>▪ Hotel registration |
| 2. *Control access to facilities*<br>▪ Entry phones<br>▪ Electronic card access<br>▪ Baggage screening | 7. *Assist natural surveillance*<br>▪ Improved street lighting<br>▪ Defensible space design<br>▪ Support whistleblowers | 12. *Remove targets*<br>▪ Removable car radio<br>▪ Women's refuges<br>▪ Pre-paid cards for pay phones | 17. *Avoid disputes*<br>▪ Separate enclosures for rival soccer fans<br>▪ Reduce crowding in pubs<br>▪ Fixed cab fares | 22. *Post instructions*<br>▪ "No Parking"<br>▪ "Private Property"<br>▪ "Extinguish camp fires" |
| 3. *Screen exits*<br>▪ Ticket needed for exit<br>▪ Export documents<br>▪ Electronic merchandise tags | 8. *Reduce anonymity*<br>▪ Taxi driver IDs<br>▪ "How's my driving?" decals<br>▪ School uniforms | 13. *Identify property*<br>▪ Property marking<br>▪ Vehicle licensing and parts marking<br>▪ Cattle branding | 18. *Reduce emotional arousal*<br>▪ Controls on violent pornography<br>▪ Enforce good behavior on soccer field<br>▪ Prohibit racial slurs | 23. *Alert conscience*<br>▪ Roadside speed display boards<br>▪ Signatures for customs declarations<br>▪ "Shoplifting is stealing" signs |
| 4. *Deflect offenders*<br>▪ Street closures<br>▪ Separate bathrooms for women<br>▪ Disperse pubs/bars | 9. *Utilize place managers*<br>▪ CCTV for double-deck buses<br>▪ Two clerks for convenience stores<br>▪ Reward vigilance | 14. *Disrupt markets*<br>▪ Monitor pawn shops<br>▪ Controls on classified ads<br>▪ License street vendors | 19. *Neutralize peer pressure*<br>▪ "Idiots drink and drive"<br>▪ "It's OK to say No"<br>▪ Disperse troublemakers at school | 24. *Assist compliance*<br>▪ Easy library checkout<br>▪ Public lavatories<br>▪ Litter bins |
| 5. *Control tools/ weapons*<br>▪ "Smart" guns<br>▪ Disabling stolen cell phones<br>▪ Restrict spray paint sales to juveniles | 10. *Strengthen formal surveillance*<br>▪ Red light cameras<br>▪ Burglar alarms<br>▪ Security guards | 15. *Deny benefits*<br>▪ Ink merchandise tags<br>▪ Graffiti cleaning<br>▪ Speed humps | 20. *Discourage imitation*<br>▪ Rapid repair of vandalism<br>▪ V-chips in TVs<br>▪ Censor details of modus operandi | 25. *Control drugs and alcohol*<br>▪ Breathalyzers in pubs<br>▪ Server intervention<br>▪ Alcohol-free events |

the hypothesis that an increase in homosexual men in the priesthood will lead to an increase in the abuse of boys.

Figures 5.3 and 5.5 display the average length of time, or "duration," of an incident of abuse in years for male and female victims. Although almost 40 percent of the incidents of abuse lasted less than one year, the 20 percent of incidents that persisted longer than two years increases the average for both boys and girls. When all *Nature and Scope* data is considered, almost one-third of incidents took place once. Another 18 percent were reported to have taken place "more than once," and slightly more than 50 percent took place "numerous times." Figures 5.4 and 5.6 display the comparative frequency of incidents occurring once, more than once, and numerous times, as measured in five-year intervals over the study period.

These *Nature and Scope* data show no significant difference in the average duration of abuse for male and female victims, or for the frequency of the abuse. These findings again indicate that the duration and frequency of abuse are affected by situational factors rather than psychological or gender-specific factors. Note that the duration and frequency of the abuse for both males and females decreased from the 1980s onward, with notable decreases in the 1990s. This decline corresponds to the increased knowledge about sexual abuse in society at this time (see Chapter 1), knowledge of abuse in the church (see Chapter 2), and implementation of policies to reduce sexual abuse in the church (see Chapter 4).

Table 5.3 shows that both male and female victims met the priests who abused them under similar circumstances. The most common venue was in the church, with girls slightly more likely to meet the abuser in school and in their own homes. Likewise, the places and situations in which the victims were abused were consistent for males and females, as indicated in Tables 5.4 and 5.5. Slightly higher incidences of the abuse of males occur in hotel rooms, vacation houses, and outings, as well as during travel and church service (such as altar service). This result would be expected given that priests had substantially higher levels of access to boys at such events. The most common venue in which children were abused was in the parish residence (shown in Table 5.4). Not surprisingly, then, the priests' primary role at the time of the abuse was most commonly a pastor or an assistant pastor (indicated in Table 5.6). The primary role of the abuser is important to note, as it has significant implications for situational crime prevention techniques.

In sum, the *Nature and Scope* data indicate substantial situational impact on abuse. There is consistency in how male and female victims met the priests who abused them, where the abuse occurred, and under what circumstances the abuse took place. This consistency is evident despite the substantial difference in the percentage of males and females abused. Overall, the constancy of the data indicates that opportunity plays a significant role in the choice of victims.

### *Victim Assistance Coordinator (VAC) and Survivor Surveys*

The above information from the *Nature and Scope* study is supported by qualitative data from the VAC and survivor surveys. Narratives from the VAC surveys discussed at length the access of priests to children and adolescents, and many also noted the position of power the priest had in the community and with the Catholic families. One VAC said the abuse was able to occur because of "opportunity coupled with credibility as a man of God." The VACs discussed how priests would spend extended periods of time socializing with the families of victims, often in the victims' homes. The VACs also discussed how abusive priests would create opportunities for the abuse by taking minors on trips (for example, camping), at which point they would give the victims alcohol and abuse them while they were intoxicated.

The information provided by the VACs was confirmed by the narratives of survivors. Every survivor who completed a survey discussed ways in which the priests took advantage of, or created, opportunities to commit the acts of abuse. Supporting the information from the *Nature and Scope* data, they said that the priest-abusers took advantage of their position within the church to create opportunities, or used opportunities they had (for example, when the families invited the priests over for dinner). Consistent in the narratives is the theme of trust of the priest by both the victims and the families of the victims. For instance, one survivor responded by saying that her family invited the priest-abuser to the home for dinner each week and allowed him to tuck her into bed on those nights. He took advantage of this opportunity to abuse her. While this type of abuse situation required little grooming behavior of the individual victim, several of the survivors also talked extensively about the grooming behaviors of the priests who abused them.

## Grooming Behavior and the Onset of Abuse

Many priests, like sexual offenders in the general public or in other institutions, "entice" minors to participate in the abusive behavior by giving them gifts or other benefits (for example, providing tickets to sporting events or taking them on trips). A study of abuse of young athletes by coaches shows the importance of, and steps of, the grooming process. [460] The coach may offer additional practice time, rides home, or special privileges. As the relationship progresses, the athlete develops greater reliance on the

coach and may become isolated from teammates, family, and friends. Innocent behaviors transgress into ambiguous behaviors that can easily be dismissed or explained away as "medical treatment," a "slip of the hand" during massage or instruction, "fitness measures," or athlete-desired rewards. Compliance with abuse is assured by using threats of cutting the athlete from the team, giving or withholding privileges, confirmation of the "love" shared between the two, guilt regarding the amount of time invested in the athlete's development, and/or blaming the victim. These researchers concluded that the institutional circumstances and culture of sports normalized abuse and disempowered athletes.

In addition to the survivors' narratives and the VAC surveys, the *Nature and Scope* study provided substantial information about the types of grooming behavior employed by abusive priests. According to the *Nature and Scope* data, priests groomed victims through various types of enticements. The enticements given to male and female victims were similar, except that males were more likely than females to be given alcohol or drugs, taken to sporting events, and allowed to stay overnight with the priests (Table 5.7). Because the enticement of alcohol and drugs was nearly eight times higher for males than females, this analysis was performed separately, as were the data on whether the priest-abusers used alcohol and drugs during the abuse incident.[461]

Interestingly, the use of alcohol and drugs by abusive priests increased significantly during the peak years of abuse (1970s and 1980s), but only for male victims (see Figure 5.7). This finding is important for several reasons: the increase in the use of alcohol and drugs by the abuser is consistent with the increase in the abuse of males, and the increase in the abuse of males is consistent with the increase in the abuse of minors by priests, reflected in the increase in incident between 1950 and the late 1970s. Most importantly, the use of alcohol and/or drugs by the abuser is a feature of the typology of the "situational" or "regressed" child abuser in the literature on sexual offending, but not the "fixated" abusers who are primarily sexually attracted to children.[462] Figure 5.8 shows only the use of alcohol by priests who abused male youths. No similar increase is evident in the use of alcohol and/or drugs for priests who abused female minors (Figure 5.9).

The priests who committed acts of abuse also took advantage of situational opportunities to groom their victims. According to the VAC surveys, priests would begin grooming the potential victims once they became altar boys or otherwise served a role in the church. The grooming would take place over a period of time, and priests would often create opportunities for the abuse to take place, for example, taking the victims on a retreat. At the same time, the priests would build relationships with the families of the victims in order to gain their trust. Because the parents of abused children trusted the priests without reservation, the children who were abused often accepted the abuse and did not report it for many years. This lack of disclosure and concern for reporting the abuse was one reason it was able to persist.

## Persistence of Abuse

One factor that is consistent with nearly all sexual abusers is the adoption of "techniques of neutralization," which alleviate feelings of guilt and shame, thus enabling offenders to commit the acts of abuse. Sykes and Matza list five primary neutralization techniques: the denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties.[463] Cognitive-behavioral theorists have explained these techniques in terms of sex offenders' cognitive distortions (CDs), the most common of which are minimization and/or denial and justification of offenses. Techniques of neutralization, however, are heavily reliant on cultural vocabularies of motive. As such, Catholic priests exhibit additional techniques in the form of "deviance disavowal." This mechanism is one through which priests can deal with the emotional, psychological, and social harms of a negative label, thus distancing their "bad" or immoral acts from themselves as individuals. Priests who are accused of sexual abuse must not only manage the current label of "pedophile priests" but also exist in a world in which God is omniscient and omnipotent. Even if the external world is unaware of the priest's deviance, there is no way to hide from God.

The techniques of neutralization regarding sexual abuse can be roughly divided into two categories: excuses and justifications for the behavior. Some accused priests use excuses to admit that they actually committed the offense of sexual abuse but do not take responsibility for their behavior. This behavior falls under the category of "denying the victim" and "denying responsibility." Some priests also justify their behavior, admitting to the interactions, events, or acts, but not the wrongfulness of such acts. Instead, they engage in techniques known as "minimizing harm," "appealing to a higher authority," and/or "condemning the condemners." It was hypothesized that priests with allegations of abuse would exhibit techniques of neutralization similar to sex offenders in the general population.

