

Deviant Behavior

ISSN: 0163-9625 (Print) 1521-0456 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/udbh20

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To cite this article: Ryan Alexander & Michael L. Birzer (2016) Changing Trajectory: An Integrated Theoretical View of the Roman Catholic Priest Sex Abuse Scandal, Deviant Behavior, 37:9, 977-988, DOI: 10.1080/01639625.2016.1147814

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1147814

Published online: 28 Apr 2016.

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DEVIANT BEHAVIOR
2016, VOL. 37, NO. 9, 977–988
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1147814

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Changing Trajectory: An Integrated Theoretical View of the Roman Catholic Priest Sex Abuse Scandal

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ABSTRACT

The sexual abuse of children by Roman Catholic priests across the United States is a direct result of access to children, and that access changes across the life-course of individual priests. Turning points affect not only an individual priest's motivation to commit the crime, but also the suitability of a target. Guardianship of the victim and the surveillance of the offender play a salient role in facilitating the opportunity for the sexual assault of a child. Two criminological theories are germane to how contextual elements of the abusive situation can fluctuate across the life course: (1) Life Course Theory and (2) Routine Activity Theory.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 12 September 2014
Accepted 10 August 2015

Introduction

On August 2, 2012, forty-six-year-old Fr. Shawn Ratigan, A Roman Catholic priest assigned to the Kansas City–St. Joseph, Missouri diocese plead guilty to four counts of producing child pornography and one count of attempting to produce child pornography. He was initially charged with thirteen counts of sexual exploitation of children after a computer technician found images of both partially clothed and nude children on his computer. In a plea agreement, prosecutors dropped eight counts in exchange for a guilty plea on the remaining counts. During the court proceeding, Fr. Ratigan admitted to taking inappropriate pictures of youth who were between the ages of two and twelve at several locations including a church choir loft. The priest was subsequently sentenced to 50 years in federal prison for his crimes.

This case does not end with Fr. Ratigan but weaves it way up the church's hierarchy to the bishop of the Kansas City–St. Joseph dioceses, Robert Finn. Similar to many other cases where Roman Catholic priests have been suspected of sex crimes against young children, Bishop Finn and other church officials had knowledge of the photos on Fr. Ratigan's computer but failed to notify police authorities for several months. When the computer images were uncovered, Fr. Ratigan attempted suicide. Shortly after Fr. Ratigan's suicide attempt, Bishop Finn reassigned him to live in a convent and ordered him to stay away from children. Father Ratigan, however, continued to attend church events and take lewd pictures of girls for several more months until he was reported to police authorities. Bishop Finn was charged with failure to notify law enforcement of suspected child abuse. He was found guilty in a bench trial by a judge on one of the two counts. Bishop Finn was sentenced to two years of probation. What is salient here is the fact that Bishop Finn became the highest ranking American Catholic Church official to be convicted in the child sex abuse scandal. This instance is not unique and demonstrates a need to recognize that tacit responses to allegations of child sexual abuse or obvious neglect by the church hierarchy to report abuse helps foster an environment whereby opportunities to abuse children arise and instances of abuse are seen as tolerated. This implicit permissibility can allow offenders to blur the link between their behavior and harm done to young victims (Wortley and Smallbone 2006).

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The Kansas City–St. Joseph Dioceses case is merely one of a plethora of cases that have surfaced across the United States in recent years. The *New York Times* (2012) reported that the sex abuse scandal in the church has cost the American Roman Catholic Church approximately $2 billion in settlements. Terry (2008) reported that 4,392 priests had allegations of sexual abuse levied against them and 10,667 victims reported abuse. Polls have revealed that American Catholics believe that the church has grossly mishandled the sex abuse crimes committed by priests (Jost 2002). In Boston shortly after the sex abuse scandal was revealed, 75% of Boston Catholics thought that the cardinal of the archdiocese should resign 71% reported that Cardinal Law had done a poor job handling the crisis, while 51% of Boston Catholics reported that they had lost faith in church as an institution (Paulson 2002). A 2004, ABC News/Washington Post poll underscored the harm done to the credibility of the Catholic Church when it was reported that 58% of Americans see a continued cover-up in the manner in which the church had handled sex abuser priests, and only 4 in 10 of respondents surveyed believe the church can be trusted to handle this issue in the future (Sussman 2004). These revelations have generated a number of negative consequences not only for victims but also for churches more generally (Piquero et al. 2008).

