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RISK ASSESSMENT OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE CLERGY: UTILITY OF SEX OFFENDER  
RISK INSTRUMENTS WITH A UNIQUE OFFENDER SUBGROUP

by

ANTHONY DION PERILLO

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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The manuscript has been read and accepted for the  
Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the  
Dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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## Abstract

RISK ASSESSMENT OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE CLERGY: UTILITY OF SEX OFFENDER  
RISK INSTRUMENTS WITH A UNIQUE OFFENDER SUBGROUP

by

ANTHONY DION PERILLO

Advisor: Professor Cynthia Calkins

Sex offender risk instruments provide empirically based outlooks on recidivism risk and often serve as a critical part of sex offender management. If applied to unrepresented offender groups, these instruments may offer inaccurate pictures of risk and hinder efforts to reduce sexual violence. With little research available on sexually abusive clergy prior to the abuse scandal of the early 2000s, sexually abusive clergy are one group not represented in the research used to develop risk measures. An understanding of the validity of current risk assessment practices with sexually abusive clergy is critical and timely, as changes to the handling of abuse by the Church will lead to increased need for risk assessment in the community.

Based on archival data of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and data from a state-wide investigation of sex offenders ( $N = 6,934$ ), the current series of studies was designed to incrementally identify differences between sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders, evaluate the validity of current risk instruments with clergy, and explore modifications to improve risk assessment with clergy. Study 1, which compared clergy and general offenders over the course of their offending history, found that clergy exhibited different patterns from general sex offenders on most variables included in risk measures. Study 2 ( $N = 2,852$ ) examined recidivism in relation to scores on established risk measures. Recidivism rates for clergy (14%) were similar to rates from the body of sex offender research. Of the four instruments examined

(Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R), only the Static-99R predicted recidivism for clergy (and did so poorly). Study 3 ( $N = 616$ ) identified additional predictors of clergy recidivism and possible modifications to current items. This modified approach resulted in stronger predictions of clergy recidivism, on par with the best predictors of recidivism for general sex offenders. Overall, results suggest sexually abusive clergy to be a unique subgroup of offenders not sufficiently accounted for in existing risk measures. Use of the Static-99, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R with clergy is not recommended. Future research is needed to develop proper and valid risk assessment approaches with sexually abusive clergy.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the face of serious concerns expressed by the public and policy makers about the risk that sex offenders pose to the community, clinicians and scholars have advocated for the proper assessment of sex offenders. A variety of risk assessment practices have been developed for use with sex offenders, but one overarching aspiration is common among all these techniques: prevention of future sex offending. Given the heightened societal concern about repeat sexual offenders, few would argue against the importance of efforts that reduce risk of re-offending. The proper assessment of sex offenders can help reduce future sex crimes and, in turn, enhance overall public safety.

Several different instruments have been developed specifically for assessing recidivism risk among sex offenders. These instruments generally are intended to provide an outlook on the risk that a sex offender will re-offend based on the presence or absence of various factors associated with re-offending. When conducted under proper conditions, sex offender risk instruments can provide valuable data important to sex offender management and the prevention of future sexual crime. When used improperly, however, these instruments may provide inaccurate or misleading information about offenders, which in turn may result not only in misguided assessments of offender risk levels, but also in misguided management decisions (e.g., decisions to recommend for civil commitment).

One particular consideration that may impact the proper use of a risk instrument is whether the normative development of an instrument accounts for a given subgroup of sex offenders. As a broad example, a risk instrument developed from re-arrest data of 10,000 sex offenders would be poorly suited to assess the risk that an offender convicted of embezzlement would commit another white-collar crime; the instrument was not based on any data from

embezzlers and thus does not account for specific factors relevant to embezzlement or the re-offense rates of those who have committed embezzlement. Within the sex offender population, many different subgroups have been identified, which goes in accordance with the variety of acts that are covered under the broad umbrella of *sex offending*. Some of these sex offender subgroups differ in ways that may directly impact recidivism risk, including different offender characteristics and different modus operandi during the offense. For example, a risk instrument developed from re-arrest data of 10,000 rapists may include several factors related to violence history and violence during the index offense; such an instrument may be poorly suited to assess the risk that an offender convicted of an exhibitionist act would commit another sex offense. It is thus important to consider the subgroups of offenders included in the normative sample of a risk instrument, as this will impact the instrument's utility in assessing different subgroups of sex offenders.

The current project first details the rates and predictors of sex offender recidivism, with a particular emphasis on the recidivism investigations conducted by R. Karl Hanson and colleagues. Discussion then focuses on the development and use of risk assessment tools designed to provide insight into which sex offenders are at an elevated risk to re-offend. An explanation of key considerations to make when using these risk assessment tools follows, which provides the transition into an overarching topic of this project: the utility of sexual risk assessment instruments with different subgroups of sex offenders. The remainder of the literature review focuses on one unique subgroup in particular: sexually abusive clergy. Specifically, this section details current research on sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and implications on the utility of existing risk instruments with sexually abusive clergy. It is with this background that

the methods, results, and implications of the current project examining the utility of existing sex offender risk instruments with sexually abusive clergy are presented.

## **CHAPTER 2: CURRENT STATE OF SEX OFFENDER RECIDIVISM AND RISK ASSESSMENT RESEARCH**

The prevention of recidivism has long been considered a vital goal for criminal intervention. As such, much empirical focus has been given to recidivism of sex offenders. Various criteria have been used to measure recidivism among sex offenders, and meta-analyses of the body of research in this area provide some overall estimates of recidivism among sex offenders. Hanson, Steffy, and Gauthier (1993), who investigated outcomes of 197 child molesters released from prison over a 16-year period, reported that 41.6% of these offenders were later convicted for another crime (sexual or non-sexual). In a large-scale analysis of studies following 28,972 sex offenders, the sexual recidivism rate was 13.4%, while the overall recidivism rate was 36.3% (Hanson & Bussière, 1998). Similar rates were found in a follow-up analysis of sex offender studies, whereby the sexual, violent, and overall recidivism rates for offenders across 73 studies were 13.7%, 14.3%, and 36.2%, respectively (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). An updated look at sex offenders evaluated with various risk instruments revealed that among 45,398 sex offenders included in research examining recidivism, the sexual recidivism rate was 11.5%, the sexual or violent recidivism rate was 19.5%, and the overall recidivism rate was 33.2% (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009). Taking the entire body of these meta-analyses into account, roughly 13% of sex offenders are later found to have committed another sex crime, and roughly 35% later commit another criminal offense (sexual or otherwise).

### **Risk Factors for Recidivism**

Despite the fact that the majority of sex offenders may not commit another future sex crime, it is critical to identify those sex offenders who may be more likely than others to engage in further sexual offending. As such, arguably the most extensive focus of sex offender research

has been that which seeks to identify those at risk of perpetrating future sexual offenses. The bulk of recidivism literature is summarized by the large-scale investigations conducted by R. Karl Hanson and colleagues. The first large-scale investigation (Hanson, Steffy, and Gauthier, 1993), which exclusively analyzed sex offenders with child victims, identified background information and victim characteristics of recidivists. Follow-up meta-analyses (Hanson and Bussière, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005), which included data from sexual abusers of both children and adults, accounted for clinical and dynamic factors, as well as phallometric assessment of deviant sexual interests.

The 1993 study by Hanson et al. revealed three strong predictors of recidivism among child molesters: having extrafamilial victims, abusing only male children, and having prior sex offenses. These factors were all similarly robust predictors of child molester recidivism. The 1998 follow-up meta-analysis (Hanson and Bussière, 1998) suggested that sexual interest in children (as determined by phallometric assessment), particularly sexual interest in boys, was the strongest predictor of sex offender recidivism. Other significant predictors included having extrafamilial victims, male victims, and prior sex offenses (as was previously found), as well as a young onset of offending, failure to complete offense-related treatment, poor education, prior non-sexual offenses, abusing children of both sexes, use of force, and having a severe clinical disorder. The 2005 meta-analysis (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005) identified several clinical predictors of recidivism. Such predictors included emotional identification with children, antisocial or psychopathic tendencies, deviant attitudes about sex and sexuality, unstable employment, issues with hostility, and difficulty controlling behavior. Notably, this meta-analysis of clinical factors revealed that several factors have demonstrated inconsistent relationships with recidivism or need to be further explored to establish the true nature of their

connection (or lack thereof) to recidivism risk. These questionable clinical factors include abuse (physical, neglect, or sexual) as a child, low self-esteem, denial or minimization of the sexual offense, poor progress during sex offense-relevant treatment, social isolation, and use of force during a sex offense. Interestingly, these aggregated findings cloud prior findings by Hanson and Harris (2000), which examined clinically relevant factors connected to recidivism. Many of those clinical factors identified as connected to sex offender recidivism—such as poor social support and difficulties with supervision—were among those found to be inconclusive predictors of recidivism in the 2005 meta-analysis. As stated previously, these meta-analyses reported sexual recidivism rates of around 12-15%, widely in conflict with public assumptions that all sex offenders inevitably offend again (Hanson, 2003).

### **Types of Sex Offender Risk Assessment**

With increasing awareness of factors related to recidivism among sex offenders, researchers and clinicians have applied this empirical knowledge toward evaluations of sex offender recidivism risk. As such, much effort has been given to developing well-guided techniques and tools for sex offender risk assessment. Ultimately, risk assessment is often at the center of crucial decisions regarding the freedom of a given sex offender, as they are usually conducted as part of the decision making process during civil commitment evaluations and parole board hearings (Janus & Prentky, 2003).

The processes used by clinicians during risk assessment evaluations can be generalized into three practices (Doren, 2006a): actuarial risk assessment (which involves using an empirically supported instrument that provides a step-by-step formula for completion), clinical risk assessment (which relies on clinical judgment and is guided by clinical expertise and intuition), and structured clinical assessment (a hybrid of actuarial and clinical practices that is

guided by an actuarial instrument but allows clinicians to adjust risk outcomes or consider other factors at their discretion). Scholars have debated the strengths and limits of these practices (see Litwack, 2001), but empirical evidence has generally supported the use of actuarial risk assessment over clinical judgment (Grove & Meehl, 1996; Grove, Zald, Lebow, Snitz, & Nelson, 2000). Meta-analysis of sex offender risk assessment practices and instruments suggests that actuarial measures are generally more accurate than structured clinical judgment, which itself is more accurate than unstructured clinical judgment (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009).

### **Current Risk Assessment Instruments**

Arguably the most widely known sex offender risk assessment instrument is the Static-99 (Hanson & Thornton, 1999), which assesses convicted sex offenders across 10 static factors, including prior sex offenses, male victims, and young onset of offending. Scores are determined by the presence of these static factors, and the total score (calculated by the sum of scores for each item) places the sex offender in one of four corresponding risk levels for later offending (low, medium-low, medium-high, and high). A revised version of the Static-99, the Static-99R (Helmus, Babchishin, Hanson, & Thornton, 2009), updated the scoring of offender age. Other prominent risk assessment tools include the Minnesota Sex Offender Screening Tool-Revised (MnSOST-R; Epperson, Kaul, Huot, Goldman, & Alexander, 2003), a 16-item instrument that includes both static and dynamic factor subscales; the MnSOST-3 (Duwe & Freske, 2012), a revised version of the MnSOST-R consisting of 9 historical items; the Sexual Violence Risk-20 (SVR-20; Boer, Hart, Kropp, & Webster, 1997), a 20-factor instrument that follows the structured clinical judgment model; the Sex Offender Risk Appraisal Guide (SORAG; Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1998), a 14-item scale largely consisting of clinical variables related to violence; and the Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism (RRASOR; Hanson,

1997), a 4-item instrument that ultimately served as the foundation for the Static-99. The validity studies of these instruments suggest that despite some differences between individual sex offenders, these offenders as a whole exhibit some general trends that can help assess risk in a global sense.