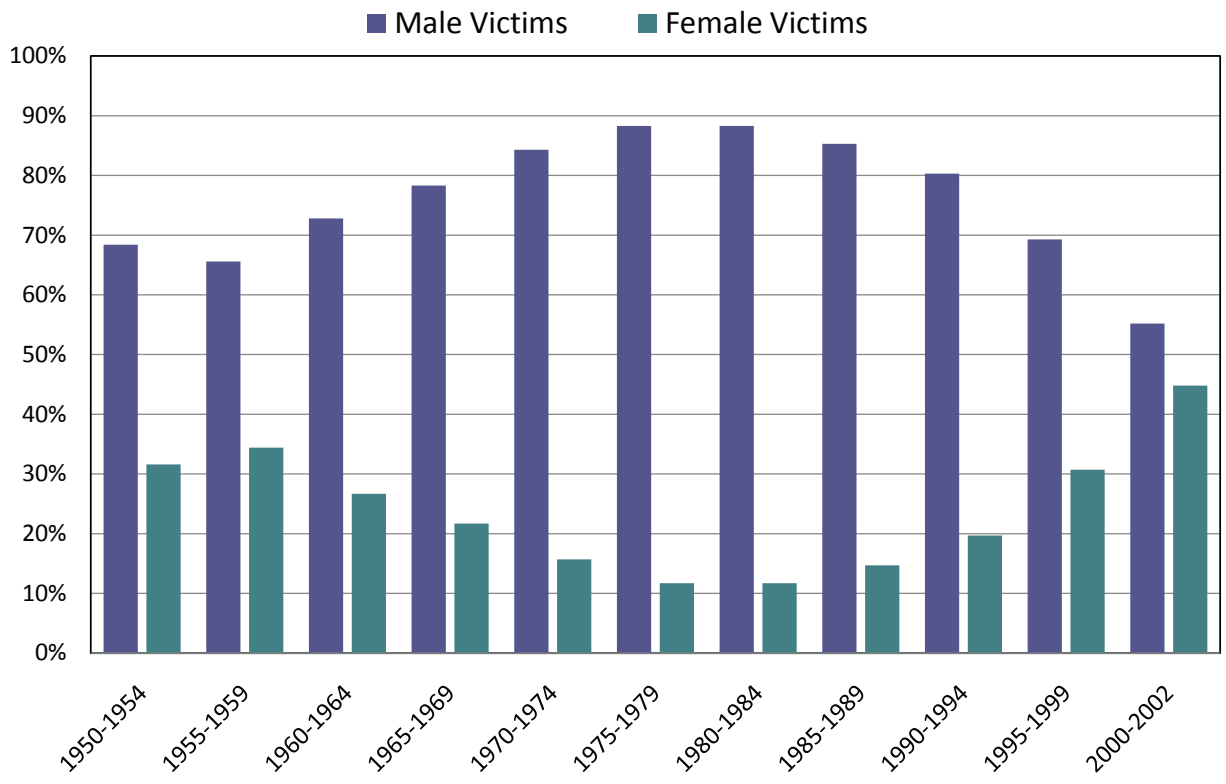
The data regarding neutralization techniques for this study are derived from surveys and interviews with priests who had allegations of abuse (the Identity and Behavior survey, noted in Chapter 3). These narratives are important in understanding priests' individual excuses and justifications for their behavior but also provide a glimpse into their perceptions of themselves within their role as priests.

**Table 5.2** *Nature and Scope*: Gender of Victim by Five-Year Intervals

| Time Interval | Percent of Victims—Male | Percent of Victims—Female |
|---|---|---|
| 1950-1954 | 68.4 | 31.6 |
| 1955-1959 | 65.6 | 34.4 |
| 1960-1964 | 72.8 | 26.7 |
| 1965-1969 | 78.3 | 21.7 |
| 1970-1974 | 84.3 | 15.7 |
| 1975-1979 | 88.3 | 11.7 |
| 1980-1984 | 88.3 | 11.7 |
| 1985-1989 | 85.3 | 14.7 |
| 1990-1994 | 80.3 | 19.7 |
| 1995-1999 | 69.3 | 30.7 |
| 2000-2002 | 55.2 | 44.8 |
| TOTALS* | 80.3 (N = 7804) | 18.7 (N = 1823) |

**Does not equal 100% due to some missing gender identifications and two victims who identified themselves as transgendered*

**Figure 5.2** *Nature and Scope*: Gender of Victims of Sexual Abuse, in Five-Year Intervals



The narratives provide a rich source of qualitative data. The purpose of the interviews, which included in-depth questions about the priests' attitudes towards their own abusive behaviors, was to understand in their own words how they explained their actions. What follows is a summary of the interviews and the priests' responses.

## Excuses

Priests in this sample used two primary types of excuses for their behavior. First, the accused priests denied responsibility by making claims that they were either "not well" (using or addicted to substances) or compelled by "sick" or "sinful" impulses. Second, they denied the victim his or her status by claiming that the victim either participated by being seductive or precocious or did not fight back or say anything during the abuse. One caveat of these data is that the information is derived from retrospective interviews, and many of the accused priests had participated in treatment programs prior to the interviews. As such, the language they used and the thoughts they expressed may have been influenced by the psychological treatments as well as years of retrospective evaluation of their behavior.

### *Denial of Responsibility*

Priest-abusers are similar to nonclergy abusers in their cognitive distortions regarding abusive behavior. It was common for priests to proclaim that they were not responsible for their actions, but rather their "sick self" was. This force beyond their control allowed them to deny full responsibility for their behavior, similar to legal claims of diminished capacity. Commonly, they used the excuses of alcohol and/or drugs or the sickness of addiction associated with these substances.

Some accused priests relied on clinical or psychological explanations for their deviant behavior. A common excuse for offending was sexual immaturity. The priests alluded to what they had lost (their active ministry), rather than recognizing the harm done to the accuser. In this explanation, they also showed a lack of victim empathy. In addition to the sexual immaturity, they also expressed emotional immaturity. The priests talked about seeking excessive emotional closeness with parishioners generally (such closeness with parishioners is not considered appropriate for priests), and they also explained that their emotional needs were not met by peer priests. Other priests explained that abuse is really no one person's fault, because it is either a disease of the mind, a misunderstanding about what is appropriate, or the result of retarded psychosexual development.

### *Denying the Victim*

One way an accused priest denied his status as an abuser was to disallow the accuser his or her victim identity. One way to blame the victim is to indicate that the victim—or the victim's family—colluded in setting up the conditions