It has only been since about 2002 that priest sex crimes against young children began to receive any significant media attention. The spotlight on the sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church was primarily due to the *Boston Globe*'s ground breaking reporting investigation into the sex abuses of minors by priests within the Boston Arch Dioceses (Carroll et al. 2002). Likewise, the sex abuse scandal has only recently begun to attract significant scholarly treatment, and attempts to study sex abuse crimes committed by priests through a criminological lens have been scant.

In this article we argue that the sexual abuse of children by Roman Catholic priests across the United States is a direct result of access to children, and that access changes across the life-course of individual priests. These turning points affect not only an individual priest's motivation to commit the crime, but also how they target a specific child. The guardianship of the potential victim or surveillance of the offender plays a salient role in facilitating the opportunity for the sexual assault of a child. We discuss two criminological theories that are germane to how the motivation of priests to sexually abuse children can fluctuate across the life course: (1) Life Course Theory and (2) Routine Activity Theory. Elements of Situational Crime Prevention are used to supplement to the abusive event. The article concludes with a discussion of specific protocol on how the church could more effectively address abusing priests.

Summary of the problem

The U.S. Catholic Church continues to grapple with a series of sex crimes committed by priests against children. Terry (2008) reported findings that showed 4,392 Catholic priests incurred sexual abuse allegations between 1950 to 2002 and also that 10,667 victims made allegations of sexual abuse. In response to these incidences and other revelations concerning child sexual abuse the Catholic Church was mandated as a reporter in cases of suspected abuse of a minor. Prior to mandated reporting laws, many abuses in the church went unreported to police authorities and were handled in secret by the church. Despite the lack of reporting and missing documents, the numbers of cases that have been reported are disconcerting. Hitchens (2007:51) described the sex abuse scandal that has engulfed the Roman Catholic Church as one where:

> The Vatican, and a vast network of dioceses has in the past decade alone been forced to admit complicity in a huge racket of child rape and child torture, … in which known pederasts and sadists were shielded from the law and reassigned to parishes where the pickings of the innocent and defenseless were often even richer.

One report revealed that between 1983 and 1987 more than 200 Roman Catholic priests or religious brothers were reported to the Vatican Embassy for sexually abusing children of which most were teenage boys (Berry 2002). Sullivan and Beech (2002) added context to this report when they commented: "this averaged out to nearly one accusation a week in those 4 years alone and that by

1992 it was estimated to have cost the church $400 million in settlements to victims and treatment of the perpetrators" (Sullivan and Beech 2002:160). Plante (2003) reported that when the initial abuse scandal began to receive increased media attention in 2002, 325 Catholic priests and bishops experienced credible accusations of sexually abusing children. Sipe (1995, 1999) estimated that 2% of priests are pedophiles, and 4% are ephebophiles. Plante (2003) asserted that, based on Sipe's figures, an alarming 2,700 of 46,000 active Catholic priests in the United States have had sex with minors and that's not taking into account retired priests.

Some have correctly pointed out that sexual abuse of minors is not just a problem in the Roman Catholic Church, and that this problem has affected secular organizations and other faith traditions too (Burkett and Bruni 1993; Ruzicka 1997). The sex abuse scandal in the Catholic Church, however, is arguably more pronounced due to the way priest abusers were handled by church leaders. Moreover, it is perhaps slightly more widespread when compared to other professions both religious and secular.

In many cases upon learning of a suspected abuser priest, Catholic bishops would quietly transfer him to another unsuspecting parish. If a victim's family pushed the matter, the abuser priest would typically be placed on sick leave for a period of time, and then transferred to another parish. The victims were then offered a financial settlement with the stipulation that the abuse incident had to remain a secret and if revealed, the dioceses reserved the right to have the money forfeited back to them (Carroll et al. 2002).

The secrecy centering on how many bishops handled sex abuse cases involving priests, and the, at times, unwillingness to disclose pertinent documents to police authorities about abuser priests has left some to compare the Catholic Church's handling of these incidents with mafia-like criminal organizations. For example, Former Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating, who in 2003, chaired the National Lay Review Board, which was formed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for the purpose of studying the scope and causes of the sex abuse scandal, compared the actions of some Catholic bishops to those secretive ways of "La Cosa Nostra," the American branch of the Mafia (Goodstein 2003). Governor Keating was critical of those bishops who had transferred abusing priests and publically stated that those bishops should resign. Specifically, he singled out Los Angeles Cardinal Roger M. Mahony for a reluctance to disclose church documents to a grand jury investigating the sexual abuse of children by priests. Many bishops resented the idea of having a lay board auditing and acting as oversight in priest abuse cases because they believed that they could audit themselves (Frawley-O'Dea 2007).