### **Utility of Risk Instruments Relative to One Another**

Several studies among the many sex offender risk assessment instruments have compared their overall utility. Some studies have suggested the Static-99 is a stronger instrument for assessing sexual recidivism risk than other risk instruments. Research suggests sexual recidivism risk has been more strongly identified by the Static-99 than the RRASOR (Hanson & Thornton, 2000), SORAG (Blair, Marcus, & Boccacini, 2008), and the MnSOST-R (Bartosh, Garby, Lewis, & Gray, 2003). On the other hand, overlap and commonalities among the different instruments have led to strongly correlated results across the various instruments (Roberts, Doren, & Thornton, 2002). Regarding non-sexual recidivism among sex offenders, Rettenberger, Matthes, Boer, and Eher (2010) found that the SORAG had stronger predictive utility than the RRASOR, SVR-20, and PCL-R for general recidivism and stronger predictive utility than the SVR-20 and PCL-R for violent recidivism.

Further analysis by Roberts et al. (2002) suggested that sex offender risk assessment instruments may have different strengths relative to one another, depending on whether they are better geared toward accounting for sexual deviance or more general antisocial traits. Despite the implications of these findings, there are mixed results regarding a cumulative effect of using multiple instruments. An analysis of various manipulations of the Static-99, RRASOR, SORAG, and the Violence Risk Assessment Guide (VRAG; Harris, Rice, & Quinsey, 1993) suggested that no combination of the different instruments improved predictive accuracy of various criteria than

the single strongest standalone scale (Seto, 2005); however, a recent meta-analysis by Babchishin and colleagues (2012) demonstrated the potential for a cumulative effect in predicting recidivism. Additionally, incorporating flexibility by means of clinician adjustment (i.e., giving the evaluators the option of adjusting final risk scores of completed instruments by considering factors not included in the tool) appears to have a detrimental effect. Clinically adjusted scores on actuarial sex offender risk instruments consistently result in poorer predictive accuracy than when using unadjusted scores (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2009).

### CHAPTER 3: RISK ASSESSMENT OF DIFFERENT SEX OFFENDER SUBGROUPS

The development of risk instruments has assisted in improved methods of assessing sex offenders who may be eligible to return to the community. Despite this contribution, a consideration often overlooked during sex offender risk assessment is the extent to which a given instrument has been properly developed to assess a particular offender. The term *sex offender* has long covered a broad group of offenders who have engaged in a wide variety of criminal sexual behaviors. These offenses include acts such as forcible sexual contact with a non-consenting individual, sexual contact with children (who, per state statutes, are not legally able to consent to such behavior), non-contact sexual behavior that violates the rights of others (e.g., exhibitionism, voyeurism), or other sexual acts deemed to threaten societal well-being (e.g., solicitation of a prostitute). As would be expected given the wide variety of offenses in which sex offenders may engage, research has consistently shown that sex offenders are not a unilaterally deviant group. Rather, the characteristics and offending patterns of sex offenders can differ across several domains. Sex offenders identify different reasons for perpetration, such as the need for sexual pleasure, a release from stress, or desired intimacy (Mann & Hollin, 2007). Further, sex offenders have been known to incorporate an array of different strategies to perpetrate abuse (Kaufman et al., 1998), including strategies of force (e.g., verbal threats of harm to the victim, physical restraint, use of a weapon), coercion (e.g., threats toward the victim's family, intimidation), and enticement (e.g., present gifts, share pornography, and rationalize and desensitize sexual behavior), among other compliance techniques.

Differences in the etiology of offenses, in addition to individual factors, are likely to have an impact on recidivism risk. Indeed, evidence suggests that categorizing sex offenders according to certain offender or offense characteristics reveals different recidivism rates across

sex offender subgroups. Because these subgroups may have different contributing factors for their offenses and differing risks for recidivism, it would seem likely that different risk factors would be indicative of recidivism risk across these subgroups. As will be later discussed, empirical research has supported this assertion. If overall base rates for recidivism and factors increasing recidivism risk are different for some sex offender subgroups, then current sex offender risk assessment instruments—which consist of predetermined items universally applied to all sex offenders—are likely to better assess risk for certain subgroups over others.

The utility of risk instruments with different sex offender subgroups is likely influenced by the composition of the samples used in developing them. That is, the extent that characteristics of a given sex offender (or subgroup of offenders) differ from the sample on which a given assessment measure was normed is likely to impact the measure's utility with that individual offender (or that subgroup). Indeed, Doren (2006a) argues that current actuarial instruments are not suited for assessment of certain unique subgroups of sex offenders, a limitation that is dangerously overlooked or disregarded by a substantial number of evaluators. Several different sex offender subgroups have been identified through research, and many of these groups have been shown to differ from other sex offenders in ways that may impact the direct utility of risk measures. The following section identifies a few of those subgroups examined in the literature.

### **Victim Age: Child Molesters and Rapists**

One common distinction made among sex offenders is between those offenders who sexually abuse a minor (child molesters) and those who commit forcible sex acts against adults (rapists). Factor analysis has revealed that child molesters tend to have a narrow pattern of offending (i.e., their criminal behavior almost exclusively involves sexually deviant acts), while

rapists are more likely to have diverse criminal backgrounds and commit a variety of sexual and non-sexual offenses (Lussier, LeBlanc, & Proulx, 2005). As such, sex offending by rapists has been attributed more so to general antisociality, while those sex offenses committed by child molesters have been more often attributed to sexual deviance (Baxter, Marshall, Barbaree, Davidson, & Malcolm, 1984; Lussier et al.). Beyond direct crime factors, pedophilic offenders have been found to be older, more likely to be unmarried, and more poorly educated when compared to rapists (Baxter et al.). A recent meta-analysis, however, suggested that child molesters and rapists exhibit similar trends across psychosocial factors, with a few exceptions: child molesters exhibit higher levels of anxiety and depression and lower levels of anger and psychopathy (Whitaker et al., 2008). Notably, the Whitaker et al. meta-analysis revealed no significant differences between rapists and child molesters in regard to sexually deviant interests or attitudes, though these factors were analyzed broadly to include the presence of any deviant interest or attitude (e.g., attitudes condoning sex with children and sexual dominance against women both constituted *deviant attitude*).

Sex offender risk instruments generally do not differentiate between child molesters and rapists, despite empirical evidence that child molesters and rapists exhibit different rates and patterns of recidivism. Hanson and Bussiere (1998) divided the samples in their meta-analysis by victim age and found that sexual recidivism rates were higher for rapists (18.9%) than for child molesters (12.7%). Analysis of 35,000 offenders suggested that rapists had higher rates of general recidivism than pedophilic offenders; in fact, almost half of rapists were arrested for another offense within five years (Sample & Bray, 2006). In a study of 251 sex offenders over 26 years, child molesters and rapists exhibited similar sexual recidivism rates, but recidivism rates of rapists were considerably higher when including non-sexual crimes (Prentky, Lee, Knight, &

Cerce, 1997). Further, the long-term sexual recidivism rates (i.e., re-offending ten years after release) of child molesters were higher than those of rapists, suggesting that child molesters are slower to age out of sexual offending than rapists. Indeed, a follow-up study by Prentky and Lee (2007) with civilly committed sex offenders revealed that child molesters showed a steady increase of offending into their thirties followed by a slow, non-significant decline of sexual offending until after age 50. In contrast, rapists showed a stable rate of offending into their thirties followed by a steady decline of sexual offending until after age 40, at which time a dramatic drop in offending occurred. Research by Dickey, Nussbaum, Chevolleau, and Davidson (2002) supports the patterns and findings described above. The findings of Dickey et al. suggested that in early adulthood rapists sexually re-offend at higher rates than child molesters, while the opposite pattern is evident as offenders enter middle age. Overall, the literature suggests that child molesters and rapists differ as subgroups in ways that can potentially impact risk outcomes, which may also be reflected in the distinct recidivistic patterns of the two groups. Indeed, a comparison of use of the Static-99, RRASOR, MnSOST-R, and SORAG suggests that all four instruments more accurately predict sexual recidivism for child molesters than for rapists, with only the SORAG significantly predicting any kind of recidivism for rapists (Bartosh et al., 2003).

### **Victim Relationship: Incest versus Extrafamilial Offenders**

Beyond the age of victims, sex offenders may differ from each other in risk-relevant manners as a function of the offender-victim relationship. Large-scale studies have generally established that sex offenses against children most commonly occur against non-related acquaintances (e.g., Hanson et al., 1993). Some have argued, however, that incest offenders may not be properly defined by merely examining the relationship to the index offense victim because

some incest offenders have also reported having extrafamilial victims (Studer, Clelland, Aylwin, Reddon, & Monro, 2000). With regard to recidivism, research suggests that incest offenders recidivate at lower rates than do extrafamilial offenders. Investigations by Hanson and colleagues revealed that incest offenders had lower recidivism rates than extrafamilial offenders. Incest offending against female children was actually negatively correlated with recidivism (Hanson et al., 1993), and having an extrafamilial victim served as a risk factor for sexual recidivism (Hanson & Bussiere, 1998). A study of 400 child molesters revealed that recidivism rates for those who had sexually abused non-family members (16.2%) were higher than for those who had abused their own children, be they biological (4.8%) or step-children (5.1%). Similar trends were identified for non-sexual recidivism as well, with those rates for extrafamilial offenders being double that for those who sexually abused their own children (Greenberg, Bradford, Firestone, & Curry, 2000). Similarly, in two separate studies by Firestone and colleagues, the recidivism rates of extrafamilial offenders (Firestone et al., 2000) were approximately double that of incest offenders (Firestone et al., 1999) whether including general crimes, only violent crimes, or only sexual crimes. Other studies have gone further to suggest that incest offenders are the least likely sex offenders to recidivate (e.g., Langevin et al., 2004).

Although the offense and recidivistic patterns of incest offenders appear distinct from those of extrafamilial offenders, instruments such as the Static-99 and RRASOR have proven ineffective in distinguishing incest offenders from extrafamilial sex offenders (Sjöstedt & Grann, 2002). In addition, the developers of the MnSOST-R excluded most incest offenders in the norming of the instrument, using only those whose offenses included penetration (and classifying these offenders as rapists); this brings the utility of this instrument with incest offenders into question. Overall, only the Static-99 has shown the ability to identify sexual recidivists among

incest offenders, although the SORAG has shown the ability to identify general and violent recidivism among incest offenders (Bartosh et al., 2003).

