TYPOLOGIES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSERS

In the ongoing effort to develop an understanding of characteristics that would allow for classification of sex offenders into specific groups, many researchers have proposed typologies of offenders. These typologies, or classification schemes, utilize offender characteristics and/or victim-choice information, including interpersonal and situational characteristics, to outline a framework for analysis (e.g. Knight & Prentky, 1990; Simon et al., 1992; Schwartz, 1995).

THE FIXATED/REGRESSED TYPOLOGY

In the 1970s, researchers began to classify offenders based upon their motivation for committing sexually deviant behavior. One of the most basic classification schemes was proposed by Groth et al. (1982), who considered two issues: the degree to which the deviant sexual behavior is entrenched and the basis for psychological needs. With regard to the first issue, Groth proposed the fixated-regressed dichotomy of sex offending. This is not simply a dichotomous distinction, but rather exists on a continuum, as shown in Figure 1.

The fixated offender is characterized as having a persistent, continual and compulsive attraction to children. They are usually diagnosed with pedophilia, or recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies of at least six months in duration involving pre-pubescent children (American Psychiatric Association, 1999). Finkelhor (1984) classifies these offenders as exclusively involved with children and points out that they are usually not related to their victims and are attracted to children from adolescence. According to Holmes and Holmes (2002), the offender has not fully developed and shows characteristics of a child. In particular, fixated offenders do not develop past the point where they find children attractive and desirable. The fixated offender's actions are typically premeditated in nature and do not result from any perceived stress. In addition, this type of offender is often unable to attain any degree of psychosexual maturity and,

during adulthood, has had virtually no age-appropriate sexual relationships. The fixated offender is more likely to choose victims who are male and not related to him (Abel and Rouleau, 1990; Simon et al., 1992; West, 1987).

It is the fixated offenders who are most dangerous to society, constituting "a public health problem" (Abel, Lawry, Kalstrom et al., 1994) as well as a "criminal problem" (Freeman-Longo, 1996). These offenders develop relationships with vulnerable children (vulnerable in either an emotional or situational sense), and they typically recruit, groom and maintain the children for a continuing sexual relationship (Conte, 1991). The offenders delude themselves into believing they have established a caring, supportive role with the child and that the child is able to derive pleasure and educational experience from the interaction (Abel and Rouleau, 1995; Marshall and Barbaree, 1990b).

Fixated offenders are particularly dangerous because their offenses often go unreported, and subsequently, many have been convicted of far fewer offenses than they actually committed (Abel and Rouleau, 1990; Abel et al., 1994; Elliot, Browne and Kilcoyne, 1995). Offenders who abuse young boys are at the highest risk of recidivating and are also likely to commit the most offenses (Marques, Day, et al., 1994; Marques, Nelson et al., 1994). Abel and Rouleau's (1990) study of 561 male offenders who voluntarily sought treatment showed that the non-incestuous offenders in the sample who assaulted young boys averaged 281 offenses with an average of 150 victims. It is the strongly fixated offenders who have the most victims and the highest rate of recidivism and should consequently be considered the highest risk to the community.

The regressed offenders' behavior, on the other hand, usually emerges in adulthood and tends to be precipitated by external stressors. Gebhard et al. (1965) touched upon the role of external stressors as precursors to sexual offending. In this early classification system, the authors state that sexual

offending is the product of environmental stressors and disordered childhood relationships. These two variables intersect in such a manner as to render the offender powerless to control his behavior, thus culminating in an offensive act. At the time of the creation of this classification system, the authors were unable to specify childhood precursors to offending; however, there has been extensive research evaluating the nature of stressors. These stressors can be situational, such as unemployment, marital problems and substance abuse, or can related to negative affective states such as loneliness, stress, isolation or anxiety. These stressors, according to Schwartz (1995), often lead to poor self-confidence and low self-esteem, thereby undermining the abusers confidence in themselves as men. Sexual involvement with children is not fixed, but is instead often a temporary departure from the offender's attraction to adults (Simon et al., 1992). This type of offender is more likely to choose victims who are female.