As noted above, in 2002, the *Boston Globe* broke the story of priest sex abusers in the Boston Archdioceses. The *Globe*'s story broke with detailed reporting into decades-long abuses of more than 130 children by Fr. John Geoghan. It was revealed that the Archdiocese of Boston had known about the Fr. Geoghan's abuse of children for many years and did very little to stop it. Within days after the *Boston Globe* broke the sex abuse story, Cardinal Bernard Law who at the time was cardinal of the Boston Archdioceses apologized to Geoghan's victims during a press conference and announced the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy. In the following days and weeks, the *Globe* published new articles daily on sex abuses within the church. The *Boston Globe* exposed hundreds of cases of abuse and church cover-ups as scores of new victims came forward (Doyle 2012). Subsequent to the sex abuse scandal being exposed in Boston, Cardinal Law stepped down from his post and was reassigned to a position at the Vatican.

In the two years following the *Globe*'s ground breaking reporting of massive sex abuses and cover up in the Boston Dioceses, Catholic bishops in the United States had removed about 400 allegedly abusive priests and deacons from ministry. The church increasingly received criticism, which centered on the manner that the church handled abuser priests. A lay panel formed by the Boston Archdioceses found that Boston church officials had failed to properly screen and train candidates for the priesthood, and that some bishops had failed to respond to what was termed the multitude of preventable acts of abuse (Paulson 2004). In the end, more than 800 individuals accused 248 Boston Archdioceses priests of abusing them as children.

The sex abuse of children by Catholic clergy is not isolated to only Boston. The sexual abuses of children by Catholic clergy have been reported in scores of dioceses across the United States. For example, recently in Philadelphia, a high ranking church official, Monsignor William Lynn, was

sentenced to 3–6 years in state prison for transferring sex abusing priests from parish to parish where they would abuse children again. Monsignor Lynn was convicted for covering up sex abuse reports. The manner in which the Philadelphia Archdioceses handled the abuse reports was saliently similar to other dioceses handling of abusing priests, by cover up, and transferring the priests to unsuspecting parishes. At Monsignor Lynn's trial, numerous witnesses testified that they were sexually abused by priests who had been allowed to serve in their parishes even after being suspected or accused of abuse (Hurdle and Eckholm 2012).

The handling of the sex abuse scandal by Catholic Church leaders is troubling. A theme that readily emerged in the sex abuse crisis centers on the fact that the bishops handled the allegations in a fairly uniform manner. This included ensuring the victims' families that the problem had been taken care of when in reality the bishops only transferred the abuser priest to another parish. In some cases the offending priest was placed on sick leave for a short period time and sent for treatment. Some bishops engaged in victim blaming while others responded to abuse allegations as attacks on the church. There were cash settlements conducted in secret with victims who had come forward to speak of their victimizations. In many settlements there was always an implicit understanding, the victims must keep the abuse strictly confidential or forfeit the settlement back to the church (Berry 1992; Frawley-O'Dea 2007; Keenan 2011).

It has only been in recent years that the church made a good faith effort in responding to the abuse allegations by making significant changes in its disciplinary procedures. As cases of offending priests have unfolded, it is clear that the issue is more than just isolated incidents of a few rouge priest sex offenders. Within the very institution of the Catholic Church there appears to be a sharp divide which pits those who conform to a more traditional idea of protecting bishops and priests above all against those who advocate for transparency and openness.

John Jay College Report

In 2011, a group of researchers at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice released their report on the Catholic Church sex abuse scandal (Terry et al., 2011). The report is touted as being the most current and comprehensive analysis of the Roman Catholic sex abuse scandal in the United States. The objective of the John Jay study was to investigate the causes and context of the phenomenon of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests in the United States between 1950 and 2010.

In brief, the John Jay College study indicated that there was no single cause of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic priests. The report stated that Catholic clergy abuse of children in the church is a historical problem, but that the majority of cases occurred between the 1960s and the mid-1980s. The study found that the increased frequency of abuse in the 1960s and 1970s was consistent with the patterns of increased deviance of society during that time. The report also revealed that social influences intersected with vulnerabilities of individual priests whose preparation for a life of celibacy was inadequate at that time. The John Jay Report also noted that neither celibacy nor homosexuality was the cause of the abuse, and that priest candidates who would later abuse could not be distinguished by psychological test data, developmental and sexual history data, intelligence data, or experience in priesthood. Moreover, the report stated that the development of human formation components of seminary preparation for priesthood is associated with the continued low levels of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests in the United States.