### **Older Offenders**

As previously noted, differences in the perpetration and recidivism rates of older and younger sex offenders have been extensively considered in the risk assessment literature. Criminological research has consistently found that offenders tend to “age out” of crime, making age a potentially significant factor in sexually offensive behavior. Indeed, few people over age 50 are convicted of sexual offenses, and research on recidivism among older sex offenders has consistently found a negative relationship between age and risk (Hanson, 2002). Many risk assessment instruments, including the Static-99, MnSOST-R, and SORAG, include age as a factor in risk scores. In fact, the only modification made from the Static-99 to the Static-99R concerned the age factor. Although the specific scoring weights and cutoff ages differ across instruments, the overall pattern is consistent in that being young elevates risk for recidivism. The research, however, suggests that the relationship between age and recidivism risk is not as linear as is reflected in some risk assessment coding schemes. A large-scale analysis of recidivism revealed that recidivism risk for child molesters decreased slowly and non-significantly until around age 50, at which time risk decreased sharply (Hanson, 2002). Similar trends have been found among those sex offenders deemed particularly dangerous and committed as sexually violent predators, although these trends were most strongly observed among rapists rather than child molesters (Prentky & Lee, 2007). Research among New Zealand sex offenders has suggested that the age at which a sharp decrease in recidivism is observed is positively related to risk level, such that those offenders classified as high risk are more likely to show decreases in recidivism at later ages than lower-risk offenders (Skelton & Vess, 2008). Further, a study of risk

factors among older sex offenders suggests that specific factors, such as having a stranger victim, may be unique to this subgroup (Fazel, Sjostedt, Langstrom, & Grann, 2006). In light of these advancements in the understanding of age and sexual recidivism, some risk assessment experts have recommended careful consideration for particularly older sex offenders beyond the relevant age variable (e.g., Hanson, 2006). In fact, Wollert (2006) argued that Bayesian analyses conducted with the data from Hanson's large-scale investigation of age and recidivism (2002) suggest that none of the actuarial instruments included (Static-99, RRASOR, MnSOST-R, SORAG, and VRAG) were valid assessors of risk for sex offenders age 25 or older, limiting their utility to offenders age 18 to 24.

Some have suggested that those older recidivists are likely to exhibit more sexual deviance than younger offenders, who are likely to exhibit more general antisociality (Thornton, 2006). Indeed, sex offender scores on antisociality scales are highest among the youngest offenders and lowest among the oldest offenders, while scores on sexual deviance are highest among the oldest offenders and lowest among the youngest offenders (Barbaree, Langton, Blanchard, & Cantor, 2009). Others have contended that it is premature to make strong conclusions about the risk for sexual recidivism among older offenders because of confounding factors and the overall small number of offenders released in their elder years (see Doren, 2006b). Nonetheless, the general consensus is that aging serves, in essence, as a protective factor in terms of reducing sexual recidivism.

### **Sexually Abusive Clergy**

Although the previously discussed sex offender subgroups deserve further consideration from sex offender risk assessment researchers, one sex offender subgroup that has received increased attention may be in particular need of further focus: sexually abusive clergy. Beyond

the public fascination and intense media scrutiny of this subgroup, the current state of sexual risk assessment with clergy and some emerging trends in approaching clergy sexual abuse make investigation into clergy sexual risk assessment a particularly compelling endeavor. First, the overall body of sex offender risk assessment research has not only failed to compare sexually abusive clergy as a subgroup to other sex offenders, but the research has also failed to even include sexually abusive clergy in *any* capacity. Many of the subgroup categories previously mentioned consist of offenders who may not have been examined within the context of these subgroup conceptualizations but have nonetheless been included in the empirical development of risk instruments or follow-up consideration of these instruments. For example, data from older sex offenders have been included during the development of several sex offender instruments, even if these offenders were not specifically earmarked as older; the same cannot truly be said in regard to sexually abusive clergy, as only a minute portion of incarcerated clergy could possibly be included. Second, sexually abusive clergy have generally been addressed, managed, and treated in isolation from other sex offenders. The vast majority of cases of clergy sexual abuse have not involved any form of police investigation; in fact, only 2% of sexually abusive clergy were incarcerated for their offenses (Terry, 2008). Instead, sexual abuse among clergy has generally been handled within the Church context by Church officials. In doing so, any risk assessment of these clergy have generally been conducted within the context of Church management and treatment, which creates uncertainty regarding the standards of practice for sexual risk assessment with clergy.

Finally, the Catholic Church has shifted its approach to sexual abuse in the United States such that sexually abusive clergy will now be promptly removed from the Church through a zero-tolerance policy (USCCB, 2004). As the Church responds to substantiated sexual abuse

allegations by removing the offending clergy, sexually abusive clergy will become more integrated within the general community. This shift will likely result in increased police involvement, exposure to community sex offender services, and exposure to children in the community. Taken altogether, these trends suggest that understanding risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy is of emerging importance.

## **CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING LITERATURE ON SEXUALLY ABUSIVE CLERGY**

Part of the increased attention to sexually abusive clergy stemmed from the initial shock that a sizable portion of Catholic clergy could be among the feared group of perpetrators who sexually abuse children. Public perception of child molesters has often consisted of images of strangers secretly watching children from afar, waiting for the right moment to attack (see Levenson, 2007). News reports about sexually abusive clergy provided a jolt to the public's idea of sexual abusers. Further, clergy generally have received much respect and are often trusted with providing guidance and support to the community (including children), which has made the abuse scandal all the more staggering.

### **Increased Media Attention and Public Awareness**

Child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church came to the forefront following extensive media coverage and public outcry from the publicized scandal involving Father John Geoghan, a priest in the Boston Archdiocese. After reports that Father Geoghan had sexually molested more than 130 children over the previous 30 years, intense focus on sexual abuse in the Catholic Church emerged during the summer of 2002. The *Boston Globe* provided extensive coverage of both general revelations and focused investigations into allegedly abusive priests (Boston Globe, 2002), particularly Father Geoghan. In the process, the public followed the ongoing Father Geoghan scandal, including detailed accounts of his indiscretions, his defrocking, his conviction of Indecent Assault and Battery, and his murder at the hands of another inmate. Strong public reaction ensued, and Father Geoghan ultimately served as a catalyst for increased awareness of the long-hushed problem of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church.

### **Lack of Research Prior to the Publicized Abuse Crisis**

Prior to the intense scrutiny into Catholic Church sexual abuse in 2002, little information about the nature and prevalence of clergy sexual abuse was available. Most published articles regarding the abuse were theoretical in nature (e.g., Krebs, 1998; Plante, 1999), often offering hypotheses regarding the development of a community of abusive priests. Plante (1996) suggested the high esteem given to clergy played a major factor into clergy sexual abuse by fostering feelings of entitlement and superiority among clergy; allowing clergy to be trusted with frequent, prolonged, unsupervised moments with children; and promoting clergy as authorities on not only spirituality but also moral decency. The latter was suggested to result in both victim blaming (victims, confused as to how clergy could commit any transgressions, would believe themselves to be responsible for any sexual behavior) and inaction by parents (who similarly either did not believe their children or directed blame toward them). Empirical analyses prior to the 2002 scandal primarily consisted of descriptive reports with small samples of sexually abusive clergy. Plante's (1996) review of the scant literature available suggested sexually abusive clergy often exhibit maladaptive personality traits, such as defensiveness, depressed mood, and issues with authority. Indeed, eight of ten sexually abusive clergy observed by Ruzicka (1997) had prior psychiatric histories. A larger-scale cluster analysis of 111 sexually abusive clergy revealed that the majority of these clergy had high levels of passivity and anxiety (Loftus & Camargo, 1993). Among a sample of 43 child victims, a surprisingly elevated rate (21%) reported being abused by more than one clergy, and these children exhibited more negative attitudes toward church and spirituality in general following the abuse (McLaughlin, 1994).

A few of the earliest empirical studies involving sexually abusive clergy involved direct comparisons to convicted sex offenders. In an examination involving 30 clergy accused of child sexual abuse, clergy offenders tended to be older, more highly educated, and more likely to abuse older, male adolescents relative to convicted child molesters (Haywood, Kravitz, Grossman, Wasyliw, & Hardy, 1996). Later research revealed that when accounting for differences in age, education, marital status, and type of offense, sexually abusive clergy showed similar offending patterns to other sex offenders, such as similar durations of abuse and number of victims (Langevin, Curnoe, & Baine, 2000). Though these findings are important and should not be disregarded, the few studies that existed prior to the intense public attention to clergy abuse tended to be constrained by small samples or reliance on anecdotal reports. The body of data were, as a whole, insufficient for addressing the sexual abuse problem when it publicly arose in 2002.

### **The John Jay College Investigation**

Following the intense coverage of clergy sexual abuse, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) developed a Charter intended to propel a thorough, comprehensive investigation into the nature, scope, and causes of clergy sexual abuse. The Catholic Church ultimately reached an agreement to work in collaboration with John Jay College to acknowledge and address the extent of abuse in the Church. Researchers at John Jay College developed three surveys, each focusing on a distinct level of analysis: one regarding clergy accused of sexual abuse (Cleric Survey), one regarding the individuals who made allegations of sexual abuse (Victim Survey), and one regarding the nature and overall extent of sexual abuse within the diocese (Diocesan/ Order Profile). The surveys were delivered to the bishops in all United States dioceses, and 97% of dioceses and eparchies (representing 99% of U.S. diocesan and eparchial

priests) participated by providing all relevant information available in the archived personnel files of all dioceses. All survey responses were confidential, absent of identifying information for the clergy or victims.

Results from the John Jay College investigation (John Jay College, 2004) indicated that from 1950 to 2002, allegations of child sexual abuse were documented against 4,392 clergy, representing 4% of the total clergy population in the United States over that period. Overall, the John Jay investigation identified 10,667 children who made formal accusations of sexual abuse. Furthermore, an additional 3,000 children were identified as potential victims. These potential victims consisted of those for whom there was sufficient reason to believe they had been abused, but no formal accusation was made (e.g., an accusation was made by one child on behalf of himself and two others allegedly involved in the same incident).

Further analysis of the John Jay College data (John Jay College, 2006; Terry, 2008) revealed that the majority of abusive clergy (56%) had only one documented victim. In contrast, a small but significant portion of clergy (4%) were persistent abusers with at least ten victims on record. Most victims (81%) were male, and the majority of victims (51%) were between the ages of 11 and 14. The predominant victim profile was a male adolescent between ages 11 and 14 (40%). The majority of abuse allegations (57%) included sexual touching under the victim's clothes, and almost half of allegations included oral sex performed by the victim (18%) or priest (27%). Approximately one-third of clergy (31%) were accused of abusing victims for less than one year (including single-incident accusations). Of those clergy who abused children for more than one year (69%), the average duration of abuse was approximately five years.

Most allegations of abuse were addressed strictly within the Church, with only 14% of allegations resulting in outside police involvement. Excluding those clergy who were retired or

deceased when allegations arose, most clergy remained active following the Church's handling of accusations. Clergy found to have abused children were most commonly referred by the Church for some form of treatment (40%) prior to reinstatement. Within five years of the publicized abuse scandal, the Catholic Church paid over \$1 billion to victims through legal settlements.