Regressed offenders tend to victimize children to whom they have easy access, and as such, they often victimize their own children. It is difficult to establish accurate patterns of arousal for regressed offenders, and researchers (Freund, McKnight, Langevin et al., 1972; Quinsey, Steinman, Bergerson et al., 1975) have found that they have similar arousal patterns to "normal" men. Arousal

is generally measured through a penile plethysmograph (PPG) as the male is shown erotic material. The control group generally shows some level of arousal to photos of young children in erotic poses, and it is therefore difficult to differentiate between the two groups. This indicates that, as with rapists, the offender is not necessarily motivated by sexual needs alone.

A distinction is made between a sex-pressure offense and a sex-force offense. In a sex-pressure offense, the offender either entices or entraps his victim. In his pursuit for sexual gratification, the offender would prefer his victim to cooperate. However, should his victim resist, the offender usually will not follow through with the sexually abusive behavior.

In contrast, a sex-force offense is one wherein the offender uses either intimidation or physical aggression. When intimidation is used, the offender may be drawn to his victim primarily because the victim is easily overpowered and may present less resistance than an adult. The offender is using his victim purely as a means of sexual release. Those offenders who use physical aggression to overpower their victim, commonly known as "sadistic" offenders, must inflict pain in order to achieve sexual gratification. Fortunately, this type of offender is the rarest.

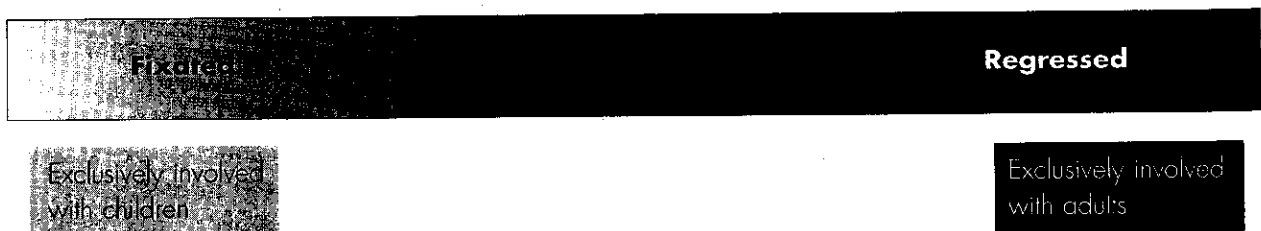Figure 3. The fixated and regressed offender continuum, showing that fixation is continuous, not dichotomous.

Fixated — Regressed

Exclusively involved with children

Exclusively involved with adults

Table 2. Characteristics of fixated and regressed offenders.

	MOTIVATION	PRIMARY VICTIM PREFERENCE	RISK OF REOFFENDING
FIXATED OFFENDER	• Having never developed an attraction to age-appropriate partners, the fixated offender has a persistent, continual, and compulsive attraction to children. • Behavior emerges in adolescence. • Offenses are premeditated in nature and do not stem from stressors. • Most likely to be diagnosed/characterized with pedophila/ephebophilia.	• Extrafamilial • Female (prepubescent), male (pubescent/adolescent) • Typically recruits vulnerable children and engages in extensive grooming in order to ensure the continuation of the abuse	• Very high risk of recidivism • The risk of recidivism increases according to the number of victims.
REGRESSED OFFENDER	• Offending stems from stressors in the individuals environment which undermine self esteem and confidence. • Behavior emerges in adulthood. • Offending is a departure from the offender's attraction to adults. • Similar to rapists, the offender is not necessarily motivated by sexual needs alone.	• Intrafamilial, acquaintance • Gender varies, depending on who is accessible. • Tend to victimize children to whom they have easy access	• Since they are not sexually fixated on children, they are at a lower risk of reoffending if treated. • Capable of feeling remorse for their actions