Sex offenders

Research has demonstrated that a trend toward harsher, penal-based punishment for sex offenders is especially pronounced in the United States (Petrunik and Deutschmann 2008). Yet, a recurring theme continues to be a relatively uninformed public, especially concerning those whom target children and how sexual abuse of children typically occurs. Much public perception about sex offender recruitment is based on well-publicized cases such as that of Polly Klaas, Megan Kanka, Elizabeth Smart, and Jaycee

Dugard, where strangers kidnap their victims and sometimes kill them. The Catholic Church has also not escaped its share of media coverage concerning child sexual abuse either. Those accused of such crimes while priests have led many to be mistakenly characterized as pedophile priests. However, the actual number of priests diagnosed as such is relatively low and is in proportion to the general population of sex offenders (Terry et al. 2011).

The vast majority of child sexual assault cases are perpetrated by someone the child knows and those cases where a child is abused often does not result in a homicide. The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering and Tracking (2014) reported that only 10% of perpetrators of child sexual assault are strangers to the victim. Additionally, a separate Bureau of Justice Statistics report calculated that in 86% of child sex abuse cases the victim knew the perpetrator and that as the victim's age decreased the likelihood the offender was a family member or other acquaintance increased (Snyder 2000). Sample (2006) found that only 3% of arrests including a sex offense included a charge of homicide, and a homicide victim in sexual assault cases was much more likely to be an adult than a child. The same study noted that sex offenders had a relatively low recidivism rate (2.9%) when compared to other categories of offenders such as murderers (5.7%), burglars (5.4%), and larceny offenders (4.2%). Thus the chances of a stranger committing the sexual assault of a child are small and the chances that a child will be killed during that assault are even smaller.

Sexual abuse is more likely to take place in locations that a child is familiar with (Wortley and Smallbone 2006; Snyder 2000; Elliot, Brown,, and Kilcoyne 1995). Due to the usual nature of the relationship between victim and perpetrator there is no need for overt physical force or forced removal to another area in order for the offense to occur. The offender, usually a trusted other, offends at their home or the victim's home (when home is not shared by both parties) (Beauregard, Lussier, and Proulx 2005), the same holds true for child victims of clergy abuse (Terry et al. 2011).

Most child sexual offenders are neither diagnosed pedophiles nor do they often rise to the legal level of sexually violent predators (Seto 2008; Marshall and Barbaree 1990). The sexual recidivism rate for the sex offender population as a whole is likewise relatively small. A meta-analysis of 61 studies pertaining to sexual abuse recidivism involving over 23,000 participants revealed that sexual recidivism was 13.4% (Hanson and Bussiere 1998). Additionally, Harris and Hanson (2004) found sexual re-offense rates after 5 years to be 15% and after ten years to be 20%. Thus, very few sex offenders are diagnosed as pedophiles, and when examining the entire population of offenders one realizes that few of those convicted of a sexual offense continue committing future sex offenses.

Child sexual abuse is much more often perpetrated by people that the victim is familiar with as opposed to a stranger. The likelihood of physical force or murder is markedly diminished as the victim's age decreases (Proulx and Beauregard 2009). Finally, those that do commit sexual offenses against children are very unlikely to be diagnosed pedophiles or rise to the level of sexual predator. The same proclivities of the general sex offending population are shared by those whom offended while in the priesthood (Terry et al. 2011).

General Life Course Theory

Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) strategies operate within the constellation of the Life Course Perspective (LCP) through Routine Activities Theory (RAT). Schreck, Wright, and Miller (2002) note the difference between "predisposing" (i.e., structural) and "precipitating" (i.e., situational) factors in exposure to risk. In other words, there are structural factors within the life course such as work or marriage that predispose more immediate factors such as offender motivation, perception of suitable targets, and positioning of capable guardianship for both offender and potential victims (Cohen and Felson 1979), which simultaneously influence precipitating environmental criminogenic factors like effort to complete the crime, risk and reward perceptions, situational prompts, and individual as well as institutional permissibility (Wortley and Smallbone 2006). In essence these large structural factors set the stage or allow for more immediate precipitating factors to potentially occur.