### **Research Following the Publicized Abuse Crisis**

The John Jay College investigation documented the nature and scope of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church over a recent 50-year period. Following this investigation, a wave of theoretical articles about the abuse emerged. Several scholars argued that the Church was responsible for establishing an environment that allowed priests the opportunity to abuse children and failed to address sexual abusive clergy in any meaningful way (see Doyle, 2006; Kocahnsky & Hermann, 2004; McGlone, 2003). Frawley-O'Dea (2004) argued that several aspects of the traditional Catholic Church factored into the abuse scandal. Among these theorized factors were the lack of life experience and relative youth of clergy upon entering seminary; feelings of entitlement fostered by posturing clergy as spiritual and moral authorities; suppression within the Church of discussions concerning modern sexuality; and the promise of total, unconditional forgiveness for cleric sins. Other scholars have examined existing studies and theorized on the extent to which sexually abusive clergy should be regarded in the same light as convicted child molesters. Dale and Alpert (2007) argued that sexually abusive clergy have much in common with child molesters and should thus be treated accordingly. Cimboic and Cartor (2006) suggested the Church scandal strengthened the case for a subgroup of ephebophiles (those who abuse early-pubescent adolescents and are unlikely to abuse younger children) often overlooked in sexual abuse literature, a subgroup to which most sexually abusive clergy would belong.

Most of the studies immediately following the 2002 Church abuse scandal have been qualitative in nature. Clinical interviews focusing on the attitudes and beliefs of a small sample of sexually abusive clergy revealed that many had naïve or narcissistic beliefs about relationships with others (Saradjian & Nobus, 2003). Similarly, a small group of abusive clergy who were administered the Rorschach were found to have profiles suggestive of distorted thinking patterns (Ryan, Baerwald, & McGlone, 2008). In terms of the effects of the abuse scandal on the Church community, victims may be vulnerable to severe long-term emotional distress (Fogler, Shipherd, Clarke, Jensen, & Rowe, 2008), while some clergy have revealed that the resulting stigma of the Catholic Church abuse scandal has made them less trusting of their colleagues and more withdrawn when interacting with parishioners (Kane, 2008).

The most comprehensive collection of empirical research on clergy abuse was published in a special 2008 edition of *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, with this special edition including follow-up analyses of the John Jay College investigation. Further analysis of clergy with multiple victims suggested that priests who had abused victims of different genders or age ranges abused children across longer periods of time, began abusing children soon after entering the priesthood, and were more likely to have groomed their victims than were priests with a consistent victim type (Tallon & Terry, 2008). In regard to potential implications for risk assessment in the Church, clergy with the most victims (10 or more) were likely to exhibit offending patterns similar to those of sex offender recidivists, such as early onset of offending and having male victims (Mercado, Tallon, & Terry, 2008). Other predictors of sexual recidivism among sex offenders, such as victim relationship, were found to be less relevant to persistent offending in sexually abusive clergy (Perillo, Mercado, & Terry, 2008).

## **Application of Sex Offender Literature to Clergy**

Although research on Catholic Church sexual abuse has developed strongly in recent years, our comprehensive understanding of sexually abusive clergy is still emerging. With the nature and extent of the abuse better understood following the John Jay College investigation, further research is needed to develop ways in which our knowledge of sexually abusive clergy can be applied in a way to curb the prevalence of child sexual abuse among clergy. Much sex offender research has been used to improve methods of approaching sexual offending in an effort to curb sexual violence. As sexually abusive clergy are increasingly removed from the Church and into the general community, it is important to implement effective sex offender management practices. As part of this endeavor, it is important to conduct proper risk assessment practices with this group. Currently, there is no empirically supported method for assessing risk among sexually abusive clergy. Indeed, institutions currently responsible for assessing clergy often resort to assessment practices of convenience, many of which lack empirical support. For example, some evaluators simply ask clergy whether they feel remorse for abusing children (Sawyer & Applewhite, 2009), despite the apparent lack of relationship between full acceptance for sexual perpetration and recidivism among child molesters (Nunes et al., 2007).

Current risk assessment instruments may seemingly appear to be an attractive alternative. The utility of current risk instruments with sexually abusive clergy likely will depend in part on the extent that the offense and offender characteristics of sexually abusive clergy are similar to those of the general sex offender population. Some have theorized that sexually abusive clergy are no different than sex offenders in the community (e.g., Dale & Alpert, 2007). Following that stance, one could argue that the knowledge we have about sex offenders would provide the information needed about sexually abusive clergy to develop proper evaluation methods. To that

end, the tools currently used to assess convicted sex offenders might therefore be used to assess sexually abusive clergy. Implications of some research findings provide credence to the potential application of current sex offender instruments with clergy. Some of the preliminary examinations of offense and offender characteristics surrounding Catholic Church sexual abuse complement findings regarding those same characteristics surrounding sexual abuse in the community. A substantial portion of clergy sexual abuse occurs in the cleric residence (Terry, 2008). Such findings are consistent with the offending patterns of convicted sex offenders, who also tend to commit offenses in residential locations (Smallbone & Wortley, 2000). In addition, patterns such as earlier onset of offending and having male victims have been associated with repeat offending in both clergy (Mercado et al., 2008) and sex offenders (Proeve et al., 2006). Overall, some common etiological markers have been identified among community sex offenders and sexually abusive clergy as well as some common factors associated with persistent sexually abusive behavior.

On the other hand, some empirically observed differences between sexually abusive clergy and community sex offenders highlight the notion that sexually abusive clergy may be a unique subgroup of sex offenders. Some general findings in the sex offender literature have not been observed in early analyses of abusive clergy. A substantial portion (40%) of convicted sex offenders abuse either relatives (including, but not exclusively, children) or complete strangers (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003), but none of the victims in the John Jay College (2004) investigation fit into either category. In addition, most victims in the community are female (Bureau of Justice Statistics), but most victims in Church abuse cases are male (Terry, 2008). Overall, direct comparisons (e.g., Haywood et al., 1996; Ukeritis, 2005) and separate analyses (e.g., John Jay College, 2006) suggest that sexually abusive priests tend to be older, have more

male victims, have fewer victims overall, and report less psychological dysfunction than convicted sex offenders. All of these characteristics impact sex offender risk assessment (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Hanson et al., 1993) and would thus seemingly affect the outcomes of risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy.

Regarding the extension of current sex offender assessment techniques to sexually abusive clergy, findings on the validity of risk instruments with unique sex offender subgroups may provide insight into the potential utility of current risk assessment instruments with sexually abusive clergy. Instruments such as the Static-99 are better at predicting future offenses among child molesters than among rapists with adult victims (Harris et al., 2003). Although it is possible some clergy have sexually assaulted adults, the Catholic Church abuse scandal and subsequent research have first and foremost concerned the sexual abuse of children, making it conceivable that current risk tools such as the Static-99 would be particularly helpful with assessing abusive clergy despite not being developed with clergy specifically in mind. In addition, the MnSOST-R and MnSOST-3 were developed with extrafamilial abusers in mind (rather than incest offenders). This focus would support their potential utility with sexually abusive clergy, who as a group are extrafamilial abusers.

Arguments for the application of sex offender assessment tools to sexually abusive clergy, however, may not ultimately be supported because of inherent differences within the clergy population that must be considered. The unique circumstances surrounding clergy life suggests that no matter how similar some trends may be between sex offenders and abusive priests, some assessment factors, particularly in their current state, have essentially no value in assessing abuse in the Catholic Church. For instance, based on research of sex offenders in the community, the Static-99 differentiates between extrafamilial offenders and incest offenders,

with those who abuse acquaintances or strangers scored as a higher risk for later offending than those who abuse their own children. Given that clergy are prohibited from marrying or being sexually active, it is highly unlikely that any clergy sexual abuse would involve incest offenses, meaning clergy would not be differentiated on this factor. Also, although younger sex offenders and priests are at higher risk for having multiple victims, the cutoff for young offenders on the Static-99 (age 25 or younger) is not practical for determining young clergy abusers, considering the absolute minimum ordination age is 24 (John Jay College, 2004). Although such complications would compromise the ability to compare relative risk across clergy, it remained unclear whether such distinctions would improve risk assessment for clergy overall.

In a preliminary investigation into this area, Montana and colleagues (2012) examined the predictive accuracy of the Static-99 with 337 clergy who had completed treatment for sexual abuse of a child. Relapse rates were lower than aggregated sexual recidivism rates in the general literature (less than 10%). Results demonstrated minimal variance of Static-99 scores, with most clergy receiving a score of 3 for having unrelated victims, having male victims, and never being married. Clergy whose risk scores deviated from a 3 had significantly different recidivism rates: lower rates for scores below 3 and higher rates for scores above 3. Although the findings provide preliminary support for the Static-99's utility with sexually abusive clergy, the authors urged for increased sample sizes and additional types of analysis to better understand how current risk assessment techniques can assist in assessing clergy.

If risk instruments in their current form are ultimately of poorer utility with clergy, a potential solution could be to accommodate for certain issues by recalibrating factors from current measures that cannot properly assess clergy in their current states. For example, one could hypothesize that if younger clergy were more likely to engage in further abuse, a higher

cutoff for differentiating older and younger priests could be useful in assessing risk. Certain factors, such as victim relationship, would be more difficult to adjust, however. Indeed, a prior attempt to examine victim relationship for sexually abusive priests in terms of social intimacy with the victim or victim's family failed to provide significant insight into clergy abuse (Perillo et al., 2008).

Beyond issues with recalibrating certain factors, it is important to consider that although some similarities between sexually abusive clergy and convicted sex offenders have been observed, concluding that sexually abusive clergy fit solidly as a subgroup of sex offenders is, at this point, premature. Preliminary studies directly comparing sex offenders and abusive clergy found similarities when accounting for potential differences in factors often important to risk assessment, such as age. Indeed, sexually abusive clergy tend to be older, more educated, and less psychologically disturbed than convicted sex offenders (Ukeritis, 2005). Even if clergy showed similar offender and offense characteristics when controlling for certain traits, these factors are not controlled when conducting actual sex offender risk assessments. These issues must be considered when evaluating similarities between sexually abusive clergy and sex offenders.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overall, restricted access to information has long prevented thorough examinations into sexual abuse among Catholic clergy. The combination of the unique circumstances surrounding sexual abuse of this nature and the limited available data has concerned those who aim to address the problem. For those who sought to address Church sexual abuse, it appeared that the existing knowledge on sexual abuse was on too limited a scope to be directly applicable to sexually abusive clergy. Empirical research with sexually abusive clergy is generally lacking, as are comparisons of these clergy with other sex offenders that would provide insight into the generality of existing sex offender knowledge to clergy. As research on various subgroups of sex offenders suggests, special consideration may be necessary during risk assessment to accommodate for distinct characteristics and the unique context of certain subgroups (see Doren, 2006a). To that end, an understanding beyond the direct applicability of current sex offender risk assessment instruments to sexually abusive clergy toward an understanding of what (if any) modifications to current practices improve assessment with clergy would assist in developing proper methods for risk assessment. It is with this in mind that the current project was developed.

## CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW

The current series of studies was designed to incrementally provide insight into the utility of current risk assessment techniques with sexually abusive clergy. First, empirically relevant offender and offense trends across the course of the offending careers for sexually abusive clergy were compared to those for a sample of convicted sex offenders. Second, the patterns of abuse among sexually abusive clergy were examined to identify clergy who sexually abused additional victims following earlier intervention (recidivists). Third, sex offender risk assessment instruments were coded retroactively for sexually abusive clergy, using archival data obtained from diocesan records. These instruments' abilities to distinguish sexually abusive clergy who did or did not recidivate were explored and in turn compared to findings from a sample of convicted sex offenders. Next, factors found to be poor indicators of clergy recidivism were re-examined to determine whether modified approaches to these factors (e.g., elevating or lowering cutoff scores) increased their utility with sexually abusive clergy. Additionally, other factors of potential importance to clergy were examined to determine what other factors predicted recidivism among clergy and, in turn, may contribute to clergy risk assessment. Finally, on the basis of modifications for this specific offender subgroup, a modified version of these risk instruments (based on the re-examination of poor factors and examination of additional factors of predicting clergy recidivism) was developed to examine its utility with sexually abusive clergy.