**Figure 5.3** *Nature and Scope*: Average Duration of Abuse for Male Victims (in Years), in Five-Year Intervals

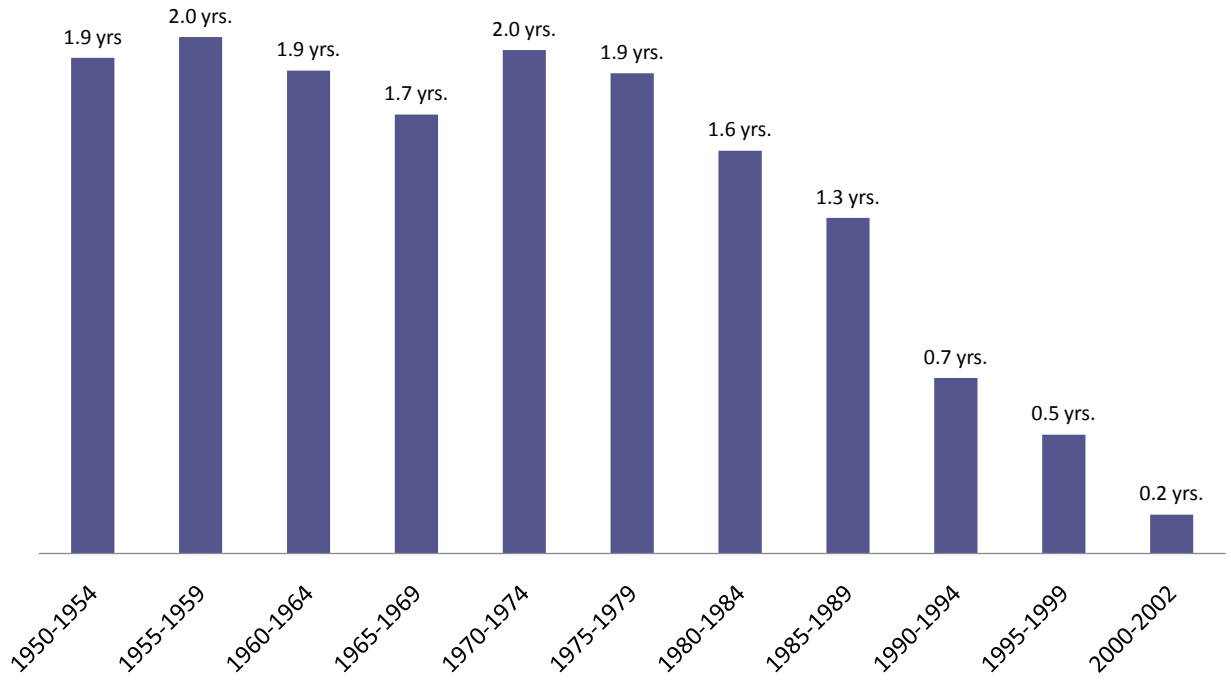


**Figure 5.4** *Nature and Scope*: Frequency of Abuse for Male Victims, in Five-Year Intervals

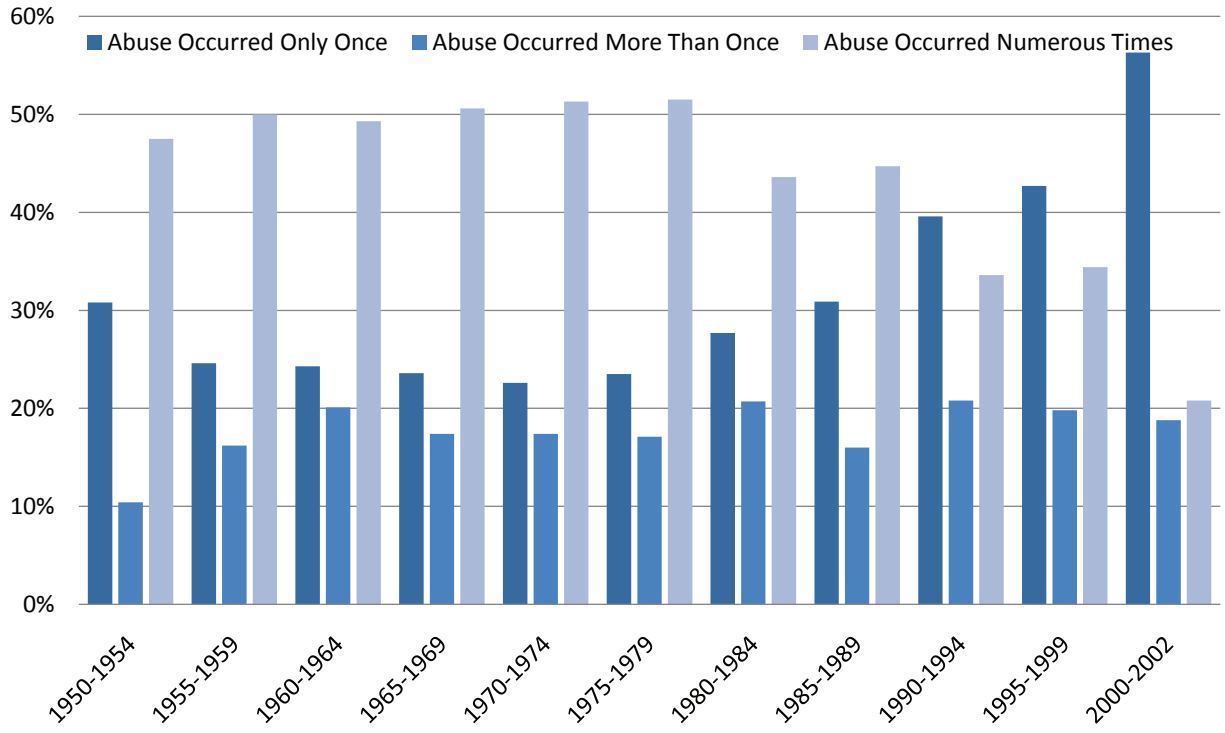



**Figure 5.5** *Nature and Scope*: Average Duration of Abuse for Female Victims (in Years), in Five-Year Intervals

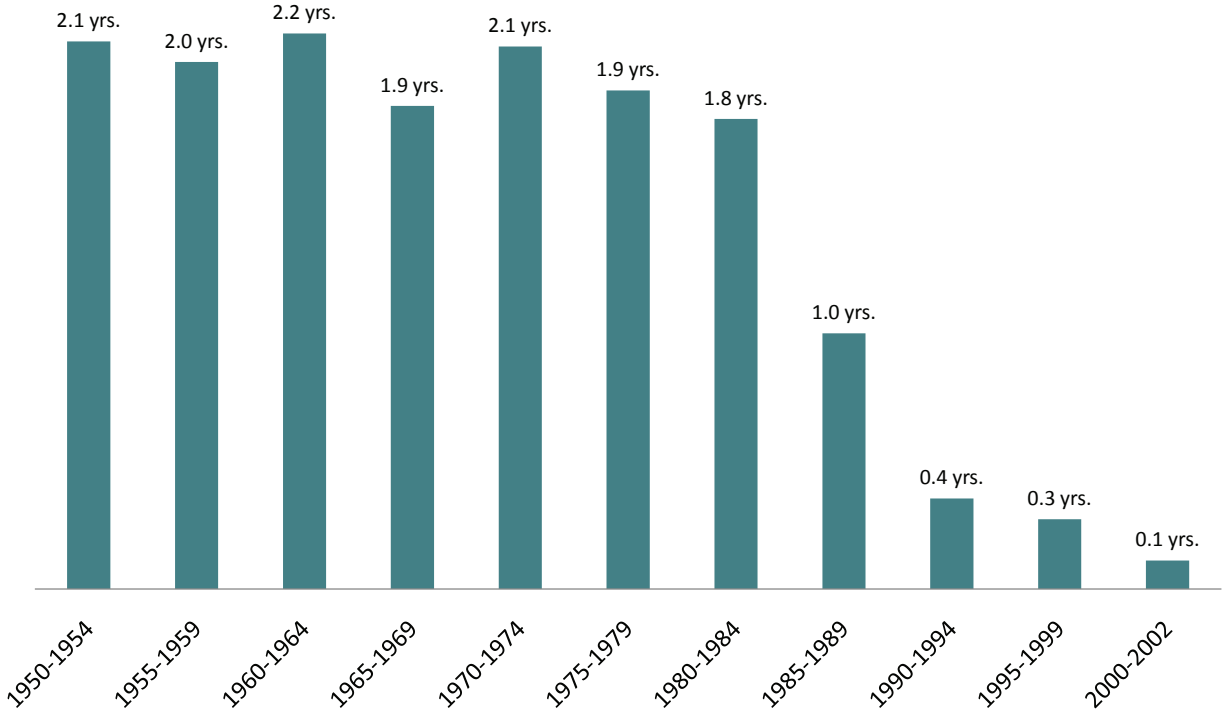
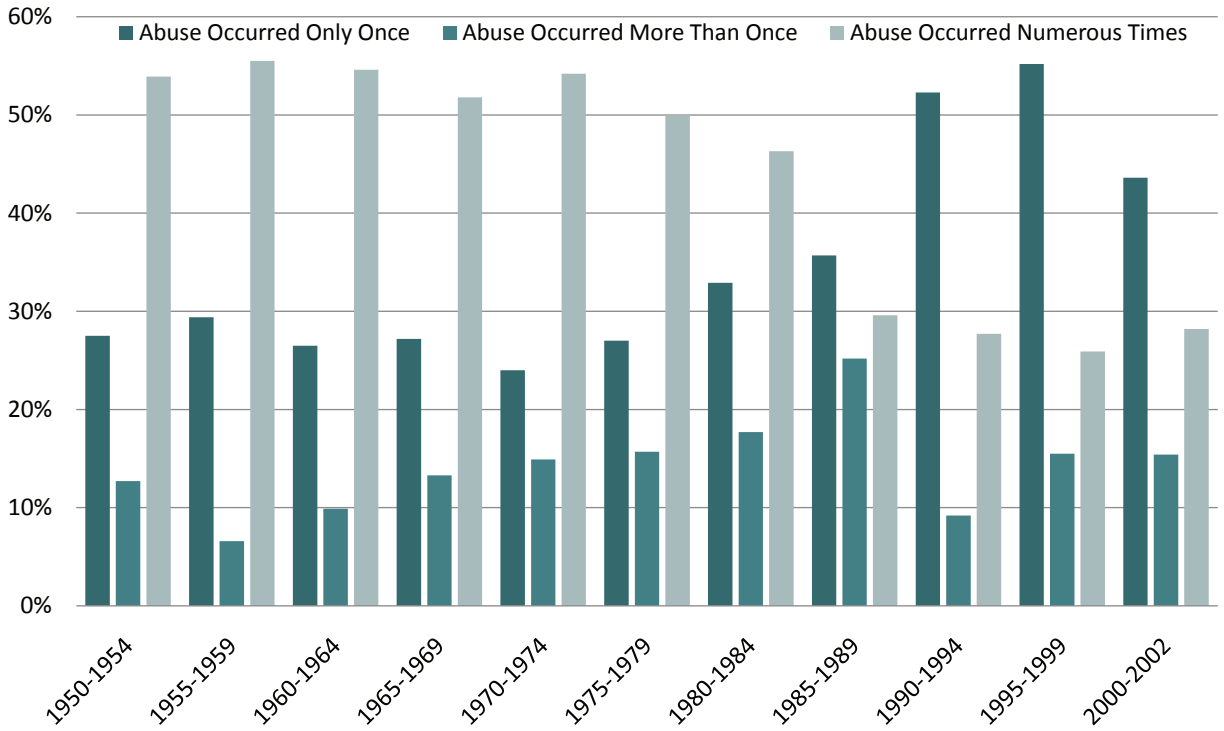


**Figure 5.6** *Nature and Scope*: Frequency of Abuse for Female Victims, in Five-Year Intervals




that allowed for the abuse to occur. Some priests argued that they had diminished control of their sick or sinful impulses. For example, a family might have invited a priest into their home, engaged him socially, and included him as part of their family. Therefore, the victim was to blame, or those responsible for the minor who had allowed the contact to take place.

Sometimes the accused priests explicitly blamed the victims by placing the onus of the initiation of the physical intimacy on the accuser. This excuse was particularly common for priests who were accused of abusing adolescents, who referred to the abuse as a "relationship." Even some priests who did not explicitly blame the accuser noted that the victims were "willing" or "precocious." It was evident that the "bad self," or the sinner, was not engaged as an identity belonging to the priest, but was instead some other disavowed self. Similar to the excuses in which priests denied their own culpability, the accused priests, even when admitting that sexually inappropriate events occurred, did not always identify the actions as abusive. Accused priests expressed the sentiment that had the family not included them in their lives, or if the family of the victim was not so broken, or even if the victim was not so intimately forward, none of these things would have happened. Without such circumstances, the priests argued, no sexual interaction would have taken place and therefore no allegations.

Another way to "deny the victim" is to shift the focus away from the accuser. Some priests who were interviewed did not discuss an accuser; rather, they considered themselves the "victims" because they were accused of these indecent acts. In these cases, everyone else but the accuser was a victim of the sexual abuse. Denying the victim's identity therefore allowed the accused priests to absolve themselves of the status of abuser.

## Justifications

Some of the priests interviewed justified their actions by diminishing the wrongfulness of the behavior, deflecting the harmfulness of their actions, or placing the responsibility of the deviance on others. The priests minimized harm by downplaying what actually occurred or by using positive language surrounding the "relationship" between themselves and the victim. These practices were often interwoven with blaming the victim. In their appeal to a higher authority, some priests claimed that they were really responsible only to God and the practice of seeking reconciliation, and they were not to be judged by others. Further, some priests actually condemned the condemners or criticized their accusers; in these cases, the accusers may have been the media, church hierarchy (bishops), parishioners, or families of the victims. This technique overlaps with the appeal to a higher authority, particularly if the priest had sought and felt that he had been given forgiveness.

Although excuses allowed the priests to accept that they committed particular acts, the justification framework suggests that what was done was something for which the priests can be forgiven by God (appeal to a higher authority or loyalty), was not really harmful to the victim or others (denial of harm), and/or was not the real problem (condemning the condemners). All of these techniques are deflective and allowed the priests to deny that they did anything objectionable, whereas the excuses allowed them to admit that they engaged in wrongful acts, but such acts were not their fault.