Simon et al. (1992) attempted to empirically validate the fixated-regressed typology. They sampled 136 consecutive cases of convicted offenders over a two-year period. They reviewed pre-sentence data that comprised a case history, MMPI results, presentence reports and police report data. Application of the criteria defining fixated versus regressed status yielded a unimodal and continuous distribution of offenders rather than the bimodal (fixated/regressed) distribution predicted by Groth's theory. Based on the results of this study, Simon et al. suggested that Groth's fixated/regressed dichotomy was unable to account for all child sexual abusers and recommended using a modification of Groth's

approach. This modification would entail the use of Groth's criteria along a continuum and rejecting the original dichotomy. The findings of Simon et al. identify a potentially causal link between general criminality, anti-social behavior and child molestation. These variables have been typically ignored by theories such as Groth's. A further contrast between Groth's classification system and Simon et al. is the suggested existence of at least three different age groups of child molesters (not two). The presence of these age clusters suggests that situational opportunities (i.e., marital discord and availability of a young, potential victim) may interact with the "stable" tendency of an individual with a past history of

antisocial acts. This leads to a potential increase in the risk of child sexual abuse. Thus, molesters of different age groups may differ in terms of the predisposition to molest as well as opportunity.

THE FBI TYPOLOGIES

The FBI also expanded on Groth's typologies to include seven subgroups of offenders: regressed, morally indiscriminate, sexually indiscriminate, inadequate (these are situational offenders); seductive, fixated and sadistic (these are preferential). Four of these subgroups (regressed, morally indiscriminate, sexually indiscriminate and inadequate) correspond to regressed offenders as described by

Groth and three subgroups (seduction, introverted and sadistic) correspond to Groth's description of fixated child molesters. The morally indiscriminate offender chooses his victim based on accessibility, whereas the sexually indiscriminate offender is driven by his desire to experiment with almost any type of sexual behavior. The inadequate offender chooses his victim because he is socially inept and likely to perceive his victim as a vulnerable object through which he may satisfy his sexual curiosity. Those offenders who utilize seduction will groom their victim. However, the introverted offender does not have the social skills necessary to seduce a victim, thus they molest very young children. Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of these offender types.

Table 3. The FBI typologies of situational and preferential offenders and their seven subgroups.

TYPE OF OFFENDER	CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENDERS
Situational offenders	
REGRESSED	Offenders have poor coping skills, target victims who are easily accessible, abuse children as a substitute for adult relationships.
MORALLY INDISCRIMINATE	Offenders do not prefer children over adults and tend to use children (or anyone accessible) for their own interests (sexual and otherwise).
SEXUALLY INDISCRIMINATE	Offenders are mainly interested in sexual experimentation, and abuse children out of boredom.
INADEQUATE	Offenders are social misfits who are insecure, have low self-esteem, and see relationships with children as their only sexual outlet.
Preferential offenders	
SEDUCTIVE	Offenders "court" children and give them much affection, love, gifts, and enticements in order to carry on a "relationship."
FIXATED	Offenders have poor psychosexual development, desire affection from children, and are compulsively attracted to children.
SADISTIC	Offenders are aggressive, sexually excited by violence, target stranger victims, and are extremely dangerous.

Source: Holmes and Holmes (1996)

THE MTC:CM3 TYPOLOGY

In their attempt to classify child molesters, Knight and Prentky (1990) employed deductive-rational and inductive-empirical research strategies (simultaneously) to develop multidimensional typologies of offenders on two axes. Axis I addresses the degree to which an offender is fixated with children and is further broken down to consider the offender's level of social competence. Axis II evaluates the amount of contact an offender has with children and is analyzed according to the meaning (interpersonal or sexual) of that contact. This axis further evaluates the amount and type of physical injury involved in the contact. Through this system, which is known as the Massachusetts Treatment Center: Child Molester Typology, versions 3 [MTC:CM3], each offender is assigned a separate Axis I and Axis II typology. Knight and Prentky state that this classification system has already demonstrated reasonable reliability and consistent ties to distinctive developmental antecedents. In addition, the preliminary results of a 25-year recidivism study of offenders conducted by the authors indicate that aspects of this system have important prognostic implications.