In sum, the set of studies in this project attempt to address the following questions:

1. To what extent are sexually abusive clergy and other sex offenders—and their offense patterns—similar?
2. How well do current sex offender risk assessment instruments predict recidivism for sexually abusive clergy?

3. Can risk assessment instruments be modified—by removing, adding, or adjusting risk items—to be of better utility with sexually abusive clergy?

The above questions were addressed through a series of three studies, which are detailed in the subsequent sections.

## CHAPTER 7: STUDY ONE: COMPARISON OF LIFELONG OFFENSE AND OFFENDER PATTERNS FOR CLERGY AND GENERAL SEX OFFENDERS

### Study One Method

#### Data

Data for this study ( $N = 6,934$ ) originated from two independent datasets, both based on archival data. One sample (*clergy* sample) was derived from archival clergy data gathered during the John Jay College (2004) investigation into the nature, causes, and context of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church as requested by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This dataset includes records from 4,090 clergy with documented allegations of sexual abuse against children over a 52-year period (1950-2002). The clergy sample consists predominantly of priests (94.0%), with a small portion of deacons (1.0%), seminarians (0.4%), and bishops (0.1%). Cleric status was unknown for the remaining 4.5% of the sample.

The original John Jay College investigation included both a cleric survey and a victim survey sent to each U.S. diocese. The cleric survey included questions about documented information on each priest in a diocese with at least one allegation of child sexual abuse against him. Data obtained from these surveys include cleric background (such as age, history of substance abuse, and history of sexual victimization) and composite descriptions of those who made allegations of sexual abuse (such as number of allegations, victim gender, and victim age at the time of abuse). The victim survey focused on each allegation of child sexual abuse made against clergy. Data obtained from these surveys include individual descriptions of victims who made an allegation of sexual abuse (such as victim gender and age at onset of abuse) and information on the clergy-victim relationship outside of the sexual abuse (such as whether the priest took the victim on trips or socialized with the family). All 202 dioceses and eparchies in

the United States, as well as the 140 U.S. religious institutes of men, were instructed to complete surveys for all allegations of child sexual abuse on record (hereby referred to as *offenses*) from 1950 to 2002.

For the clergy sample, offenses most commonly occurred within the clergy's home or residence (35.0%), with another 13.6% of offenses occurring in the Church. Offenses were reported to occur in many other settings, including the victim's home (10.7%), school (9.0%), a car (8.1%), a hotel room (7.4%), or a public outing (6.6%). Clergy were an average of 39.0 years old ( $SD = 11.1$ ) at the time of first offense. Time between first offense and facing allegations of abuse varied greatly; although clergy most commonly faced action for offenses within one year of the abuse, the average time between first offense and first response to allegations was 15.3 years ( $SD = 12.8$ ). Most offenses were handled exclusively within the Church, with only 294 clergy (7.5%) ever facing criminal charges for offenses.

The second sample (*general sample*) was derived from archival file data gathered during a National Institute of Justice-funded investigation of sex offender management, recidivism, and Sexually Violent Predator (SVP) commitment in New Jersey. This dataset includes records of 2,844 male sex offenders who were incarcerated for a sexual offense in New Jersey and released from custody over an 11-year period (1996-2007). Although the offenders in this general sample were released between the years 1996 and 2007, the sexual offenses for which they were convicted often occurred several years (and sometimes decades) earlier, making the time frame of sexual offending in the general sample more in line with that covered in the clergy sample. Data gathered include demographic characteristics, offense history, victim characteristics, and static risk factors found to be associated with sexual offense recidivism. Those offenders from

the general sample who were identified as clergy at the time of incarceration ( $n = 8$ ) were excluded from the sample.

The general sample includes offenders with a variety of sex offenses; however, a substantial portion of offenders (77.9%) have a record of contact offenses against children. Victims were predominantly female (84.2%). A significant portion of victims were immediate, related, or step-family (36.9%). One-quarter of the general sample was unemployed at the time of incarceration (25.7%;  $n = 703$ ). Of those employed, a small portion ( $n = 68$ ) were noted to have committed a sex offense in the context of their employment. Offenders from the general sample were an average 29.5 years old ( $SD = 11.2$ ) at the time of their first sex offense.

### **Measures**

Group comparisons were based on items from two sex offender risk assessment instruments, the Static-99 and MnSOST-R. Variations of the Static-99 (the RRASOR and Static-99R) were also included for analysis; thus, a total of four sex offender risk assessment instruments were used. Items and scoring for these instruments are included in Appendices A-D. Because the current study focused on offender and offense patterns over the course of offending, some of the specific items were omitted or refined for the purposes of analysis (see the Procedures section for additional information).

Except where otherwise noted, instrument items were coded in the same fashion as established on the instrument protocols. For the clergy sample, diocese records were coded for extensive information about each accused clergy (e.g., history of substance abuse) and the sum of their corresponding abuse allegations (e.g., age of victims and whether victims were threatened). Data for the general (i.e., non-clergy) sex offender sample were based on records

from multiple correctional facilities and one corrections-based sex offender treatment facility in New Jersey.

Many of the case files in the general sample included completed risk assessment measures for the Static-99 and MnSOST-R as coded by clinicians. To maximize uniformity in the data collection across samples, however, documented file data were used to score the measures during the current study instead of relying on prior clinician-scored data. The other instruments included in the current study (RRASOR and Static-99R) were also scored based on available file data. Two coders (the current investigator and a post-doctoral level research assistant) scored all items. Coding was reviewed for agreement, and discrepancies between scores were resolved through discussion between both coders.

### **Procedure**

Cases from the clergy and general samples were merged into a single dataset with an additional group identification (i.e., clergy or general) variable included for each case. Between-group comparisons were based on items from the Static-99 and MnSOST-R. These items focus on offender and offense trends found relevant to recidivism risk, including victim gender, victim relationship, substance abuse history, completion of offense-related treatment, and use of force against victims. The scope of analysis in the current study, however, differs from that for traditional risk assessment. Whereas traditional risk assessment examines the presence of risk factors at a specific point in time, the current study focuses on the presence of these factors across the course of an offender's record. Such an approach was used in order to get a more thorough look into the extent that sexually abusive clergy offend in ways that would be relevant to risk assessment (an approach more in line with traditional risk assessment techniques is then used in Study 2, when recidivism is examined).

Because the current study examines trends across offending, there is no index offense that provides a basis for determining the presence of risk factors. Instead, items were assessed for their presence at any point. As an illustration of the difference in this approach, in traditional risk assessment of the MnSOST-R item concerning *different victim age groups*, only those victims prior to and including the index offense would be considered in scoring the item; this item could hypothetically be scored differently at a later date if subsequent offenses occurred against victims or different age groups. In the current study, this item considers all victims and reflects whether this risk factor ultimately presented itself at some point in the offender's offense record. Items were also coded for lifetime prevalence when appropriate. For example, for items regarding a history of sex crimes (e.g., the Static-99 item for *prior sex offenses*), total number of offenses on record was used to code the item. Items that focus specifically on an index offense (e.g., the MnSOST-R item concerning whether the offender will be on supervised release for the index offense) were excluded from analysis, with one exception: offender age. The three items regarding offender age (on the Static-99, Static-99R, and MnSOST-R) were coded for the offender's age at the first opportunity for risk assessment. For the general sample, this factor was offender age when first convicted of a sex crime. For the clergy sample, this factor was offender age when first facing action for sexual abuse against children. In all other cases, items were coded in the same fashion as in the risk measure from which they were derived.

## CHAPTER 8: STUDY ONE RESULTS

Most likely impacted by the circumstances surrounding clergy life and working within the Catholic Church, the clergy sample exhibited little-to-no variance on several risk items. For example, all clergy victims were unrelated to the offender, but none were strangers. Other items with minimal variance for clergy include history of non-sexual violence, being younger than age 25 at time of offense, ever being married (or co-habiting with a partner for at least two years), and history of adolescent antisocial behavior. The minimal variance on these items can be attributed to both the circumstances of clergy life and a lack of available records on other items. For the general sample, variance of scores was observed on all risk items.

Table 1.1 includes chi-square comparisons between clergy and general sex offenders on risk items. Compared to general sex offenders, sexually abusive clergy showed distinct patterns on most risk items measured, including all items on the Static-99, Static-99R, and RRASOR. Cramer's  $V$  statistics reveal large effect sizes for three of the items from these measures: sex offenses, with clergy having significantly more offenses on record than general offenders ( $V = .80$ ); ever being married, with significantly fewer clergy ever being married or living with a lover for at least two years ( $V = .68$ ); and having a male victim, with a significantly larger portion of clergy having male victims ( $V = .52$ ). Another three items were observed to have medium effect sizes: clergy were significantly less likely to have history of non-sexual violence ( $V = .49$ ), significantly more likely to have an unrelated victim ( $V = .42$ ), and significantly less likely to have a stranger victim ( $V = .38$ ). For items from the MnSOST-R, clergy abusers presented with significantly different patterns on all but two items. There were no significant differences between clergy abusers and general offenders with regard to the number of sex-related convictions or the number of different age groups offended against. The former would appear to

contradict the earlier mentioned findings regarding clergy having significantly more victims; however, the criteria and cutoff scores of these items differ in such a way to make such trends possible. Large effect sizes were observed for two MnSOST-R items: clergy were significantly less likely to have physically threatened or used physical force against victims ( $V = .78$ ) or to have committed multiple types of sexual acts (e.g. incidents of both fondling and oral sex) against a single victim ( $V = .59$ ). Medium effect sizes were observed for four items: clergy were significantly less likely to have a history of adolescent antisocial behavior ( $V = .49$ ), substance abuse ( $V = .39$ ), or disciplinary action during an incarceration ( $V = .39$ ) and were significantly less likely to have offended against strangers ( $V = .38$ ). Finally, although there were only small effect sizes for offender age at first event when following the coding schemes of the risk instruments, clergy were significantly older than general sex offenders at first documented offense,  $t(5,026.5) = 31.7, p < .001, r = .41$ , an average of approximately ten years (9.4, 95% CI [8.9, 10.0]).

Although the clergy abusers and general offenders significantly differed on the presence of most risk items, these trends did not appear to push heavily in one direction with regard to higher or lower risk for one group. Of the five items that had large effect sizes for clergy abuser and general offender differences, three items differed in a direction of higher risk for clergy (i.e., clergy were more likely to present in the category indicative of higher risk), and two items differed in the direction of lower risk. In contrast, clergy differed from general offenders in ways indicative of lower risk for six of seven items with medium effect sizes.

Results of the above analyses highlight differences on risk-relevant factors between sexually abusive clergy and a broad representation of sex offenders. To examine the extent that offense and offending trends differed for clergy compared to offenders similar to their offense

and demographic subset, analyses were repeated with two subsets of the general sample: those that only had child victims ( $n = 1,574$ ) and those with a similar level of education, defined as post-high school education ( $n = 413$ ). For both sets of follow-up analysis, equal samples of clergy cases were randomly selected from the database for comparison.