### *Appealing to a Higher Authority*

One way in which the abusive priests rationalized their behavior was by calling upon their relationship with God, particularly through the process of reconciliation. The priests may have already been absolved, as sinners who participate in the sacrament of reconciliation can be, and therefore the slate would have been wiped clean of sin. They may have sought forgiveness from the parishioners, as well as from the victims, or they may have already completed some distinct punishment or treatment as a result

**Table 5.3** *Nature and Scope*: Location Where Victims Met the Priests Who Abused Them

| Location of First Meeting | Percent of Male Victims | Percent of Female Victims |
|---|---|---|
| Mass | 33.8 | 27.1 |
| At an Altar Service / In the Rectory | 12.3 | 10.7 |
| In Parish (Not Specified) | 17.5 | 19.9 |
| Choir | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Sunday/Parish School | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Home of Cleric | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Teacher (up to grade 6) | 0.7 | 1.3 |
| Teacher (grades 7-8) | 0.9 | 1.4 |
| Teacher (grades 9-12) | 8.4 | 4.9 |
| Other School (Not Specified) | 2.4 | 4.9 |
| Home of Victim / Social Function w/ Victim's family | 4.5 | 12.7 |
| Boys Club / Youth Recreation | 4.9 | 5.6 |
| Seminary Faculty/Administrator | 1.9 | 0.2 |
| Work in a Hospital | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| In Jail/Prison/ Youth Offender Residence | 1.2 | 0.1 |
| Orphanage | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Cleric is Relative | 0.4 | 1.5 |
| Other | 7.1 | 6.2 |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

*The categories in this table are mutually exclusive.*
*Percentages in this table are based on Nature and Scope victim surveys for 7,142 boys and 1,762 girls.*

**Table 5.4** *Nature and Scope*: Physical Locations of Abuse Incidents by Gender

| Place of Abuse | Percent of Male Victims | Percent of Female Victims |
|---|---|---|
| Cleric's Home/Parish Residence | 36.6 | 30.7 |
| In Church | 14.2 | 12.9 |
| In Victim's Home | 10.9 | 10.4 |
| In School | 8.2 | 11.4 |
| In a Hotel | 7.0 | 3.6 |
| In a Car | 8.5 | 8.4 |
| Vacation House | 9.9 | 5.0 |
| Outings/Camp, Park, Pool | 7.8 | 5.7 |
| Retreat House | 1.2 | 1.5 |
| Cleric Office | 6.2 | 7.6 |
| In the Hospital | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Congregate Residence | 0.6 | 0.1 |
| In Other Residences (Friends, Family) | 1.0 | 0.8 |
| Other | 5.3 | 5.5 |

*The categories in this table are not mutually exclusive, as victims may have experienced abuse in more than one location.*

**Table 5.5** *Nature and Scope*: Circumstances/Timing of Abuse, by Gender

| Circumstances of Abuse | Percent of Male Victims | Percent of Female Victims |
|---|---|---|
| Visiting/Working at Cleric's Home/Rectory | 13.2 | 13.1 |
| During Social Event | 17.8 | 21.9 |
| During Travel | 14.0 | 7.2 |
| Church Service (Before, During, After) | 8.0 | 3.4 |
| Cleric Visited Home of Victim | 2.9 | 7.4 |
| During Counseling | 6.3 | 7.1 |
| During Reconciliation | 1.3 | 2.8 |
| During Sporting Event | 4.5 | 2.5 |
| During Other Travel | 3.7 | 2.3 |
| Outings | 3.0 | 1.8 |
| School Hours | 4.2 | 8.2 |
| Church Service, Training | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| During a Retreat | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| Hospital Visit | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Other | 7.2 | 7.5 |

*The categories in this table are not mutually exclusive, as victims may have experienced abuse at more than one time or in more than one circumstance.*

**Table 5.6** *Nature and Scope*: Priest's Primary Duty at Time of Abuse

| Duty | Percent of Male Victims | Percent of Female Victims |
|---|---|---|
| Pastor | 25.0 | 26.0 |
| Associate Pastor | 42.2 | 42.1 |
| Resident Priest | 8.8 | 10.9 |
| Bishop, Vicar, Chan., Card. | 0.4 | 0.2 |
| Seminarian/Seminary Administrator/Faculty | 1.9 | 1.4 |
| Teacher (up to grade 6) | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Teacher (grades 7-8) | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Teacher ( grades 9-12) | 7.2 | 4.2 |
| School/Inst. Administrator | 1.0 | 1.7 |
| Guidance Counselor | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| Catechism Teacher | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Boys Club/Recreation | 1.6 | 1.2 |
| Chaplain | 2.8 | 2.1 |
| Worked in Hospital | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Saying Mass | 1.2 | 1.2 |
| Cleric Is Relative | 0.3 | 1.0 |
| Other | 5.5 | 6.4 |
| Total | 100% | 100% |

*The categories in this table are mutually exclusive.*
*Percentages in this table are based on* Nature and Scope *victim surveys for 7,864 boys and 1,863 girls.*

of an allegation. Therefore, some of the accused priests believed that the subcultural process of forgiveness should be enough to end the process of condemnation.

Some of the priests who were accused of abuse identified with their failed human selves and how those selves were distanced from the cultural practices of the faith. They expressed that their failing was as men, not as priests. They believed that what they did wrong was not the sexual abuse, per se. Instead, it was a subversion of the higher authority or the subculture to which they belonged. For example, one priest called himself "spiritually dead" in reference to his sins of the body. The particular focus on the relationship with God and "award" of forgiveness from him was also mentioned by several priests. They explained that an infraction (sin) must first be mended with a higher authority, and that authority is God. However, even in referencing their own relationship with God and their own sin and personal failings, the priests failed to recognize any harm to the victim.

### *Minimization of Harm*

Priests employed a number of justifications in an attempt to negate the harm done to victims. It is important to note that many instances of sexual abuse did occur at a time in social history (late 1960s to early 1980s) when there was little or developing knowledge around the concepts of sexual violation, victimization, and long-term impact of sexual victimization (see Figure 5.1, above). Priests may have been uncomfortable with their actions but would not have viewed them as criminal or harmful.

Not all of the justifications for committing sexual offenses are solely rooted in subcultural interpretation. Many priest-abusers, like non-priest abusers, explained their actions as being part of a "relationship," "not sex,"

**Table 5.7** *Nature and Scope*: Grooming Victims with Gifts and Enticements, by Gender

| Grooming | Percent of Male Victims | Percent of Female Victims |
|---|---|---|
| Gifts Given to Victim | 8.0 | 7.6 |
| Enticements Given to Victim | 15.3 | 16.1 |
| *The above percentages for gifts and enticements are based on data provided in 50% of the* Nature and Scope *victim surveys, or approximately 5,500 surveys.* | | |
| Specific Enticements | | |
| Alcohol/Drugs | 8.6 | 1.2 |
| Money | 22.7 | 22.0 |
| Stay Overnight with Cleric | 6.1 | 1.7 |
| Taken to Sports or Recreational Activity | 5.3 | 1.6 |
| Allowed to Stay Up | 1.5 | 0.1 |
| Allowed to Drive | 2.0 | 0.6 |
| Access to Pornography | 1.9 | 0.0 |
| Special Church Activities | 0.9 | 0 |
| Travel | 0.9 | 0.3 |
| Food | 0.3 | 0 |
| Toys, Other Gifts | 0.1 | 0 |
| Other | 2.7 | 2.6 |

*The categories in the Specific Enticements section of this table are not mutually exclusive, as victims may have been offered more than one type of enticement.*

or that it "happened only once" or "happened long ago." They viewed the sexual behavior as consensual, not harmful, and they viewed any behavior short of intercourse as not wrong because it was not sex. They often did not acknowledge that a single incident of sexual behavior constituted abuse, insinuating that it was the repetitive nature of abuse that is harmful rather than the act itself. Lastly, the priest-abusers' claims that the event(s) occurred long ago implied that the harm should be forgotten because there was temporal distance between the incident(s) and the accusation. It is valid that a bulk of the events did occur decades before reporting, which made it easier for the priests to minimize or deny the harm that was caused. The priests rationalized that if there had been harm, the abuse would have been reported sooner.

Another technique of minimizing harm employed by some of the accused priests was to call the interaction between the accuser and the accused something other than an abusive interaction. The language suggested that the interaction occurred as a part of a friendship or relationship, be it romantic or even a relationship with the family. Accused priests employing this justification of their actions explained that they had contact with the victims through harmless encounters or invited relationships, such as socializing with the family of the victim. Several priests with allegations of abuse had established relationships between themselves and the victims' families.

### *Condemning the Condemners*

The last category for justifying the behavior is a deflective technique in which priest-abusers blamed church leaders for the abuse and/or the responses to the accusations. Through this technique, the priests deflected from the wrongfulness of their actions by shifting the focus of blame to the church hierarchy. One way in which priest-abusers did this was to blame church leaders for how poorly they prepared seminarians for life in the priesthood. They also blamed church leaders for how poorly they dealt with the accusations of abuse, which they considered to be reactive and unforgiving. These respondents ignored their own abusive behavior and simply focused on the behavior of church leadership. This technique is known as "condemning the condemners."

One such condemnation draws on the very culture of forgiveness. Accused priests noted that the Catholic practice of forgiveness should outweigh the sins, and their interpretation of forgiveness was that no one should take action against them in response to the allegations. This