In 2001, Looman et al. attempted to replicate Knight and Prentky's research strategies with 109 child molesters in Canada. These child molesters were classified in accordance with the MTC:CM3 typology. Groups of molesters were compared on a number of meaningful variables, such as number of victims and sexual deviance. Results showed that it is possible to apply the MTC:CM3 child molester typology in a population outside of Massachusetts. All molesters, with the exception of the sadistic types, were classified into all subgroups with an acceptable level of reliability. The authors claim that this exception may be due to the low number of offenders who fell into these subgroups rather than difficulties with the classification system. Differences were found between groups on the phallometric assessments, with the high fixation-low social competence group having highest levels of deviance on the slide assessment for Axis I. Interestingly, the average deviance indices for all four levels of Axis I indicated at least a failure to differentiate appropriate from inappropriate stimuli in terms of sexual responding; however, the high fixation-low social competence group was the only one that demonstrated a clear sexual preference for children. The high fixation-low social competence group was also distinguished by their preferences for male victims and their higher levels of self-reported childhood sexual abuse. On Axis II, the low contact-high injury offenders displayed more deviant arousal on the female's sexual violence assessment than other groups. These offenders were also more intrusive in their offending and were more likely to use physical force. Although most Axis II groupings were equally likely to choose male as well as female victims, the exploitative group had a clear preference for female victims. Differences were not found for groups when rates of sexual and violent recidivism were examined although it was revealed that sadistic offenders committed a great number of violent offenses. Preferential child molesters (i.e., those in high fixation and high contact categories) were found to be more likely to exhibit deviant arousal, to have greater numbers of victims and to cause little physical harm. They were also more likely to commit new sexual offenses although this difference was not significant. Given that deviant sexual arousal is one of the best predictors of sexual recidivism, these individuals present as being higher risk and having higher treatment needs. Low contact-high injury offenders also had a greater number of victims and were more likely to display deviant arousal. They were more likely to target strangers, were more intrusive in their offending and were more likely to cause serious physical harm to their victims. With regard to implications for risk assessment, sadistic offenders had a greater number of violent offenses, indicating that these offenders may be at higher risk for violent nonsexual offenses. Also, low social competence offenders were more likely to reoffend in a nonsexual, nonviolent manner.

Table 4. MTC: CM3 classification of child molesters.

AXIS	DESCRIPTION OF AXIS MEASUREMENT
Axis I	• Assesses the extent to which the offender is fixated with children (on a continuum) • Measures the level of social competence of the offender
Axis II	• Assesses the amount of contact the offender has with children (e.g., exclusively involved with extrafamilial children, abuses own children) • Meaning of the contact (sexual and interpersonal) • Amount and type of physical injury involved in the contact (including threats and use of force)

OTHER TYPOLOGIES

Other researchers have used various forms of data in their attempt to differentiate types of child molesters. Baxter et al. (1984) evaluated the criminal records, personal histories, social-sexual competence and physiological responses to erotic stimuli of incarcerated pedophiles, ephebophiles (those individuals with recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies about adolescents) and rapists. Results indicated that there were significant differences among the groups in criminal and personal background. Pedophiles tended to be older, more poorly educated, more likely to be unmarried and less frequently involved in nonsexual crime. Social and social-sexual inadequacy was common to all groups as reflected by under-assertiveness, low self-esteem and negative attitudes.

Baxter et al.'s data provide a degree of support for the view of the pedophile as a sexual deviate. Pedophiles were somewhat older than other subjects and were more likely to be repetitive sexual offenders, with less nonsexual criminal involvement than rapists or ephebophiles. They were more likely to exhibit deviant sexual arousal, inasmuch as they responded much more to children than non-pedophilic subjects. However, the pedophiles did not so much show an erotic preference for children as display a failure to either inhibit responding to children or to show a clear erotic preference for adults. Non-pedophilic subjects showed an attenuated response to children relative to adults while pedophiles did not. Although the findings of the present study are consistent with earlier reports that many pedophiles are married and have children of their own, they conflict with the reports indicating that pedophiles tend to exhibit strong sexual preferences for children. The authors suggest that this may be a result of the rather small sample from which the present data were obtained. Overall, choice of victim was clearly related only to sexual response patterns, and then only in the case of a prepubescent victim. Pedophiles and homosexual offenders responded more to male children than did heterosexual offenders.