Results of these analyses are presented in Table 1.2. For both subset comparisons, all statistically significant differences remained with one exception: when compared specifically to offenders with child victims and those of higher education, clergy were no more likely to have a victim between ages 13 and 15. Analyses of offenders with only child victims revealed similar effect sizes, with clergy again particularly more likely to have more victims and have never been married (or co-habitated) and particularly less likely to have used physical threats or force and have offended in multiple ways against the same victim. For analysis with offenders of higher education, clergy continued to be more likely to have male victims, but the strength of this effect was reduced from a large effect to a medium effect bordering on small ( $V = .30$ ). Overall, the trends of different offender and offense characteristics for clergy and general sex offenders were fairly consistent across both broad and specific comparisons.

## CHAPTER 9: STUDY ONE DISCUSSION

Many of our current sex offender management practices are rooted in research of sexual abuse in the community. These studies have rarely included sexually abusive clergy, an issue that until recently had been handled primarily within the Church and outside many traditional practices. The current study was designed to create an aerial snapshot of the course of offending for sexual abusive clergy and general sex offenders in order to compare these groups on factors found relevant to approaching sexual perpetration. The presence of offense and offender characteristics included in current actuarial risk assessment measures over the course of offending was analyzed for a large-scale sample of sexually abusive clergy. These trends were then compared to a sample of general sex offenders in the community. If sexually abusive clergy were to demonstrate similar patterns for their offenses and have similar risk-relevant characteristics to general sex offenders, addressing sexually abusive clergy in the same manner as general sex offenders would appear to have empirically based merit. If sexually abusive clergy were to demonstrate different offense patterns and be characteristically different from general sex offenders, however, an altered approach toward assessing sexually abusive clergy may be warranted.

Results of the current study point toward the latter scenario: that sexually abusive clergy have differed from general sex offenders with regard to offending patterns and personal characteristics that have long been considered relevant to sex offender management. Such findings are immediately apparent when examining the minimal variance within clergy on several items traditionally considered during risk assessment. These trends suggest sexually abusive clergy would likely present with little variance if assessed for recidivism risk with current risk measures, which could potentially hinder efforts to distinguish high-risk clergy from

lower-risk clergy. Indeed, these trends are consistent with early research with a smaller sample of clergy referred for sex offender treatment (Montana et al., 2012). A lack of variance on many of these items is likely influenced by contextual factors within the Church. For example, because most clergy do not marry or engage in sexual relationships in accordance with the vow of celibacy, it is rare for clergy to have biological or stepchildren, making it far more likely that sexual abuse victims would be unrelated to the clergy.

Beyond the lack of differences across clergy on risk-relevant factors, sexually abusive clergy differed from general sex offenders on a range of items considered for actuarial risk assessment. In particular, some robust differences in the offending patterns and personal characteristics between sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders emerged. On factors assessed on the Static-99 (and RRASOR and Static-99R), sexually abusive clergy were far more likely to have never been married, to have male victims, and to have more victims overall when compared to general sex offenders. All three of these factors would appear to be influenced to some degree by contextual factors within the Church. This includes the increased number of victims, which may have been impacted by a lack of supervision for clergy, a lack of reporting of sexual abuse, and the extent and nature of addressing abuse allegations that granted clergy continued unsupervised access to children. What remains unclear, however, is the extent that these findings would be different had these clergy abused in the general community. For example, sexually abusive clergy were more likely to have male victims, a trend that runs opposed to trends in the community, where the preponderance of sexual abuse victims are female. Given that clergy are far more likely to have professional and unsupervised private time with males than females (e.g., the altar service program), it is not surprising that the majority of

victims for sexually abusive clergy are male. It is unknown, however, how the rate of male victims would change (if at all) were these clergy to have offended outside the Church.

In addition to differences on Static-99 items, sexually abusive clergy differed from general sex offenders on a number of items from the MnSOST-R. Two items showed particularly strong differences: clergy were far less likely to exhibit physical force or threaten force and less likely to have committed multiple types of offenses against the same victim. These items appear slightly different than those from the Static-99 discussed previously with regard to these differences being attributed to contextual factors within the Church. With regard to differences in the use of force, one potential contextual influence is that a combination of a lack of supervision; the nature of spiritual and mentoring relationships with children; and an overall trust, influence, and authority of clergy make the use of physical force (or threats of force) unnecessary. It is less clear, however, how contextual factors may contribute to differences in the different types of offenses that may be committed against the same victim. In addition to differences on specific risk measure items, sexually abusive clergy were a significantly older group of offenders when compared to general sex offenders, with clergy as a group being approximately 10 years older than general sex offenders when committing their first offense.

When compared to general sex offenders on factors currently considered in sex offender management, sexually abusive clergy present with different offense patterns and personal characteristics. Further analyses were conducted to evaluate the extent that these differences could be attributed to clergy being a completely unique offender subgroup as opposed to resembling a subset already within the general sex offender population. Namely, follow-up analysis examined whether sexually abusive clergy continued to have different offense and personal characteristic patterns when compared exclusively to general offenders with child

victims or general offenders also of higher education. When clergy were compared to these subgroups, the differences that had been identified in the overall comparison remained fairly consistent, although the strength of these trends did weaken to a degree in comparisons to sex offenders of higher education. Overall, the findings suggest sexually abusive clergy represent a unique subset of sex offender that have demonstrated different offense patterns over their course of offending. As such, unique or altered considerations may be warranted when addressing clergy sexual abuse. Future analyses with sexually abusive clergy may include comparisons with narrower subsets of general sex offenders to further refine how unique a subgroup sexually abusive clergy may be. Although the current study compared sexually abusive clergy to a subset of offenders with child victims, comparisons specifically to general offenders whose victims were extrafamilial boys, for example, may offer additional insight into the extent clergy differences are a product of victim choice relative to additional unique contextual factors.

Despite widespread differences between sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders on risk-relevant factors, a pattern did not emerge that would offer a clear picture into how these differences would impact risk for future offending. On the one hand, stark differences such as sexually abusive clergy having a higher rate of offending against unrelated victims, having more victims, and having never been married would seemingly increase risk for future offending. On the other hand, differences such as sexually abusive clergy having lower rates of using force, lower rates of non-sexual violence, and lower rates of substance abuse would seemingly *decrease* risk for future offending. These interpretations, however, are based on our understanding of recidivism risk for general sex offenders. As sexually abusive clergy appear to differ from general sex offenders on the presence of risk-relevant factors in a variety of ways, it

is conceivable they may also differ from general sex offenders with regard to what factors are important to recidivism risk.

The results overall have potential implications for risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy. With the trends of sexually abusive clergy on risk-relevant items being unlike those of general sex offenders, overall risk scores at a particular point in time would also be likely to differ for sexually abusive clergy. Given that these measures were developed with general sex offenders, it is likely that these differences would have a detrimental effect on the measures' ability to predict recidivism for clergy. In addition, risk assessment items are configured in a manner intended to help distinguish those at higher or lower risk for recidivism. Many of these items had minimal or zero variance of sexually abusive clergy, making it less likely that these items in their current form would differentiate clergy at different levels of risk. The lack of variance on several risk factors suggests that summed risk scores for sexually abusive clergy would also have less variance and use less of the scale for these measures, further hindering their ability to differentiate clergy at different levels of risk. Whether certain factors, different cutoff points for these factors, or certain overall scores may be particularly important to recidivism risk for clergy remains unclear.

Although several results from the current study suggest current risk measures would perform more poorly with sexually abusive clergy, conclusions about the use of current risk measures with clergy are limited by several factors. First, the current study provides insight into the prevalence of factors included in risk assessment over the course of offending, while risk assessment focuses on the presence of factors at a particular point in time. Additionally, risk assessment conclusions are based on a summation of factors. The focus of the current study required items to be examined only individually and in isolation and did not allow for an

examination of how factors incrementally contributed to differences between clergy and general offenders. Finally, recidivism was not assessed in the current study. The lack of available data on sexually abusive clergy outside of the John Jay College investigation has generally prevented such examinations with clergy from taking place. Without recidivism data, it is unclear whether re-offending by clergy who have been addressed for sexual abuse is an issue, either in general or to the same magnitude as for general sex offenders. Recidivism data is also necessary in order to examine how differences on risk-relevant items actually impact our ability to assess sexually abusive clergy, both overall and in comparison to other sex offenders.

Taken together, Study 1 examines issues relevant to risk assessment but not in a manner from which direct conclusions about risk assessment utility can be made. The next study (Study 2) attempts to expand upon Study 1 by directly examining recidivism and recidivism risk at a specific point in time. The study is thus designed to examine overall recidivism rates for sexually abusive clergy and the extent that the differences found in Study 1 may actually impact the use of current risk assessment instruments with sexually abusive clergy.

**CHAPTER 10: STUDY TWO: PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF CURRENT RISK  
MEASURES WITH SEXUALLY ABUSIVE CLERGY AND GENERAL SEX  
OFFENDERS**

**Method**

**Data**

Data for this study were derived from a subset of the clergy and general samples described in Study 1. The clergy sample consists of those clergy with a documented case of engaging in child sexual abuse and against whom an official action by the Church was made to address this abuse. Examples of actions by the Church include referral for psychological evaluation, suspension and reinstatement, formal reprimand, and referral for treatment. Clergy cases were excluded under any of the following conditions: the clergy was not active in the Church (e.g., retired, deceased, or defrocked for another reason) at the time of the first sexual abuse allegation, the clergy resigned in response to the allegation, the clergy was suspended following an abuse allegation with no record of reinstatement, or there was no available information on the Church's response to any allegations. Overall, records from 890 clergy satisfied all conditions and were included in Study 2.

For the general sample, recidivism data were obtained via the New Jersey State Police criminal records database for those offenders released from the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) between the years 1996 and 2007 following an incarceration for a sexual offense. These records were obtained via the New Jersey State Police Computerized Criminal History System and the National Crime Information Center's Interstate Identification Unit; thus, the recidivism data account for criminal offenses across all United States jurisdictions, not just New Jersey. Recidivism data were collected on the number and nature of sexual and non-sexual

offenses. Recidivism data for 1,942 general sex offenders were included for this study. Combined with the data from 890 clergy offenders, Study 2 includes a case total of 2,852 offenders across both samples.

### **Procedure**

Because the clergy abuse cases in the current study were addressed primarily by the Church and rarely included police involvement, clergy cases did not include the formal arrest and conviction data commonly used in most recidivism studies. Criteria for recidivism used in this study were instead based on suggested accommodations for clergy by the Static-99 coding manual-revised (Harris, Phenix, Hanson, & Thornton, 2003). For the purposes of this study to account for the context of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, a documented complaint of sexual abuse is approached as an arrest would be in the community, and diocesan action is approached as a sentence following conviction. To that end, clergy recidivism is defined in the current study as an additional, distinct documented report of sexual abuse within 10 years of diocesan action (e.g., treatment referral, suspension and reinstatement, etc.) against that same clergy for sexual abuse. Reports were excluded if the abuse was alleged to have occurred prior to diocesan action.