There are two main concepts in LCP. The first is a recognition that every person has a trajectory or line of development whereby potential pathways or future development are likely to occur due to prior happenings, specifically when considering sexual offending onset, persistence, and desistence are important. Trajectories are long term patterns of behavior such as marriage, work, or criminality (Sampson and Laub 1990). Trajectories are subject to change as an accumulation of factors occur trajectories relating to criminal behavior, specifically sexual offending can initiate, persist, or influence desistence. Life course theory posits a strong connection between childhood events and experiences in adulthood (Sampson and Laub 2005). Seto (2008) advises that early childhood experiences can have a cumulative effect on future sexual offending. The trajectories of sex offenders have been the subject of many studies without explicitly calling the work "trajectory" of offenders (Hanson and Morton-Bourgon 2005; Hanson, Morton, and Harris 2003).

A second concept is the notion of transitions. Transitions are marked by specific life events such as obtaining a job or starting a marriage. These changes in state are abrupt and noticeable (Elder 1985). These consist of not only changes in state for the person but also recognition by society as a change in status. This change in status signals a change in role, adoption of the role by the person who changes behavior in order to conform to social expectations of that role. When considering the impact of transitory periods for sex offenders the transition to young adulthood usually brings with it new social institutions not experienced before with new social expectations, like starting a career or a family. Ward and Siegert (2008) found that transition periods such as the transition experienced during adolescence is a particularly important time when attitudes and justifications for offending solidify. Thus, age graded theory emphasizes informal social controls that change as people age. Sampson and Laub (2005) argue that all stages of the life course matter concerning persistence and desistence of criminal behavior and that "turning points" are crucial for understanding processes of adult change. Literature examining the etiology of pedophilia has touched on changes, disruptions, or turning points as a risk factor for future sex offending (Seto 2008; Marshall and Barbaree 1990).

The social structural aspect of LCP, specifically social status expectations such as employee or spouse carry with it social expectations of behavior whereby individual roles are adopted and status impacts motivation to commit crime, target suitability, victim as well as offender guardianship. Those three elements: offender motivation, target suitability, and guardianship are major components of RAT (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Sampson and Laub (2005:41) advised the following concerning the relationship that Routine Activities Theory and the Life Course Perspective share: "It is therefore at least arguable that persistent offending and dissonance from crime can be explained by a general age graded theory of any form of social control that emphasizes social ties, routine activities, and human agency."

LCP relies on the concept of situated choice and is central to the connection between human agency or choice and more structural notions of turning points (Sampson and Laub 2005). In essence, these turning points, such as marriage or employment, operate as structure that defines or helps shape motivation to offend, target suitability, and guardianship for both potential victim and offender. Sampson and Laub (2005) posit that one important structural turning point is that as new situations or transitions change individual structure and likewise alter individual routine activities.

SCP and RAT share many similarities (Smallbone and Wortley 2006). They both use ecological aspects to explain facilitation of criminal behavior (Smallbone and Wortly 2006; Cohen and Felson 1979). However, SCP and RAT are connected on a more nuanced level.

The main premise of SCP centers on the immediate aspects of the environment that encourage or permit crime to occur. The basic aspect contends all crimes are the result of the interaction between the characteristics of the actor (i.e., psychological, interpersonal abilities, and psychosexual proclivities) in the circumstances around which the act is performed (Smallbone and Wortley 2006). The immediate environment an offender finds himself in plays a significant role in shaping the action. The probability of crime varies according to criminal disposition of the individual and the crime facilitating nature of the environment. In other words an offender's motivation toward criminality is influenced by the immediate environment as is his interpretation of target suitability, and level of guardianship of the

potential victim and his own surveillance. Thus the environment and the offender's interpretation of criminal possibilities or cues become important.

Another important characteristic SCP operates under the assumption that offenders are rational actors who weigh the costs and benefits of criminal action (Clarke and Cornish 1986). Accordingly, SCP strategies consider an offenders perception of risk to commit the offense, reward outcomes, and level of effort needed to complete the act, controlling prompts or situational triggers, and reducing permissibility or increasing accountability of the offender. Since most child sexual offenders are situational (opportunistic) offenders, manipulation of environmental factors relating to effort, risk, and reward can help prevent instances of child sexual abuse (Smallbone and Wortley 2006).