Simkins (1993) conducted an exploratory investigation, the purpose of which was to compare sexually repressed and non-repressed child molesters on therapy progress and on a battery of personality and research instruments. From information obtained on psychosexual histories, 68 child molesters were categorized as repressed, non-repressed or exploitive. Results indicated that significantly larger portions of therapy failures were sexually repressed. There were also significant differences between repressed and non-repressed offenders on some of the special research scales of the MMPI, the Burt Rape Myth Scales, some of the Multiphasic Sexual Inventory Scales and Mosher's Sex Guilt Scale. Differences on these measures are consistent with the characteristics of intrafamilial child molesters reported in the clinical and research literature. The results of this investigation are, however, quite speculative due to the small sample size of the repressed group. It is also conceivable that differences in treatment effectiveness between repressed and non-

repressed groups may be attributed to differences in social skills rather than to sexual repression.

Danni et al. (2002) conducted a study for the purpose of differentiating three types of child sexual offenders–pedophiles, ephebophiles and incest offenders. In this study, 168 convicted sex offenders participated. Data was gathered from the pre-sentence investigation reports, which were used by the court for sentencing proceedings. Eight independent variables were found to significantly discriminate among the three types of sex offenders almost 90% of the time. These variables were: sexually victimized as a child, pre-pubertal victim, seduction motive, age-appropriate relationships, stress, own child as victim, social facade and anger. Based on these results, the authors concluded that pedophiles are more likely to have experienced sexual victimization as a child, to prefer pre-pubertal sex partners and to be motivated to seduce their victims than non-pedophiles. The findings also illustrate that ephebophiles are more likely to have experienced external stress than non-ephebophiles, while incest offenders are more likely to have a higher level of perceived entitlement than non-incest offenders. Ephebophiles were correctly classified in 92.86% of the cases and incest offenders were classified correctly in 100% of the cases. However, pedophiles were the most difficult to correctly classify (84.06%). The authors attribute this phenomenon to the fact that pedophiles' victims are typically young and are not always able to effectively verbalize or convey the things that happen to them. The forms of seduction utilized by the offender may confuse the victims. The authors conclude that the primary characteristic of pedophilia is the offender's own childhood sexual victimization. The unwillingness to disclose that information makes it less likely that a pedophile will be discovered. They purport that this manipulative behavior is harder to detect.

Laws et al. (2000) conducted a study that examined the extent to which the use of multiple measures of pedophilic interest improved on the diagnostic accuracy of any single measure. One hundred twenty-four males voluntarily consented to participate in an outpatient evaluation and treatment program for child molesters. Of these, 56% were referred from the Florida Department of Corrections, 31% were referred from private prac-

titioners, mental health clinics or other professionals (i.e., attorneys), and 13% were self-reported. All participants admitted to either a sexual attraction to children or to some inappropriate sexual activity with a child. The average age of the participants was 36.08 years (range = 18-74). Eighty-seven percent were Caucasian, 8% were African American and 5% were Hispanic. About 26% were married or involved in a common-law relationship, 28% were separated or divorced and 46% had never married. Socioeconomic status based on annual income showed that 14% were middle class, 20% were lower middle class and 66% were lower class. Fifty-two men did not participate in the research due to various reasons, including a) bisexual child molesters were excluded, b) anyone who did not complete all three measures were excluded and c) the attrition rate for the outpatient treatment project was quite high. The remaining 72 child molesters completed a self-report card-sort measure of sexual interest, as well as direct monitoring of penile response (using the PPG) when presented with erotic slides or audio material. The reliability of all measures was high. All three measures used to assess pedophilic interest (i.e., card-sort, PPG slides, PPG audio) significantly differentiated boy-object and girl-object child molesters. The card-sort measure showed the greatest classification accuracy and was the only measure to significantly improve accuracy once the other two modalities were considered. Consideration of all three measures proved classification accuracy (91.7%) greater than any single measure.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CLERGY OFFENDERS