Based on the criteria above, abuse and diocesan response histories for the clergy sample were reviewed to categorize clergy as recidivists or non-recidivists. As previously noted, clergy were excluded if they could not be confirmed to have had opportunity to recidivate because they were no longer active in the Church at the time of the first sexual abuse allegation, resigned, or were suspended and never reinstated following a record of abuse. Recidivism was coded by the investigator or post-doctoral level research assistant who received instruction on the coding criteria. A sample of 89 cases (10% of the clergy sample) was randomly selected to be coded by

both coders. Disagreements in coding were reviewed, discussed, and reexamined by both coders jointly.

Recidivism data for the general offender sample were based on official police and criminal justice records; thus, more commonly used criteria involving rearrest data were used to code for recidivism in this group. Recidivism was defined as an additional conviction for a sex offense following release from prison for a sex offense conviction. Because clergy records focused specifically on sexual abuse allegations, only cases of sexual recidivism (and not general or violent, non-sexual recidivism) were considered for the general sample. Recidivism data were coded by trained graduate students.

As in Study 1, archival case data were used to score items from the risk measures included in this study. For the clergy sample, risk assessment items were retroactively scored for the time when clergy would first face such an assessment: the time of first diocesan action. As such, items concerning offense or offender characteristics were scored in accordance with the data that would have been available at the time of first diocesan action. For example, for the Static-99 item concerning having *any male victim*, only male victims that were documented at the time of first diocesan action would be considered during scoring. Items concerning offender age were determined by clergy's age at first diocesan action, and items concerning an index offense were based on the offense for which clergy faced diocesan action. For the general sample, items were scored based on the data available prior to release. One concern in comparing clergy and general sex offenders in the current study was that scoring risk items with different timeframes of reference would create artificial differences on risk scores and recidivism predictability between the groups. To account for potential differences in the timeframe assessed for recidivism, follow-up analysis was conducted including only those from the general sample

who had no prior sex offenses on record ( $n = 1,467$ ). Such analysis places both samples (clergy and general) at similar timeframes in their offending careers (i.e., after first offense) at the time of risk assessment.

Risk assessment items were scored in accordance with the coding schemes included for each instrument. Total scores were computed by summing the scores for all items as instructed by each instrument's manual. See Appendices A-D for the scoring procedures for the included risk assessment instruments.

## CHAPTER 11: STUDY TWO RESULTS

### Clergy Recidivism and Risk Assessment Descriptives

Of the 890 clergy examined for recidivism, 125 committed an additional sex offense against a child. This represents an overall sexual recidivism rate of 14.0% for clergy, a figure that is in line with sexual recidivism rates reported in the community (e.g., Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004). Given the nature of data collected in the current study, information on possible violent (non-sexual) or general recidivism for clergy could not be assessed. In comparison to rates from the general offender sample in the current study, clergy sexual recidivism rates were significantly higher (although to a small degree) when compared to sexual recidivism rates of the general sample (5.0% ;  $t(2,830) = 8.97, p < .001, r = .16$ ). If all types of recidivism (including non-sexual) were considered for the general sample (38.0%), clergy show significantly lower recidivism rates ( $t(2,830) = -13.3, p < .001, r = .51$ ).

Table 2.1 details the distribution of risk scores calculated for sexually abusive clergy. RRASOR scores can range from 0 to 4, Static-99 scores from 0 to 10, and Static-99R scores from -3 to 10. Little variance is observed with regard to RRASOR scores, as all clergy received a risk score of 2 (77.6%) or 1 (22.4%) on the measure. The minimal variance on total RRASOR scores can be attributed to the items included; only one item (*any male victim*) was scored with any variation across the sample. Static-99 scores also had a restricted range, with almost all clergy receiving a score of 3 (73.3%) or 2 (22.0%). This resulted in 95.3% of the clergy sample being placed in the Medium-Low risk category for recidivism. Clergy received a wider range of scores on the Static-99R, which deviates from the Static-99 only in the way offender age is scored. In terms of risk categories for recidivism on the Static-99R, 39.7% of clergy placed in the Low risk category, 50.4% in the Medium-Low category, and 9.9% in the Medium-High

category. Such trends suggest offender age greatly influences actuarial risk scores on these measures.

On the MnSOST-R, a wider range of scores was observed for clergy abusers on the Historical subscale, from a low score of -10 ( $n = 427$ ; 10.4%) to a high score of 3 ( $n = 5$ ; 0.1%). Clergy abuses had a mean score of -6.05 ( $SD = 2.88$ ) on the Historical subscale. Four scores accounted for over 10% of clergy each: -10, -8 (12.2%), -6 (15.5%), and -4 (14.6%). Less variance was observed on the Dynamic subscale, with over 90% of clergy abusers scoring a -2 or -1 on the scale. Total MnSOST-R scores ranged from -12 to 2. It should be noted that the MnSOST-R offers more variability on scoring each individual item, particularly when compared to the Static-99 (and RRASOR). All items on the Static-99 are dichotomous and have only two scoring options for each item: 0 or 1. In comparison, many items on the MnSOST-R have more than two options to be scored, and scoring for each item is weighted in a non-linear, non-ordinal fashion. These differences in scoring allow for a larger scoring discrepancy across options with each item on the MnSOST-R, which likely contributes to the larger variance in final risk scores on the MnSOST-R.

### **Between-group Comparisons on Risk Scores and Factors**

Total risk scores were calculated for clergy abusers and general offenders for the Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R. Scores for the two subscales of the MnSOST-R (Historical and Dynamic) were also calculated. Between group comparisons were made with the clergy sample and the general sample then repeated with matched subsets of the general sample: child victims only, post-high school education, and first-time offenders. Table 2.2 includes the mean scores of the clergy and general samples on the risk assessment instruments and between-group comparisons of the clergy sample to the general sample and subsets.

Compared to the general offenders, clergy had significantly higher risk scores on the Static-99 ( $t(1,640) = 7.14, p < .001, r = .17$ ) and, in particular, the RRASOR ( $t(1,864) = 19.71, p < .001, r = .42$ ). No differences were observed between total risk scores on the Static-99R for clergy abusers and general offenders ( $t(1,700) = -.35, p = ns$ ). These trends remained consistent when comparing clergy risk scores to those of general offenders with only child victims or of higher education. When compared only to general offenders who had their first offense on record at the time of risk assessment (the relative timeframe used for clergy), clergy abusers had significantly higher risk scores on the Static-99 ( $t(668) = 4.08, p < .001, r = .16$ ), but no significant differences were observed for scores on the Static-99R or RRASOR.

For comparisons with the MnSOST-R, clergy had significantly lower Historical ( $t(1,924) = -41.48, p < .001, r = .69$ ) and Dynamic ( $t(2,058) = -9.58, p < .001, r = .21$ ) subscale scores and lower total scores ( $t(1,369) = -39.40, p < .001, r = .73$ ) than the general sample. Clergy scores on these scales remained significantly lower when compared specifically to general offenders with only child victims or those of high education. These differences, however, were not statistically significant when only first-time offenders were included in the analysis.

Between-group chi-square comparisons were conducted to compare the clergy and general samples on individual items on the risk instruments. Table 2.3 summarizes item and total scores on these measures, and Table 2.4 includes the results of comparisons of clergy abusers with general offenders on the items from the Static-99, Static-99R, and RRASOR. Compared to the general sample, the clergy sample differed on all items significant at the  $p < .001$  level, with one exception: clergy scored significantly lower on the non-contact sex offences item at the  $p < .05$  level. Large effect sizes were observed for two items: clergy scored higher on the items regarding male victims ( $V = .64$ ) and never being married ( $V = .62$ ). Medium effects were

observed for three items: clergy scored significantly lower on items regarding prior non-sexual violence ( $V = .38$ ) and prior sentencing dates ( $V = .37$ ) but significantly higher on the item regarding having unrelated victims ( $V = .37$ ). These trends remained consistent when clergy were compared to subsets of the general sample (child victims only, post-high school education, and first-time offenders); however, for these subsets there were no longer statistically significant differences on the Static-99R age item.

Table 2.5 lists results of comparisons of clergy abusers with general offenders on items from the MnSOST-R. Clergy differed from general offenders on all items significant at the  $p < .001$  level with one exception: clergy were less likely to have completed sex offender treatment at the  $p < .05$  level. Large effect sizes were observed on two items: clergy were less likely to have used force ( $V = .70$ ) or to have committed multiple acts on a victim ( $V = .57$ ). Medium effect sizes were observed on four items: clergy scored differently on items related to recent steady employment ( $V = .45$ ), prior sex offences ( $V = .42$ ), adolescent antisocial behavior ( $V = .36$ ), and substance abuse history ( $V = .30$ ). Trends remained fairly consistent when analyses were repeated with general offenders who only had child victims or were first-time offenders. For comparisons between clergy and general offender of higher education, large and medium effect sizes remained intact, but some other items were no longer significantly different. For this comparison, clergy and general offenders were similarly coded for items regarding having a victim between ages 13 and 15, receiving substance abuse treatment, and receiving sex abuse treatment following an allegation.

Chi-square analyses were also conducted to compare risk categorizations of clergy abusers to general offenders on the Static-99 and Static-99R (see Table 2.4). Significant differences between clergy and general samples were found on all comparison for the Static-99

and Static-99R. A large effect was observed for clergy being more likely to be classified at medium risk categories when compared to the entire general sample ( $V = .51$ ), only those with child victims ( $V = .61$ ), those of higher education ( $V = .59$ ), and first-time offenders ( $V = .61$ ). These differences, although statistically significant, were much smaller for the Static-99R (range of  $V = .20-.23$ ).

### **Risk Measures and Identifying Recidivists**

Of the 890 clergy abusers included in this study, 125 (14%) were identified as recidivists. To examine the extent that clergy recidivists and non-recidivists differed on risk measure items, chi-square analysis was conducted comparing these groups on items from the Static-99, Static-99R, and RRASOR (see Table 2.6). Chi-square analysis requires a degree of variance on factors measured and a minimum number of cases in each category assessed. As was the case in Study 1, several risk items had zero variance, with all clergy scoring the same on an item. This lack of variance may be attributed to a combination of factors, namely the circumstances surrounding clergy and clergy sexual abuse (e.g., all victims would be expected to be unrelated to the abuser), homogeneity of clergy themselves (e.g., tend to be older and more educated), and incomplete or lack of data available in the study. Of the 11 items from the Static-99 instruments (10 from the Static-99 and a revised age variable for the Static-99R), six had no variance in scores, with all clergy (recidivists and non-recidivists alike) scoring the same on that item. Chi-square analysis could thus not be conducted with these items, and the universal scoring of these items indicate they do not distinguish clergy recidivists from non-recidivists. Of the remaining items, only the age item of the Static-99R differentiated clergy recidivists and non-recidivists,  $X^2(df = 616) = 19.90, p < .001, V = .18$ . Examination of the Static-99R age item revealed a linear association between item score and recidivism. The Static-99R age item has four scoring options from -3 to

1, with the highest score (1) going to the youngest abusers and lower scores going to older clergy. As the score on this item increased (associated with younger abusers), so did the proportion of clergy recidivists. Recidivism rates on the Static-99R age item were as follows: 9.4% for those 60 and older, 14.8% for those age 40 to 59, 20.0% for those age 35 to 39, and 30.4% for those 34 and younger.