**Figure 5.7** *Nature and Scope*: Comparison of Drug or Alcohol Use by Priests and Male Victims at Time of Incident

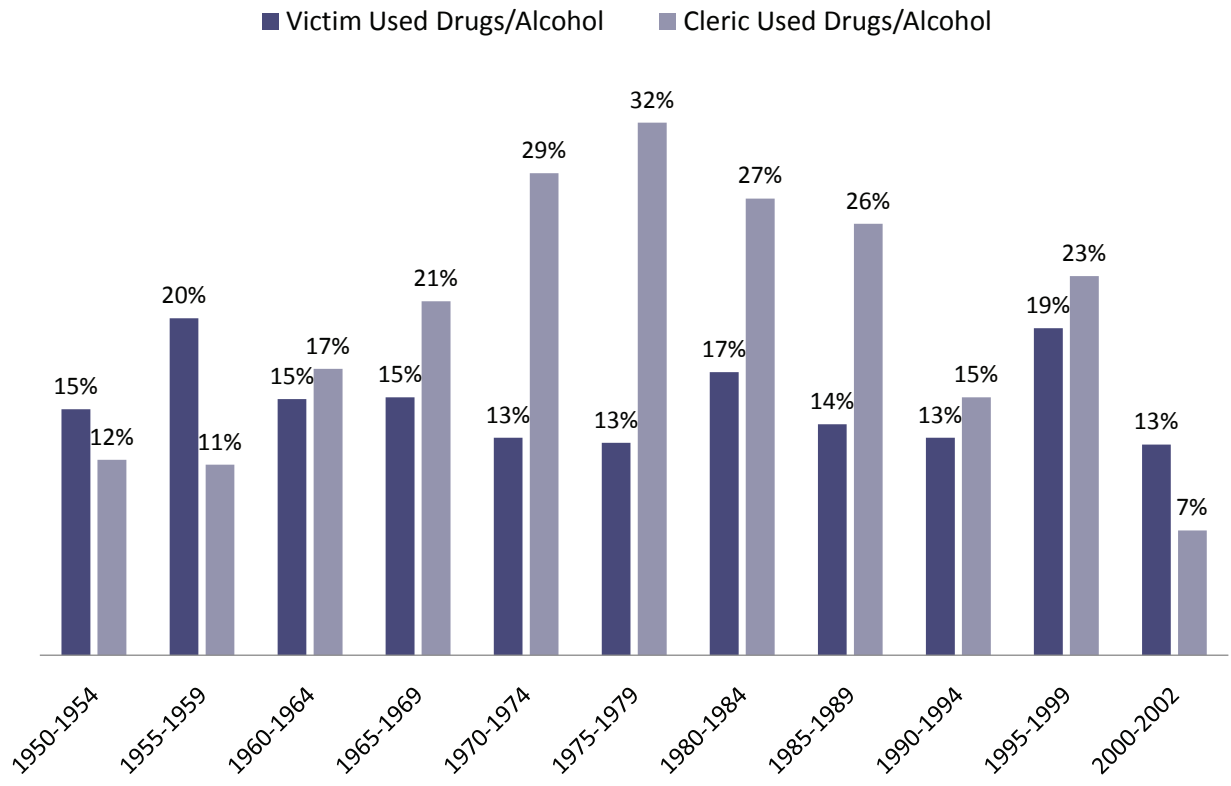


**Figure 5.8** *Nature and Scope*: Drug or Alcohol Use by Priests with Male Victims

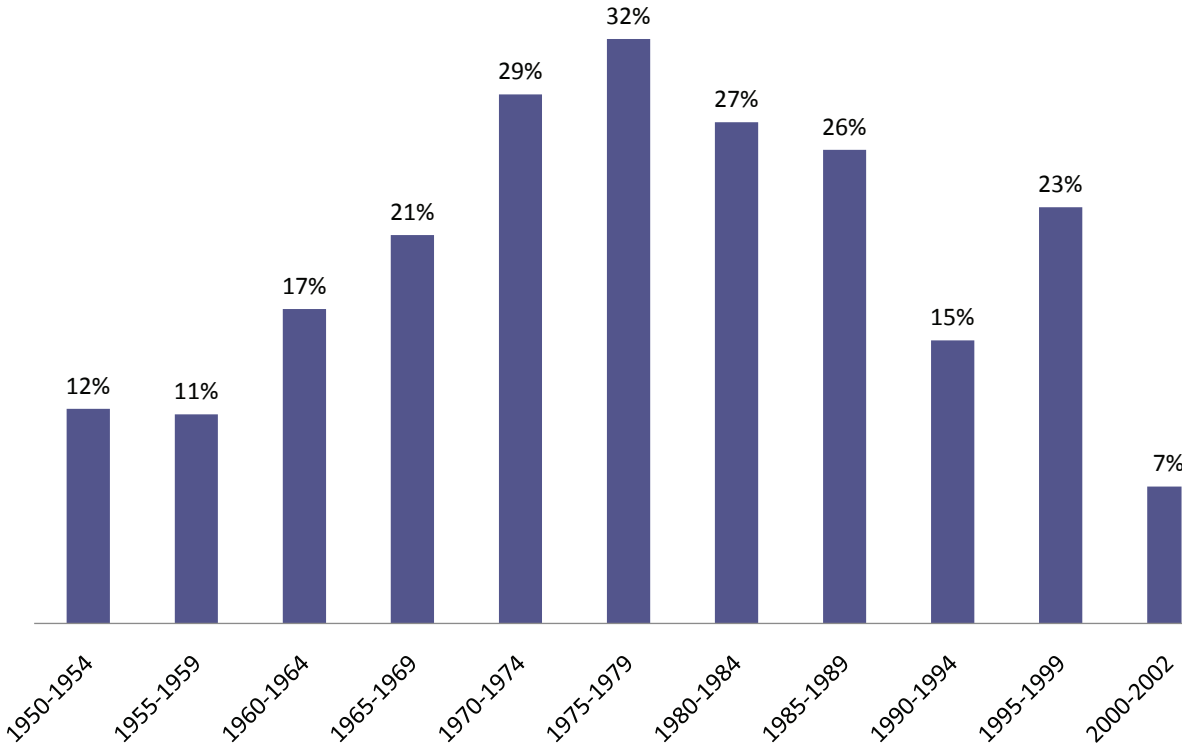
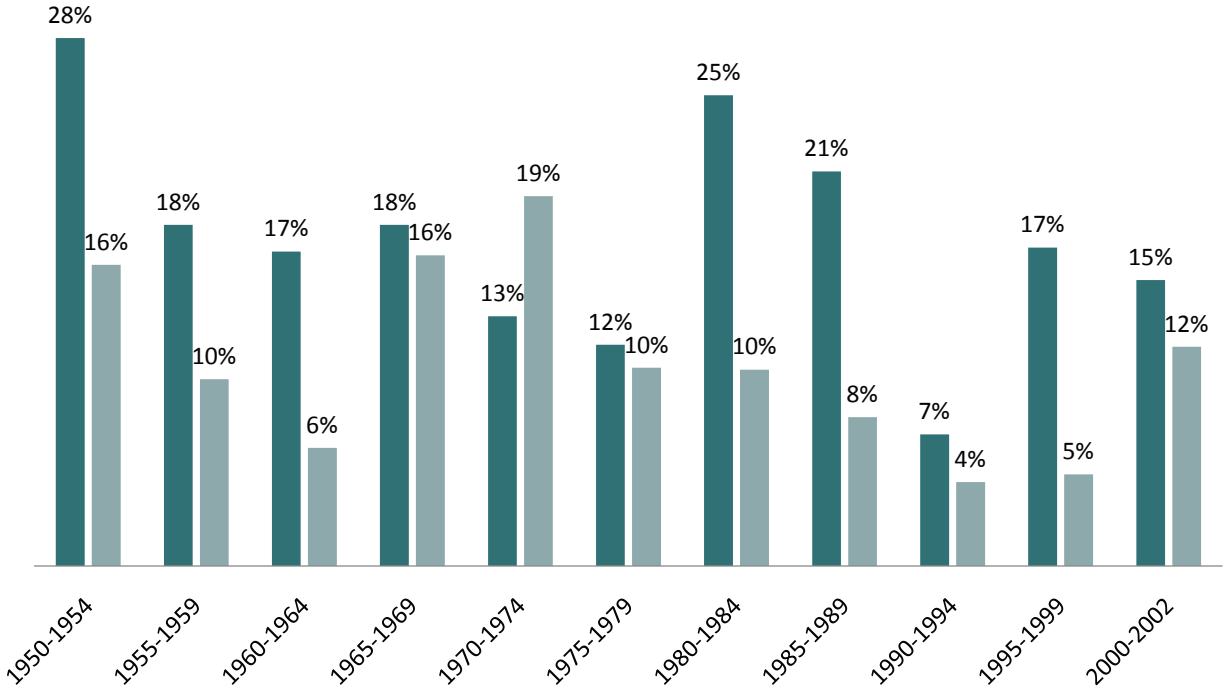



**Figure 5.9** *Nature and Scope*: Comparison of Drug or Alcohol Use by Priests and Female Victims at Time of Incident



view essentially eliminated the "penance" part of the process of reconciliation, as some priests stated that public embarrassment was sufficient. This attitude was particularly true for those who participated in psychological treatment but were still removed, priests who may have served jail time, or those who made amends with victims before the widespread media reports in 2002.

Much of the response of condemnation is associated with what accused priests might say is a "sacrificial" swath covered in the 2002 *Charter*. They felt they were denied due process. In this regard they referenced specific biblical stories, such as likening themselves to the "lost sheep" and the "prodigal son." They expressed the sentiment that if only their leaders had done things differently in the past, this "crisis" would have been avoided. However, the priests were not speaking about their own actions and what might have stopped them from sexually abusing a minor. Some priests showed particular ire at the effects of the *Charter*, particularly the zero-tolerance policy for those accused of sexual abuse.

Accused priests not only condemned the hierarchical leaders of the church for their response to the scandal of abuse, they also held leaders responsible for "poor socialization" to the life of the priesthood, and in particular for poor seminary preparation. Accused priests indicated that had each man been adequately trained to the realities of priestly life in seminary, they may have been able to make better choices in terms of whether or not to actually receive the sacrament of holy orders, or to be better equipped to adjust to the loneliness and realities of the life of celibate chastity. No one priest said that the vow of celibate chastity was the actual problem, but rather, what they learned (or did not learn) about the realities of this particular religious practice was the central issue. The problem, as it appeared to the accused priests, was the failure of church leaders to adequately train them for the priesthood, particularly the loneliness and isolation therein. Some priests who were not isolated expressed that they were emotionally, psychologically, and sometimes physically abused by their pastors, especially in their early assignments. They experienced a shock in making the transition from the supportive communal seminary setting to the more isolated and difficult experiences of active ministry.

The accused priests therefore employed a variety of justifications and excuses to protect themselves from self-blame and from accepting the status of abuser. The techniques of neutralization, while similar to those of sex offenders in the general population, were rooted in the culturally specific vocabularies of motives unique to the Catholic Church.

## Desistance from Abuse

The techniques of neutralization, as described above, represent one internal factor responsible for the persistence of abusive behavior. These excuses and justifications allowed the abusive priests, like non-priest abusers, to continue to abuse minors by both minimizing the harm done and either denying or minimizing the priest's role in the abuse. However, the question still remains of why the abuse stopped, often years before reports were made about the abuse.

Desistance is affected by both external influences, such as peers,[464] education,[465] employment,[466] and participation in other traditional activities,[467] and internal influences, such as identity transformation.[468] The criminological literature discusses desistance in the context of life-course theory, and the most common factor that has been associated consistently with desistance from deviant behavior in general is age.[469] However, sex offenders do not fit neatly into this framework; they are often older and better educated, and they rarely "age out" of the criminal behavior, as do other types of offenders.

Understanding some of the contributing factors cited in empirical research regarding desistance from crime may help to contextualize the results of the current study. An external or social/environmental factor associated with desistance includes peer associations. According to Warr, the reduced exposure to delinquent peers as one ages accounts for a decrease in deviant behavior.[470] Consonant with this view, then, desistance is related to associations with conventional peers, increased noncriminal routine activities, and reduced exposure to definitions favorable to crime.[471] Employment has also been found to promote desistance from crime.[472] Laub and Sampson posit that employment reduces offending primarily through four processes: (1) the mutual exchange of social capital between the employer and employee; (2) reduced criminal opportunities; (3) direct informal social control; and (4) the development of self.[473] Other pro-social ties, such as education, also have found empirical support for desistance from crime.[474] However, some researchers argue that focusing solely on external factors provides only a partial explanation.

A burgeoning field of inquiry involves internal factors related to desistance. In 1985, Gove was among the first to propose such as theory.[475] He argued that desistance is a result of five internal changes: (1) shifting from self-centeredness to consideration of others; (2) developing pro-social values and behavior; (3) increasing ease in social interactions; (4) expanding consideration for other members of the community; and (5) a growing concern for the "meaning of life." Since Gove's proposal, several other researchers have sought to explain desistance using psychological factors.[476] One of the more prominent

explanations is the role of identity transformation outlined by Shadd Maruna.[477] Maruna argues that in order to desist from criminality offenders need to develop prosocial identities of themselves. He found differences in the way in which the life story narratives of "persisters" and "desisters" of crime were presented. Desisters in part dissociated themselves from the past bad behavior and focused more on current accomplishments. Maruna calls this process of self-reconstruction "making good."