Some researchers claim that clergy offenders are truly unique in comparison to offenders within the general population (Kafka, 2004). This is a theory that has been illustrated by a number of researchers. Camargo (1997) concluded that clergy offenders were unique based upon their status as Diocesan priests and the combination of passivity (with the absence of overt hostility), test-taking styles which present the self as being free of major symptoms, low anxiety and high relative gregariousness. Haywood et al. (1996) found that non-cleric offenders reported more psychopathology as measured by the MMPI-1 and that, contrary to

expectations, there were no differences concerning a history of childhood sexual abuse between clergy and non-clergy offenders. These findings contrast with those of Langevin et al. (2000) who concluded that while the clergy offenders in their sample were similar to the matched group of non-clergy offenders, 70.8% were sexually deviant and characterized as homosexual pedophiles with courtship disorder. Few of the participants in either group had been sexually abused as children. None of the clergy participants were diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder, but they did exhibit symptoms of substance abuse.

Certain personality characteristics have also been shown to be unique to clergy offenders. Fones et al. (1999) studied the sexual struggles of 19 clergymen and found that they grappled with loneliness, masturbation conflicts, and a wish to be known beyond their role by others. Through a review of the available literature, Plante (1996) maintains that clergy offenders display shyness, loneliness, and passivity. Their MMPI scores illustrate the presence of depression, authority concerns, and addiction problems while Rorschach results indicated greater affect constriction than normal. Plante, et al. (1996) found that the presence of over-controlled hostility differentiated clergy offenders from non-offending priests. The authors found that the sexually abusive clergy tended to have higher verbal IQ scores than the control group. While this finding showed slight significance, it was nullified when age was taken into account. It is postulated that those priests who sexually offend may in fact be acting out their chronically over-controlled anger and aggression. Ruzicka (1997) studied 10 convicted clergy offenders (seven of which were either Catholic priests or religious brothers) and concluded that the subjects were well educated, of average to above-average intelligence, and had a limited history of substance abuse. Irons and Laaser (1994) studied a sample of 25 male clergy who had been referred for sexual misconduct, primarily with adults. They came from backgrounds "characterized by rigidity and dysfunction with themes of abuse, had little insight into these areas, had insufficient training in the issue of transference/counter transference, had virtually no training or education concerning sexual abuse, domestic violence, addictive disease, or healthy professional boundaries, and failed to appreciate how their history of trauma affected their professional life." Most of the individuals in the sample met the diagnosis for personality disorders with features of antisocial/psychopathic traits or paranoid, sadistic, or schizoid features. The results also illustrate that narcissistic and dependant traits clustered and modeled together in an exploitive manner.

What is interesting to note is the personality functioning of non-offending priests. In a review of research conducted after *Vatican II*, Doyle (2003) cites the unpublished work of Baars and Terruwe (1971), which reveals that 20-25% of the priests had serious psychiatric difficulties while 60-70% suffered from emotional immaturity. The authors assert that some of the priests experienced psychological disturbances developed in childhood whereas others developed difficulties while in the seminary. These results are consistent with the findings of Kennedy (1972), who concluded that 6% of priests were psychologically and emotionally developed, 29% were still developing, 57% were underdeveloped, and 8% were maldeveloped. Those who were underdeveloped were more comfortable with teenagers, had few friends their own age, and used intellectualization as a coping device. As cited by Scheper-Hughes (1998), Kennedy ascertains that "The vows of poverty and obedience infantilize the adult male, making him dependant on a series of father figures at a time when they should be in control of their own lives and responsible for the lives of children and young people. The vow of celibacy takes from the adult a main vehicle for the expression of intimate social relations. The end result is chronic infantilization."