Empirical evidence increasingly indicates that sexual offenses against children are significantly affected by opportunities and other environmental conditions (Smallbone and Wortley 2006). RAT is often referred to as a theory of opportunity (Cohen and Felson 1979; Osgood et al. 1996). Kaufman and colleagues (1998) devised a conceptual model of situational crime prevention focused on child sexual abuse in which routine activities provided a direct influence on the crime opportunity structure. Terry and Akerman (2008:646) explained: "The situational components associated with child sexual abuse are also apparent in the John Jay College (2011) study on child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. This indicates that there is a situational component to sexual abuse by priests that is similar to abuse by non-clergy offenders."

Here we see a connection between LCP, RAT, and SCP. However, it goes beyond mere similarity toward a direct influence of one upon the other. LCP examines the larger structural occurrences such as change in status that impacts elements of RAT. Individual roles and motivation to offend change as status change. This change in status can allow changes in guardianship or trust as status is gained a target once deemed unsuitable or unattainable suddenly becomes available. Elements of SCP are influenced as effort, risk, and reward fluctuates due to guardianship change. Perceived prompts or trigger situations of potential victim vulnerability changes as motivation ebbs and flows.

Life Course Theory applied to priest sex offenders

LCP provides the context in which RAT and ultimately SCP elements operate. Events or transitions can change offending trajectories, onset, persistence, and desistence can be facilitated. These trajectory changes can alter an offender's motivation to offend, affect their level of guardianship or surveillance as well as a potential victim's, and lastly victim preference or suitability. For instance, career promotion or demotion can change status that impact self-esteem and can allow or deny access to victims thereby affecting multiple elements of SCP (i.e., risk, effort, prompts, and permissibility). Guardianship capabilities and status or roles vary as turning points are reached responsibilities and implicit trust from others changes thereby effecting effort to commit the crime or an offender's risk perceptions. Finally, target suitability can be affected as an offender's only access to a potential victim is predicated upon their social status. It bears noting the approach here does not necessitate a top down sequence, in other words that LCP does not dictate RAT, which in turn affects SCP. On the contrary, Sampson and Laub (1990) advise that human agency have an effect on structural life course aspects (i.e., trajectory). However, due to spatial constraints onset, persistence, and desistence of child sexual abuse by Catholic priests will be examined through the wide lens of LCP to a continually narrowing scope of RAT and SCP elements.

There is a multitude of research studying the onset, persistence, and desistence of child sexual abuse (Seto 2008; Hanson and Morton-Bourgon 2005; Hanson and Harris 1998). Many of these studies focus on individual characteristics of offenders or vulnerabilities of abusers. Finklehor (1984) identified four preconditions in child sexual abuse (1) a motivation to offend (2) ability to overcome internal inhibitions (3) ability to overcome external factor preventing abuse, and (4) ability to overcome a child's resistance to the abuse. Few (see Terry et al. 2011) investigate the etiology of child sexual abuse among clergy. The scope of this article does not seek to understand the etiology behind the motivations of a priest to sexually offend against a child versus some other forms of vice

such as soliciting the services of an adult prostitute, gambling, or abusing substances. That would detract from the purpose here, which is to develop a theoretical understanding concerning how child sexual (i.e., the facilitation of and desistance of such abuse across the life-course) assault can take place rather than why it takes place.

Turning points play a large role concerning onset, persistence, and ultimate desistence of clergy child sexual abuse. Thus we can visualize an abusive trajectory's beginning, continuation, and end. Terry and Ackerman (2008) noted that, persistence of abuse fluctuated, and that desistence was based more on external matters such as the victim becoming inaccessible rather than internal self-policing.

What turning points may have been reached during the life-course and how do these impact RAT and SCP elements? One could assume that motivation to offend built as isolation from others increased and/or stress and anxiety grew as job responsibility grew. Terry and colleagues (2011) reported that surveys pertaining to priestly abusers may have experienced isolation, loneliness, insecurity, and poor social skills as very likely motivators for abuse. These feelings of isolation and loneliness could have built up over time or been accelerated due to a loss or change away from established social and emotional support sources. Regardless of an accumulation of factors or an abrupt change motivation toward, continuation, and away from offending fluctuates.