Some researchers have evaluated the integration of the external (social) and internal (psychological) factors associated with desistance.[478] The difficulty with this type of research is in establishing temporal ordering to determine causality. Nevertheless, LeBel et al. conducted a longitudinal study examining the interaction between external and internal factors in desistance among 130 male offenders.[479] Their findings suggest that for some social problems, desistance was not necessarily linked to internal changes. However, they also found support for a combination of external and internal factors, specifically for reduced recidivism among those offenders who had confidence in their abilities to change. This transformation was apparent among offenders whose experiences with social problems were minimal; however, the authors cautioned about extrapolating this finding to individuals whose social problems are overwhelming.[480]

For the *Causes and Context* study, we analyzed desistance data from two sources: clinical treatment files and surveys from survivors. The unit of analysis from the treatment files is the priests, while the unit of analysis from the survivor survey is the victims. This distinction is important, because the treatment files provide data on explanations the priests gave about why the abuse stopped. In contrast, the survivor surveys provide information about the actions that the survivors took to stop the abuse.

It was hypothesized that the priests would stop their deviant behavior because of a combination of internal and external factors. Specifically, it was hypothesized that priests would desist from the abusive behavior because of internal mechanisms, given that so many cases of abuse were reported years after the abuse took place. Additionally, it was hypothesized that contexts (community, parish, family) of abuse did not offer recognizable pathways for victims to disclose and bring an end to abuse. This hypothesis is derived from the lack of knowledge of abuse by the community and lack of recognition of harm from sexual abuse at the time the abuse was occurring. Finally, it was hypothesized that grooming behavior would increase the duration of abuse, with more extensive grooming/manipulation/threats leading to a longer duration of behavior and a lower likelihood of early desistance.

Clinical files showed that, for those priests who participated in a treatment program for which there are "desistance" data, over half had an official report filed against them. Interestingly, a large percentage of those who were reported denied the allegation of abuse—this figure was significantly higher than for those who were not reported. The clinical data showed evidence that some priests, albeit a small percentage (2.4 percent), stopped the abuse because of internal drives to do so. In particular, they felt guilt, remorse, or shame because of their behaviors. More commonly, the accused priests stopped their abusive behavior because of external reasons. Some (7.6 percent) were removed from the parish and the situations in which they could abuse. Others stopped because of a combination of internal and external reasons, for example, they earned a disgraceful reputation because of their behavior (2.7 percent), or they were reformed after treatment (.9 percent).

Survivor surveys and information from public documents lead to a more situational explanation for the desistance from abusive behavior. Many of the victims said that abuse ceased when they removed themselves from the abusive situations. In other words, they removed themselves from the situations in which they were being abused, and the priests no longer had the opportunities to abuse them. Often, however, the abuse had continued for a period of time before the victims could determine a way in which to remove themselves from the abusive situation.

## Conclusion

Many factors played a role in the onset, persistence, and desistance from abuse by priests. One VAC explained the key factors in the abuse as follows:

> I believe that the ability to have access to the children was key. The issue of a trusted person in power kept children from reporting. Fear that the victims would not be believed or would hurt their parents was often an impediment for reporting the abuse. Often gifts, trips, and alcohol were involved. Often the victims that were targeted were children already vulnerable because of familial issues. The parents trusted the clergy and did not recognize signs.

The explanations for the onset, persistence, and desistance from abuse are incredibly complex and involve a multitude of factors. Those priests who had social, developmental, or emotional vulnerabilities (as described in Chapter 3) had to be in, or create, situations in which they could initiate abuse with a minor. The abusive priests were able to persist with their behavior by excusing or justifying their actions, and in this sense they are similar to nonclergy sexual offenders. According to Maruna, offenders

need to develop pro-social identities of themselves in order to desist from offending.[481] Interestingly, the priest-abusers who responded to the Identity and Behavior survey did have positive pro-social images. While this qualitative data cannot offer causal explanations of the desistance, it is clear that some mechanism other than the criminal justice system led to the desistance from abuse of minors in most cases of priest sex abusers. Based on responses by survivors, it seems as though the victims played a key role in the desistance from abuse by removing themselves from the situations in which the abuse was occurring.

During the peak of the abuse cases in the 1970s and early 1980s, few "capable guardians" were in place who could have prevented the abuse from occurring. Victimization was little understood, signs of abuse were not readily recognized, children spent time alone and unsupervised with the priests, and the abuse was generally not reported until years after it occurred. Though the sexual abuse "crisis" is a historical problem, incidents of sexual abuse do still exist and will persist to some degree in the Catholic Church, just as they will in any organization, family, or in the general society. As such, it is critically important to employ prevention models to protect minors from potential harm.

# Chapter 6

# Conclusion and Recommendations

The *Causes and Context* study provided a unique opportunity to collect robust, rich, and multifaceted data on the sexual abuse of minors over a sixty-year period. Seven sources of quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, and the findings support a consistent set of conclusions. This convergence of findings provides confidence in the data, which can then serve as a base for creating policy recommendations.

Consistent with literature about sex offenders in the general population, the *Causes and Context* data show that priests who sexually abused minors constitute a heterogeneous population. Individual characteristics do not predict that a priest will commit sexual abuse of a minor. Rather, vulnerabilities, in combination with situational stresses and opportunities, raise the risk of abuse. Like non-priest abusers, the majority of priests who sexually abused minors appear to have had certain vulnerabilities to commit abuse (for example, emotional congruence with children or adolescents), experienced increased stressors from work (for example, having recently received more responsibilities, such as becoming a pastor), and had opportunities to abuse (for example, unguarded access to minors).

Most abuse incidents occurred decades ago, at a time when the impact of victimization was not fully understood and research on sexual offenders was in early stages of development. When priests did commit abusive acts, they were often not reported by the victim at the time of the incident, not recognized by the abuser's peers or leaders, and, when known, were not dealt with in a way that helped the victim to recover from the resulting harm. The historical, psychological, organizational, cultural, and situational data analyzed here provide a vital narrative about the abuse, abusers, victims, and institutions in which abuse took place.

## Summary of Findings

### Historical Nature of Abuse

- The "crisis" of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests is a historical problem. Data from multiple sources show that incidence of abuse behavior was highest between the mid-1960s and the mid-1980s. Sexual abuse continues to occur, but 94 percent of the abuse incidents reported to the Catholic Church from 1950 through 2009 took place before 1990. Each year, fewer new reports are brought forward, and each set of new cases reflects the known pattern.
- Priests ordained in different decades committed their first acts of abuse after different periods of time in ministry, but the abusive acts for all cohorts were clustered in the 1960s and 1970s. The influence of the overall pattern of social change is seen in all ordination cohorts.
- Factors that were invariant during the time period addressed, such as celibacy, were not responsible for the increase or decline in abuse cases over this time period.
- Reports of abuse are associated with periods of publicity about the problem of sexual abuse.
- Before 1985, reports of sexual abuse were most likely to be made by the parent of the youth within a year of the abuse. By the mid-1990s, reports of abuse were being made more often by adult men and women reporting abuse incidents that had happened ten or more years earlier. In 2002, reports of abuse were most often made by adult victims or their lawyers twenty to forty years after the abuse took place.

### Seminary Education and Priestly Formation

- The majority of abusers (70%) were ordained prior to the 1970s, and more abusers were educated in seminaries in the 1940s and 1950s than at any other time period.
- Human formation in seminary is critically important. The drop in abuse cases preceded the inclusion of a thorough education in human formation, but the development of the curriculum of human formation is consistent with the continued low levels of abuse by Catholic priests.
- Sexual abuse of minors was a national problem, and those who abused were educated in mainstream seminaries. No significant increase in vulnerability was evident in those who attended minor or foreign seminaries.

## Clinical and Individual Factors

- Priest-abusers are similar to sex offenders in the general population. They had some motivation to commit the abuse (for example, emotional congruence to adolescents), exhibited techniques of neutralization to excuse and justify their behavior, took advantage of opportunities to abuse (for example, through socialization with the family), and used grooming techniques to gain compliance from potential victims.
- Priest-abusers were not "pedophile priests." The majority of priests who abused were not driven by particular pathologies, and most did not "specialize" in abuse of particular types of victims. The pathologically driven priests were not influenced by social factors as were the majority of abusers (for example, their behavior was consistent across the time period and did not peak from the mid-1960s to1980s). "Generalists," or indiscriminate offenders, constituted the majority of abusers and were influenced by social factors.
- The majority of abusers did not have diagnosable psychological problems. No significant psychological, personality, or IQ differences were found between priests who abused minors and those who were treated for other reasons.
- Most clergy in the clinical sample had been in sexual relationships post-ordination (77%), even if that was not the primary reason for treatment. The majority of priests referred for abuse of a minor had also had sexual behavior with adults (70%).
- Data indicate that the experience of having been sexually abused by an adult while a minor increased the risk that priests would later abuse a child.
- Sexual behavior before ordination predicted sexual behavior after ordination; however, such conduct only predicted subsequent sexual interaction with other adults, not with minors.
- The clinical data do not support the hypothesis that priests with a homosexual identity or those who committed same-sex sexual behavior with adults are significantly more likely to sexually abuse children than those with a heterosexual orientation or behavior.

## Organizational Responses to Abuse

- Diocesan responses to abusive priests changed substantially over the sixty-year period addressed in this study. For example, abusive priests were less likely to be returned to active ministry and/or more likely to be placed on administrative leave during the later years. Bishops and other diocesan leaders experienced confusion about or difficulty with available options (for example, suspension, laicization, reinstatement) for permanently removing abusive priests from ministry.
- By the mid-1980s, all bishops had been made aware of the issue of sexual abuse of minors. Bishops were committed to the Five Principles, but these Principles were not consistently implemented in all dioceses. The extent of compliance with the Five Principles varied greatly across the US dioceses: some bishops undertook thoroughgoing change in their response to victims of abuse and affected parishes; other bishops limited the discussion of sexual abuse to those consultants who had commitments of confidentiality.
- Diocesan leaders responded to acts of abuse, but with a focus on the priests and not the victims. Many bishops acted in good faith to help abusive priests, most often by sending the priest-abusers to treatment. There was no clear indication, however, of the bishops' or other diocesan leaders' understanding of the extent of harm resulting from sexual abuse. Although this lack of understanding was consistent with the overall lack of understanding of victimization at the time, the absence of acknowledgment of harm was a significant ethical lapse on the part of leadership in some dioceses.
- "Insiders" were engaged, but "outsiders" were rebuffed; information about sexual abuse within the Catholic Church was tightly controlled. This pattern led individuals and groups outside the church, including victim advocates, to call for a greater response and more transparency about the response to abuse claims.
- Some diocesan leaders were "innovators" who led the organizational change to address the problems of sexual abuse of minors. However, some were also "laggards," or were slow to respond to organizational changes. The media often focused on the laggards, even though they constituted a minority of diocesan leaders, which further perpetuated the image that the bishops as a whole were not responding to the problem of sexual abuse of minors.
- It is the voices and narratives of victims that have confronted priests, enabled dioceses to act responsibly, and brought diocesan leaders to an understanding of the harm of abuse.