These motivations can impact effort, risk, prompts, and permissibility. For instance if one is granted a promotion the motivation to offend can change as new stressors and anxiety can increase as effort and risk to complete the abuse decrease. Anxiety, self-esteem issues, and stress are motivational factors for child sexual abuse (Mann, Hanson, and Thornton 2010). A new status can grant access to potential victims where before access was limited or non-existent. Access to victims allows for increased opportunities to be alone with potential victims motivation toward abusive behavior can increase because the effort is not as onerous as before. Risk can be minimized just as effort is but that a recently achieved status within the clergy can operate to ensure implicit trustworthiness and believability over an accuser of inferior social status thus diminishing risk and increasing deniability. Prompts or trigger situations can increase as the opportunity to form close bonds with children can be more easily allowed to take place, thus further motivation to abuse. Events such as overnight trips include showering and unusual sleeping arrangements can potentially become intimate affairs. Lastly, permissibility rests on individual and institutional matters. An offender can rely on techniques of neutralization (Maruna and Mann 2006)) in order to overcome internal inhibitions. These techniques are not inherent and independent within the individual but can be reinforced and supported by the institution, thus permitting, excusing, or rationalizing abusive behavior enabling such behavior to continue. Alternatively, motivations to offend can decrease as prior motivational factors are knifed off due to turning points. Turning points in the life course can sway motivations away from or toward onset, persistence of offending, and ultimately cessation of sexual assault. These motivational fluctuations affect effort, risk, prompts, and permissibility.

Guardianship of the potential victim as well as surveillance of the potential offender fluctuates as turning points are reached. Onset, persistence, and ultimately desistence of child sexual abuse vary as access to potential victims varies. Efforts to complete the crime are reduced and risk is diminished when offenders assume changes in status and potential to gain not only the trust of the victim but of the victim's guardians. As stated before, the average time from ordination to the first allegation of abuse was 11 years. Priestly abusers often had time to build trust among victim and guardians (Terry et al. 2011). They used not only grooming tactics often utilized by a general population of sex offenders but also implemented spiritual manipulation (Farrell and Taylor 2000).

Terry and colleagues (2011) also discussed the position the priest occupied at the time of the abuse and how that position or status was used to create opportunities to abuse whereby trust of the victim as well as the victim's parents would be gained. Wortley and Smallbone (2006) recognize that location of child sexual abuse is an important environmental factor and that offenses often take place in the offender's home or a familiar place to of offender. Terry and colleagues (2011) noted a large share (50.8% of males and 43.6% of female victims) of clergy sexual abuse took place at the priest's home or in

the church and that the offender's status at the time of abuse was either a pastor or associate pastor. Had those offenders not attained the status which allowed them private residences or access (chaperoning events or sponsoring activities) to not only secluded location but also access to children the effort and risk of the offense may have been perceived as too great thereby eliminating opportunities to offend. Permissibility of the institution as well as individual techniques of neutralization such as blaming the victim allowed abuse in the Catholic Church to continue (Terry and colleagues 2011). The status or standing of the priest occupied during different points along the offending trajectory allowed the offender to continue the abuse because access was granted. Efforts to commit the abuse were minimal, risk of detection was minimal, and an ability to fend off accusations was high. Desistence was more likely to occur when external responses intervened (Terry and colleagues 2011). Priests were either reported or somehow the abuse was made aware to others thereby impacting status. This turning point away from abuse impacted guardianship and access. Efforts increased to an unacceptable level as did risk due to increases surveillance. Prompts or triggers would undoubtedly be affected.

Turning points can impact target selection and in due course influence elements of SCP. These turning points can be individual such as accepting a new position which eliminates potential victimization or facilitates it. However, Sampson and Laub (1990) advise that macro-level events can alter trajectories. Target selection of priestly abusers is not limited to male adolescents. It is of significant interest that priest sexual abuse among females saw a substantial increase in the late 1990 and 2000s (Terry and colleagues 2011). This broad onset of abuse occurred because access to potential female victims increased substantially. A change in canon law confirmed by Pope John Paul II in 1992, allowed adolescent females to take more active roles and duties in the church, specifically it allowed females to perform alter duties.

This rise in female victimization did not occur because of a clergy cohort change from more homosexual priests whom preferred to abuse boys. Rather counterintuitively as more homosexuals became involved in the priesthood more females were victimized by priests (Terry and colleagues 2011). Thus we can observe a categorical onset of female victims as a result of institutional change affecting access. Elements of SCP are addressed such as effort. Female victims became more easily accessible for relationship building and chances for grooming behavior and opportunities for abuse arose when none previously presented itself. Risk of detection are minimized as priests now have reason to contact and associate with young females, whereas before no reason for such contact, even if benign initially, existed. Prompts or triggers increase as familiarity with potential victims increase. Individual permissibility and rationalization would be more likely to occur with female victims as some priests distort the abuse and perceive these are relationships with no real harm. Such justifications can easily shed these distortions as heterosexual relationships as opposed to more canonically unacceptable homosexual relationships.