## Onset, Persistence, and Desistance from Abuse

- Most abuse incidents were not reported or recognized at the time they occurred, even when the abusers had lengthy histories of abusive behavior. This lacuna led to a substantial delay in the knowledge about individual incidents of abuse and the scope of the problem in the Catholic Church.
- Access to victims played a critical role in victim choice. Few significant differences were found between

the locations and situations in which boys and girls were abused, but priests had more access to boys until recently (primarily because parishes permitted girls as altar servers only after 1983).
- Priests who abused minors exhibited behavior consistent with non-priest abusers regarding grooming behaviors (onset), techniques of neutralization (persistence), and internal and external desistance mechanisms.
- Priests who abused minors at the peak of the crisis exhibited characteristics consistent with "situational" child abusers.

## Recommendations for Prevention Policies

The heterogeneity of the priest-abuser population presents a complex agenda for prevention. It is not possible to identify most potential abusers with traditional psychological assessments, because very few priest-abusers were driven to commit their offenses by diagnosable psychological disorders. It is also neither possible nor desirable to implement extensive restrictions on the mentoring and nurturing relationships between minors and priests given that most priests have not sexually abused minors and are not likely to do so. However, it is critical to implement prevention policies that are independent of a particular risk factor, be they social, psychological, or developmental factors. Prevention policies should focus on three factors: education, situational prevention models, and oversight and accountability.

### Education

The human formation component as part of the seminary education program evolved over the period of time studied, and data show that this development reduced the vulnerability of priests to abuse. The addition of elements of what is now called a "Human Formation" component of seminary education was recognized as valuable by priests in the study and was consistent with the decline in sexual abuse incidents. In the survey of priests with allegations of abuse compared to those without allegations of abuse, the experience of some human formation education was a critical factor in distinguishing the two groups. The findings of the *Causes and Context* study should be digested and used as the basis for a mandatory curriculum for a workshop for all seminary faculty.

A long-neglected function at the diocesan level is the provision of continuing education for priests. In 2001, the US bishops prepared *The Basic Plan for the Ongoing Formation of Priests*, intended primarily for diocesan priesthood. The plan provides a general description of the kinds of ongoing formation needed to enhance the integration of priestly identity and the tasks of pastoral ministry; it also outlines formation at different stages of priesthood and discusses some of the practical possibilities for formation.

To implement such programs, bishops would need to provide the human and financial resources needed to ensure that ongoing formation is available. Also pressing is the question of the judicious deployment of priests that would make possible opportunities for some to take sabbaticals or in other ways renew themselves and their ministry. Beyond these concerns, priests have varying degrees of interest to participate in such programs. For reasons of excessive workloads, lack of money, or other personal factors, not all choose to engage in ongoing formation. Many pastors believe bishops must support, even make obligatory, some form of continuing education if parish life is to thrive.

A clear delineation of behavioral expectations appropriate to a life of celibacy must be part of formation goals during seminary education and also throughout priests' time in ministry. The *Causes and Context* data indicate that abuse is most likely to occur at times of stress, loneliness, and isolation. Such stressful or challenging situations triggered the desire in some priests to form inappropriate relationships with others—such relationships were most often with adults, but sometimes with minors. The addition of formal educational models related to human formation would be one step toward reducing the likelihood of abuse at times in which priests are most vulnerable. This formation should include a thorough understanding of the major findings of this study. Toward that end, educational opportunities should be put in place, for example, workshops and online courses, for those responsible for the human formation programs for seminarians, including seminary administrators and faculty.

### Situational Prevention Models

The peak of sexual abuse incidents in the Catholic Church occurred at a time of social upheaval, and it is possible that other social factors could influence harmful behavior in the future. Prevention models take into account that new opportunities will arise and that over time offenders will adapt and change their modus operandi. In this respect it is important to apply situational prevention strategies that incorporate a general framework—all events can be analyzed situationally, and new techniques (for example, intervention strategies) can be implemented to prevent abuse. According to SCP models, this can be accomplished in five ways:

- *Increase the effort* by making it more difficult for priests to commit acts of abuse. The church has already taken an important step in accomplishing this goal by

implementing mandatory safe environment training programs. In doing so, the church is educating potential victims (minors), potential abusers (priests), and guardians (those in the church—parents or other community members—who may witness, be told about, or become aware of abuse should it occur).

- *Increase the risks* by making it more likely that those who commit acts of abuse will be identified and, once recognized, have more to lose. The safe environment training programs help to increase the risk of getting "caught" (by educating potential victims and guardians), and the "zero-tolerance" policy for abusers makes the risk greater if one is recognized as an abuser. Dioceses should institute periodic evaluation of the performance of their priests, an established element of most complex organizations. By regularly surveying priests, administrative staff, and parishioners about their responses to, and satisfaction with, the priests with whom they have contact, dioceses are more likely to be alerted to questionable behavior that might have been undetected in the past. By sending a clear signal to all members of a parish community that their responses to individual priests are valuable, diocesan leaders open avenues of communication and gain early notice of problems.
- *Reduce the rewards* by providing alternate outlets for close bonds with others. Reducing the need for priests to develop social bonds with adolescents they are mentoring is likely to reduce the levels of abuse. Priests should have outlets to form social friendships and suitable bonds with age-appropriate persons.
- *Reduce provocations* by reducing the factors that may lead priests to abuse (such as stress). This improved situation can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as offering stress-reduction seminars after transitions into a new parish and requiring ongoing formation education. Currently, newly ordained priests may have only a few years of experience as associates before becoming pastors with responsibility for a parish. Providing more opportunities for the development of administrative and financial planning skills and more time to participate in priest support groups would decrease the likelihood of isolation and stress.
- *Remove excuses* through education about what types of behavior are and are not appropriate with minors. It is necessary to reduce the ability of priests to use techniques of neutralization, whereby they excuse and justify their behavior. It is critical not only to educate priests about the harm of abuse to victims but also to continue to do so once they have been ordained. Techniques of neutralization often develop over time and after periods of stress or other negative experiences in work and life; continued discourse about appropriate forms of closeness to others is critical throughout the life of the priest.

The church has taken many of the steps necessary to reduce opportunities for abuse, which should be maintained and continually evaluated for efficacy. Many individuals who enter the priesthood will have vulnerabilities that, if not addressed, may lead to a higher risk of abuse. It is important not only to address some of these vulnerabilities in seminary but also to offer post-ordination education, training, and evaluation. Knowing that most potential abusers will not be identified before the abuse occurs, and knowing that many priests have vulnerabilities that may lead to the commission of deviant behavior, it is important to reduce the opportunities for abuse to occur. The church has taken an important step in risk reduction through the safe environment education programs; post-ordination education and evaluation can also play a role in further reducing the possibility of abuse.

## Oversight and Accountability

The Catholic Church has undergone an organizational change regarding how it responds to sexual abuse of minors by priests. However, this change is not yet complete. Organizational change often takes decades and requires not only "buy in" from those involved in the organization but also that changes become routine. Such changes can be achieved only through transparency in reporting and dealing with sexual abuse; with continued transparency and accountability mechanisms in place, changes can become institutionalized.

In general, change must come from the leaders of organizations, and the case of the Catholic Church is no different. Pope Benedict XVI's recent and highly publicized support for accountability and transparency regarding abuse victims and hierarchical neglect should encourage Catholic dioceses to continue to complete their innovation in response to, and prevention of, sexual abuse of minors. Moving through the development of such innovation requires a number of steps, including:

- The acknowledgement of "a performance gap," leading to a specific and public timeline for the implementation of structures of accountability and transparency. The church has already taken this step through implementation of the Dallas *Charter* in 2002.
- The more efficient matching of diocesan agenda with accountability and transparency structures. The church has partially achieved this step by introducing the safe environment and audit programs and through gaining a better grasp of the problem by commissioning two studies about the sexual abuse problem.

- A more continuous redefining/restructuring of response mechanisms as dioceses reformulate accountability-transparency structures for their own geographical and subcultural contexts. This process must be ongoing, especially at the diocesan level in order to address local factors.
- As dioceses better implement structures encouraged by Pope Benedict XVI, they can be expected to engage in ongoing acts of clarifying their meaning to church members. This process must be ongoing and given serious attention since it is one that is difficult to achieve. Because cases of sexual abuse of minors continue to be reported and the community does not fully understand the temporal distribution of sexual abuse incidents over the last sixty years, it appears to some that sexual abuse is still at peak levels. This lag in understanding will require continued education of the community about these issues and about the church's commitment to respond to such reports.
- Finally, the transparency/accountability innovations of the Five Principles will achieve some degree of routinization; that is, they will have become institutionalized as part of the ordinary practice and culture of the diocese. This state of affairs has not yet been realized. To achieve this final stage of innovation, diocesan leaders must incorporate the response to sexual abuse as part of ordinary practice and culture.

## Directions for Further Research

The *Causes and Context* study results suggest a number of directions for further research that would contribute to our understanding of the harms of sexual abuse. The impact of the recognition and disclosure of sexual abuse, experienced while a minor but reported many years after it occurred, is not yet well understood. The individual needs of those victims of abuse are varied and have been met in differing degrees. The substantial impact of media on the reporting of sexual abuse may be specific to the subject or the current period in American history, or, alternatively, may be a typical result of publicity about any form of harm to or hazard for persons. The aspiration to organizational transparency with respect to deviance by the organization's members is a late twentieth-century movement: it is unclear how much development will take place. Finally, the effect of the financial impact of settlements and the results of litigation based on sexual abuse by priests will not be fully measureable until more time has passed.

## Conclusion

The Catholic Church has taken serious steps toward understanding and reducing the problem of sexual abuse of minors by priests. Diocesan leaders began these discussions as a body in the mid-1980s when the problem of sexual abuse was becoming known, but actions to address the behavior at that time were inconsistent. In 2002, at the height of discourse relative to the crisis, the bishops signed a charter committing to study the problem, address it, and implement policies to prevent it from occurring in the future. They are continuing through the model of organizational change and are on their way to implementing what are considered to be best practices in terms of education about abuse for potential victims, potential abusers, and potential guardians. The church has responded to the crisis, and as a result, a substantial decrease in the number of sexual abuse cases has come about at present. However, handling the crisis within the organization, with a lack of transparency to outsiders who also were trying to understand and respond to the crisis, led to cynicism about the church's response, even though the response was consistent with both the understanding of victimization at the time and also with typical organizational response to deviant behavior.

It is intended that this research, as presented in this report, will support the desire for long-standing change expressed by many victims and those affected by this crisis. It is also intended that the findings be useful to other organizations, for child sexual abuse is not a phenomenon unique to the Catholic Church. It is a pervasive and persistent problem that can often be found in organizations in which mentoring and nurturing relationships develop between adults and young people. It is hoped that this report will further assist other institutions in understanding this serious social problem and that many will undertake an assessment of their own policies in order to prevent abuse of the young people therein.

# Appendix A

# Glossary of Terms

**analysis of variance**
A statistical procedure for the comparison of the means of several groups that can identify significant differences.

**behaviorism**
A psychological orientation that focuses on human behaviors instead of abstract, unobservable processes such as thoughts or emotions. Behaviorists believe that an individual's environment shapes and conditions particular responses, and this complicated interplay between the environment and a person's instinctual or learned responses constitutes the basis of understanding human behavior.

**binary logistic regression analysis**
A statistical technique that examines how well certain variables predict an outcome. The analysis yields an odds ratio that represents the probability that a certain outcome can be predicted from knowledge of related variables.

**boundary problem**
Inability to maintain a clear and appropriate interpersonal (physical and emotional) distance between two individuals where such a separation is expected and necessary. Boundary problems can be mild, moderate, or severe.

**canon law**
The body of laws and regulations made by or adopted by ecclesiastical authority, for the government of the Christian organization and its members (source: www.newadvent.org/cathen/09056a.htm). The word *adopted* is used to highlight that there are certain elements in canon law borrowed by the church from civil law or from the writings of private individuals, who as such had no authority in ecclesiastical society. The canon law of the Roman Catholic Church was codified (organized into a single body of law) in 1917 and recodified in 1983. On both occasions, the code was promulgated by the pope.

**chi-square**
A statistical procedure that examines whether the distribution of observed frequencies (that is, the number of times a particular outcome occurs) differs significantly from the expected distribution of frequencies.

**cognitive distortions**
Distorted thoughts that allow individuals to alleviate their feelings of guilt and shame through excuses and justifications for their behavior.

**cohort**
A group of subjects defined by a common characteristic or trait. For the purposes of this study, clerics were divided into cohorts based on the year they were ordained.

**continent**
Exercising or characterized by restraint in relation to the desires or passions and especially to sexual desires.

**desistance**
In relation to criminal activity, the underlying processes that contribute to termination of offending behavior.

***Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)***
Currently in its fourth edition (with text revisions) and published by the American Psychiatric Association, the *DSM* contains classification and diagnostic criteria for mental disorders.

**diocese**
A geographical division of the Catholic Church over which a bishop exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

**disaggregated**
Individual measurements from distinct data sources or data levels. Aggregated data, in contrast, refers to the combination of measurements from several different sources or levels.

**eparchy**
A Catholic Church jurisdiction, similar to a diocese, of Eastern Rite Catholics living in the United States.

**ephebophile (sometimes referred to as hebophile)**
A clinical term (though not included in the *DSM-IV TR*) that denotes one who is sexually attracted to adolescent or postpubescent children. This is in contrast to the pedophile, who is sexually attracted to prepubescent children.

Some researchers and clinicians have further specified that the ephebophile is attracted to adolescent males.

**epidemiology**
The study of illness and disease in the population.

**etiological**
Pertaining to origins or causes.

**expectation maximization algorithm**
A statistical procedure that produces maximum likelihood estimates for specified features or characteristics of a population in a statistical model that involves latent variables (that is, variables that are not directly observed but derived from other variables that are directly measured).

**freestanding seminary**
A freestanding seminary provides within one institution an entire and integral program of the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral components of priestly formation.

**Gaussian distribution**
Also known as a "normal distribution," a bell-shaped distribution used in probability theory to describe a continuous variable that has values clustered around the mean.

**homosexual behavior (also called same-sex sexual behavior)**
Contact or noncontact sexual activity occurring between individuals of the same sex regardless of the individuals' sexual orientation or identity.

**homosexual identity**
An individual's characterization of the self as primarily attracted to individuals of the same sex regardless of overt sexual behavior or practices.

**incidence**
A descriptive statistic that counts the number of new events occurring in a specified time period.

**intimacy deficits**
The lack of intimate, meaningful interpersonal relationships and the consequent feelings of isolation and loneliness. This deficit can span all types of interpersonal relationships including familial relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships.

**laicization**
Conversion from an ecclesiastical to a lay condition. When imposed involuntarily as punishment for a canonical crime, the proper term is "dismissal from the clerical state."

**mean**
The average value of a set of numbers.

**median**
The midpoint in a set of numbers. In a median calculation, 50 percent of cases fall above and 50 percent of cases fall below the median.

**Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)**
A commonly used assessment instrument originally designed to measure an individual's degree of psychopathology. Recent research refers to the instrument as a personality assessment tool. The MMPI consists of ten clinical scales ("parent" scales), each of which have multiple subscales (Harris-Lingoes subscales), as well as supplemental scales.

**National Review Board (NRB)**
Lay group of Catholics established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2002. One purpose of the NRB was to commission studies on the "nature and scope" and "causes and context" of the sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests. The NRB also oversees audits of dioceses for compliance with the Dallas *Charter*. See www.usccb.org/ocyp/nrb.htm.

**ontological shift**
A term derived from the theology of ordination. The premise is that when a man is ordained, he undergoes a fundamental change of being. The term originated with St. Augustine and was used to explain why priests who had deserted the faith under persecution could be accepted back without being "reordained."

**ordained/ordination**
The sacramental rite by which a "sacred order" is conferred (diaconate, priesthood, episcopacy); the ceremony of consecration to the ministry.

**pedophilia**
A psychiatric disorder characterized by interest in prepubescent children. The current version of the *DSM* describes diagnostic criteria for this disorder as a constellation of fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a young child (often aged thirteen or younger). The individual in question must be primarily sexually attracted to prepubescent children and must be experiencing these fantasies, urges, or behaviors for at least six consecutive months. Additionally, the individual must have either acted on these fantasies or urges with a child, or the fantasies and urges are excessively distressing to the point where the individual's personal life or occupation is negatively affected.

**prevalence**
A descriptive statistic or estimate of the proportion of a statistical population affected or described by a specific characteristic.

**priest-abusers**
Priests who have allegations of abuse.

**priest council or senate**
A representative body of priests in each diocese that advises the bishop. These bodies were created as a result of the Second Vatican Council.

**psychoanalysis**
A psychological orientation based on Freud's early work with the unconscious. Concepts and treatment revolve around ego defense mechanisms, unconscious or unresolved conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, transference, repressed desires and memories, and abnormal childhood development.

**psychopathology**
The study of mental illness; may refer to the presence of mental disorders or individual symptoms of mental illness.

**psychopathy**
A personality disorder characterized by lack of empathy and remorse, superficial charm, shallow emotions and interpersonal relationships, grandiose sense of self, manipulation, and antisocial behavior.

**region (of the Catholic Church in the United States)**
One of fourteen geographical areas, or divisions, of the Catholic Church in the United States. These groupings are not provided for in canon law but are organized to provide representation on various USCCB bodies.

**reliability**
A statistical analytical measure that identifies data that are consistent, yielding the same or similar results in different clinical experiments or statistical trials.

**religious community/religious institutes of men**
A group that may include ordained clerics and/or non-ordained brothers who are professed members of a religious order and who live subject to the rules of that order. The term is used in this study to include members of religious orders or institutes as well as those who reside in cloistered communities, monasteries, and abbeys.

**restricted ministry/restricted faculties**
The limitation of a priest's ecclesiastical duties by a bishop or major superior.

**SCP**
situational crime prevention

**seminary**
An educational institute for men preparing for the holy orders. Major seminary, or theologate, is a post-collegiate institute for the spiritual, academic, and pastoral education of candidates for the priesthood. Focus in major seminary is on philosophical and theological teachings. Minor seminary is a prerequisite to major seminary, and focus is on required courses in the humanities and sciences.

**Servants of the Paraclete**
A religious congregation dedicated to serving troubled priests struggling with issues such as celibacy, alcohol abuse, and the perpetration of sexual abuse. Founded by Father Gerald Fitzgerald, the congregation opened several treatment centers for priests around the world. In the 1990s, the majority of its treatment facilities closed.

**sexual abuse of a minor**
As per the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, sexual abuse includes contacts or interactions between an individual under the age of eighteen (a minor) and an adult, when the minor is being used as an object of sexual gratification for the adult. A minor is considered abused whether or not this activity involves explicit force, genital or physical contact, or discernible harmful outcome, and regardless of who is the initiator of the contact.

**statistical significance**
The quality of a statistical result that is not likely to have occurred purely by chance. The probability that the result could be a result of random variation is given by the "p-value." In an experiment, if the statistical analysis yields a significant result, a conclusion is drawn that the outcome of the experiment is a result of a relationship between the factors of interest.

**stochastic process**
A statistical analytic technique that examines the probable course of certain random variables over time.

**sociometric**
Relating to the study of interpersonal relationships in populations, particularly the measurement of social preferences and attitudes within different groups.

**suspension (in canon law)**
Usually defined as a censure by which a cleric is deprived, entirely or partially, of the use of the power of orders, office, or benefice.

**statute of limitations**
A time limit to filing either a criminal or civil lawsuit. Both canon law and American civil law have limitation periods of various lengths for all claims except murder.

**t-tests**
A statistical analytic technique in which the means of two groups are compared to test for potentially significant differences.

**time series**
A type of statistical data collection in which variables of interest are measured at specified time intervals to investigate temporal stability or to forecast future trends. Lag variables (that is, variables that occurred prior) are often used to predict the variable(s) of interest.

**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)**
The USCCB is the organization of Catholic bishops for the United States. The USCCB in its current organizational structure was formed in 2001 as a combination of two groups: the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). It is led by an elected president, and the body of bishops meets in general assembly twice each year. Between meetings the work of the USCCB is carried out by committees of bishops and a permanent staff.

**universe**
The set of individuals, items, or data from which a statistical sample is taken.

**VAC**
victim assistance coordinator

**Vatican II or Second Vatican Council**
An ecumenical (worldwide) council of Catholic bishops convened by Pope John XXIII and continued after his death by Pope Paul VI. The council met in four sessions from 1963 to 1965 and made major changes in church teaching and practice, the most visible being authorization that Mass be celebrated in vernacular language.

**vicar for clergy**
A priest charged with managing priest personnel issues. In some dioceses called simply the priest personnel director.

## Appendix B

# List of Figures

## Appendix C

# List of Tables

# Notes

1 John Jay College, *The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950-2002* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004).

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