Child sexual abuse does not just happen without any context. There is a need to look further beyond the factors that surround an abusive event, beyond effort to complete the abuse, beyond risks of detection, beyond prompts and permissibility. Simply observing or detecting motivations to offend, guardianship, and target suitability also do not satisfy a complete contextual understanding of how abusive events occur. Turning points encountered during the life-course impact motivations toward or away from offending, guardianship, and target selection. Efforts, risks, prompts, and permissibility work simultaneously with motivational ebb and flow, level of guardianship, and preference of victim. Structure impacts individual behavior (Kroner, Mills, and Reddon 2004).

Implications and recommendations

Wortley and Smallbone (2006) offered four different SCP strategies to prevent child sexual abuse, increasing effort, increase risk, control prompts, and reducing permissibility. Terry and Ackerman (2008) offer the same SCP strategies to reduce clergy abuse. They proffer increasing effort by hardening targets or implementing methods to reduce access, increasing risk of detection by extending guardianship through surveillance, controlling prompts by identifying and removing

situational triggers, and finally reducing permissibility by clarifying consequences. This strategy appears to be sound. However, it is important to examine the larger context of the event and how opportunity is created by structure beyond the environment. An environment may present more opportunity to offend at some particular point than at another time; therefore, temporal aspects must be addressed.

We suggest that by increasing effort and risk, controlling prompts, and reducing permissibility we affect small scale tactics to curb child sexual abuse as opposed to a grand strategy. By examining the larger LCP and the structural impacts on RAT and SCP we gain a better understanding of the strategy in which to influence those tactical elements. This provides a more balanced approach to dealing with the issue as opposed to striking out with various measures employed to affect RAT and SCP elements.

Transitions throughout the life course influence offender's routine activities as well as situational elements of potential criminality. Thus transitions that clergy members experience should be recognized as potential times of concern. Therefore transitional counseling and mentoring during transition periods should be undertaken. Counseling can offer clergy an outlet to vent frustrations while equipping them with tools to better cope with transitional difficulties as well as success. Mentoring can offer another whom one can confide in as well as monitoring for any cursory abusive tendencies such as abusing alcohol or depression. Transitions are a process of recalibrating oneself and becoming re-oriented with new found status.

Educating all members about sexual abuse and the harm caused at all hierarchical positions would most certainly benefit religious institutions as well as any entity that serves or deals with children. Institutions can play an important role in preventing child sexual abuse through reducing institutional permissibility. Terry and colleagues (2011) recognized that responsibility for child sexual abuse was also implicitly allowed to continue by transferring priests or not recognizing victims as real victims of child sexual abuse. This did not diffuse the situation but compounded the problem when allegations of cover-ups and misleading people surfaced. This was demonstrated by the Pennsylvania State University child sexual abuse situation involving a former football coach. It proved to be detrimental to that institution due to not recognizing victims and failing to contact authorities in order to protect the institutions image.

Conclusion

Terry and Ackerman (2008) posit that opportunity to commit child sexual abuse varies and that whether the offender is a fixated (very determined) or a regressed (opportunistic) offender if an opportunity is blocked this type of crime can be prevented, specifically when this type of crime is perpetrated via institutional means. The Catholic Church inadvertently provides a structure of implicit trust and opportunity clergy. The most trusted are commonly referred to as "father." The term is not without several types of meaning all of which imply implicit trust assumed in one's progeny but as important is the unique religious meaning and status one obtains. This status assumes roles and privileges that are most extraordinary. Trust is embedded in the term. This status also allows unfettered access to potential victims. This access through turning points affects motivation, guardianship of the offender as well as potential victims, and attractiveness of a target toward or away from offending. Different levels of motivation, guardianship, and target suitability affect the efforts and risks one is willing to take. Prompts or triggers and permissibility are perceived differently. The status of clergy, especially in a revered institution of the Catholic Church, carry with it potential problems where some can be seen as infallible and certainly incapable or inconceivable that sexual abuse of children can be carried out by some of the most trusted people in society. The sense of infallibility and importance of social status does not solely rest with Catholic Church clergy as recently evidenced by Pennsylvania State University coach Jerry Sandusky's ability to avoid prosecution from years after allegations arose.

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