Both the Static-99 and Static-99R assign offenders to one of four risk categories according to their total risk score. Despite the lack of significant differences on individual items of the Static-99, clergy recidivists were more likely to be in higher risk categories than were non-recidivists,  $X^2(df = 616) = 495.58, p < .001, V = .51$ . The same was the case on the Static-99R but to a lesser degree,  $X^2(df = 616) = 70.07, p < .001, V = .20$ .

Table 2.7 includes the results of comparisons between clergy recidivists and non-recidivists on items from the MnSOST-R. As was the case with the Static-99, chi-square analysis could not be conducted with five MnSOST-R items because of a lack of variance. Of the remaining 11 items, clergy recidivists differed from non-recidivists on three items: length of offending history, multiple acts on a victim, and abuser age. Compared to non-recidivists, a higher proportion of clergy recidivists had only a brief offending history documented (less than one year), were not alleged to have committed multiple types of acts on a single victim, and were age 30 or younger.

To examine risk score differences between clergy abusers and general sex offenders and between recidivists and non-recidivists, a series of 2 (group: clergy or general) x 2 (recidivism: yes or no) factorial analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to compare scores on the Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R. Results of these analyses are shown in Table 2.8. As indicated in prior analysis, clergy had significantly higher risk scores than general

offenders on the Static-99 and RRASOR and lower scores on the MnSOST-R. Differences on Static-99R risk scores for clergy abusers and general offenders were not significant. As would be expected, recidivists scored significantly higher than non-recidivists on all four risk measures, although the strength of these differences was weaker for the MnSOST-R. Notably, significant interactions between group and recidivism were observed for all four measures but were strongest for the Static-99 and MnSOST-R. For these measures, risk score differences between general recidivists and non-recidivists were of a significantly greater magnitude than risk score differences between clergy recidivists and non-recidivists.

Although several differences between clergy abusers and general sex offenders can be observed on risk measures through the above findings, the analysis above does not evaluate how well these measures actually predict recidivism for the groups. To examine the predictive accuracy of these risk measures for identifying recidivists, area under the curve (AUC) for the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) was evaluated. ROC analysis involves plotting the true positive rate (sensitivity) by the false positive rate (1 – specificity) for each score on a measure. Together, these statistics indicate the likelihood that the two groups can be distinguished from one another based on the variable being measured. For the purposes of the current study, AUC values represent a risk measure's ability to correctly classify recidivists based on total score. AUC values range from 0 to 1, with .5 being chance. In the current study, an AUC value of 1.0 would indicate that a clergy recidivist will have a higher risk score than a non-recidivist 100% of the time; thus, scores on the risk measure in question would be 100% accurate in predicting who recidivated and who did not. An AUC value of .5 would indicate the measure performed at chance level, with a clergy recidivist having a higher score than a non-recidivist 50% of the time.

To evaluate the predictive accuracy of the risk measures for clergy relative to for general offenders, ROC analysis was conducted separately for the clergy sample. Analysis was conducted on the predictive accuracy of all four measures separately (Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R) to classify recidivists and non-recidivists. Calculations were then completed to compare the AUCs of each measure for clergy abusers and general offenders, which was used to determine whether the measures performed differently with clergy.

A series of ROC analyses were first conducted with clergy only to assess each risk measure's ability to distinguish recidivists from non-recidivists. Results are summarized in Table 2.9. The Static-99R was the only risk measure to have significant predict accuracy for recidivism by clergy (AUC = .62,  $p < .001$ ;  $d = .43$ ), with clergy recidivists having a higher Static-99R score than non-recidivists 62% of the time. Both the RRASOR (AUC = .53,  $p = .33$ ) and Static-99 (AUC = .52,  $p = .63$ ) predicted recidivism among clergy at only chance levels. The MnSOST-R meanwhile performed at a *below* chance level (AUC = .46,  $p = .31$ ), suggesting predictions on clergy recidivism were actually more often to be incorrect than correct.

ROC analyses were then repeated with the four risk measures for the general sample. As was the case with the clergy sample, the Static-99R significantly predicted recidivism among general sex offenders (AUC = .68,  $p < .001$ ;  $d = .67$ ). In contrast to findings with clergy, the other three risk measures demonstrated significant predictive accuracy with the general sample. The Static-99 (AUC = .68,  $p < .001$ ;  $d = .67$ ), RRASOR (AUC = .60,  $p < .001$ ;  $d = .36$ ), and MnSOST-R (AUC = .62,  $p < .001$ ;  $d = .43$ ) all accurately predicted recidivism for general sex offenders at levels greater than chance. Although significant, the AUCs for the Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R are all weaker than the AUCs reported by the authors of their respective measures. Follow-up analysis revealed that all four risk measures had significant

predictive accuracy for those from the general sample with only child victims, of higher education, and who were first-time offenders.

Differences in AUCs ( $AUC_{diff}$ ) were calculated to compare the predictive accuracies of the Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R for clergy relative to that for general sex offenders (see Table 2.10). AUC comparisons were calculated by subtracting an AUC from the general sample from the corresponding AUC from the clergy sample; thus, an  $AUC_{diff}$  of less than 0 would suggest the measure performed worse for clergy than for the general sample, and an  $AUC_{diff}$  greater than 0 would suggest the measure performed better for clergy than for the general sample. When compared to their predictive accuracies with the general sample overall, the Static-99 ( $AUC_{diff} = -.16, p < .001$ ), RRASOR ( $AUC_{diff} = -.07, p = .03$ ), and MnSOST-R ( $AUC_{diff} = -.16, p < .001$ ) performed significantly worse when predicting recidivism for clergy. Differences in the predictive accuracy of the Static-99R for clergy abusers and general sex offenders were not statistically significant but approached significance ( $AUC_{diff} = -.06, p = .07$ ).

As done with prior analyses, follow-up analysis compared AUCs of clergy with three subsets of the general sample: those with only child victims, those of higher education, and first-time offenders. A random sample of the general offender subset was matched to an equal number of cases from the clergy sample for each comparison. Compared to their predictive accuracies with general offenders with only child victims, the Static-99 ( $AUC_{diff} = -.16, p < .001$ ), RRASOR ( $AUC_{diff} = -.08, p = .02$ ), and MnSOST-R ( $AUC_{diff} = -.17, p < .001$ ) all had significantly poorer predictive accuracies with clergy. A small but significant difference was also observed with the Static-99R ( $AUC_{diff} = -.06, p = .049$ ), a finding that was not evident with the general sample as a whole. Similar findings were observed with first-time offenders, as the Static-99 ( $AUC_{diff} = -.17, p < .001$ ), RRASOR ( $AUC_{diff} = -.09, p < .01$ ), MnSOST-R ( $AUC_{diff} = -$

.17,  $p < .001$ ), and—to a lesser extent—the Static-99R ( $AUC_{diff} = -.06, p = .04$ ) had significantly poorer predictive accuracies with clergy. Results were different, however, when comparing clergy to general sex offenders with post-high school education. The Static-99 ( $AUC_{diff} = -.12, p = .04$ ) and MnSOST-R ( $AUC_{diff} = -.15, p = .02$ ) performed slightly but significantly poorer in predicting recidivism for clergy, but no differences in performance were found for the RRASOR ( $AUC_{diff} = .02, p = .37$ ) and Static-99R ( $AUC_{diff} = .01, p = .43$ ). Overall, risk measures were stronger predictors of recidivism for general sex offenders than for clergy, although differences were inconsistent with the Static-99R. Further, differences were reduced when examining predictive accuracies for offenders of higher education.

## CHAPTER 12: STUDY TWO DISCUSSION

Results from Study 1 suggested that sexually abusive clergy differ from general sex offenders in ways that are meaningful to sex offender management; however, inferences about the actual validity of current management practices with clergy could not be made without recidivism data and an analysis of re-offense trends. The current study was designed to address these limitations through a retrospective risk assessment of clergy following a substantiated allegation of child sexual abuse. Data for recidivism and risk items were coded based on recommendations from the Static-99R on assessing risk with clergy. Results were compared to those of general sex offenders to evaluate the utility of current risk assessment measures with sexually abusive clergy in relation to other offenders and, in turn, offer recommendations regarding the use of current sex offender risk instruments with clergy.

Results suggest recidivism is likely to be as serious a concern with sexually abusive clergy as with other sex offenders. Approximately 14% of the clergy examined committed an additional sex offense after the Church had addressed them for prior offenses. This recidivism rate is within the range found in recidivism studies with sex offenders in the community, which commonly range from 10-15% (e.g., Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2004). In a previous study of clergy recidivism rates, Montana and colleagues (2012) found a recidivism rate of 6.2%, lower than the rate found in the current study. The fact that the clergy in the Montana study had all recently completed treatment—not necessary the case in the current study—likely explains these differences in recidivism rates. Overall, the clergy recidivism rate in the current study highlights the importance of identifying proper and valid management practices with sexually abusive clergy.

Despite these similarities in recidivism rates, results suggest current risk assessment measures perform quite differently when applied to sexually abusive clergy. On individual risk items, sexually abusive clergy differed from general sex offenders in ways consistent with the results from Study 1. Although clergy differed on the prevalence of risk items both in ways that increase or decrease risk scores, these trends differed across the measures assessed. For the Static-99, clergy differed most strongly from general sex offenders in ways that would increase risk, as clergy had a higher rate of having male victims and having never been married. For the MnSOST-R, however, clergy differed most strongly in ways that would decrease risk, namely having a lower rate of using physical force against victims and committing multiple types of sex acts against victims. These trends suggest risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy may produce starkly different pictures depending on the measure chosen.

Risk assessment scores of clergy also differed from what would be expected when compared to general sex offenders. Sexually abusive clergy presented with a significantly restricted range of scores on the Static-99 and RRASOR. In fact, the only item having any variance on the RRASOR was the item regarding male victims, an item that did not predict recidivism for clergy. In terms of overall scores, results were consistent with the analysis of individual risk items. When compared to general sex offenders, clergy had significantly higher risk scores on the Static-99 and RRASOR. In conjunction with these results, clergy differed from general sex offenders on risk classifications from the Static-99 and Static-99R, with clergy more represented in the moderate risk categories but less represented in the highest risk categories. Sexually abusive clergy produced significantly lower risk scores, however, on the MnSOST-R. Again, using different risk measures with clergy produced different pictures of risk.

Most of these risk measure options, however, appear to be of poor utility with sexually abusive clergy. All the risk measures included in this study significantly predicted recidivism for general sex offenders, offenders expected to generally resemble the samples used to create these measures. The RRASOR, Static-99, and MnSOST-R all performed significantly more poorly, however, when used with sexually abusive clergy. Scores on these instruments did not differentiate recidivists and non-recidivists, making their use for assessing risk with clergy highly questionable. The disparate performance on these measures remained when sexually abusive clergy were compared only to offenders with child victims or to first-time offenders and, with the exception of the RRASOR, remained when compared to general sex offenders of higher education. Taken together, these findings suggest the RRASOR, Static-99, and MnSOST-R are poor predictors of recidivism with sexually abusive clergy.

The recently revised offender age factor on the Static-99R, however, appeared to have a strong impact on risk outcomes for clergy. The Static-99R produced a wider range of risk scores for clergy than other measures, was the only measure that significantly predicted recidivism for clergy, and performed to a similar degree for clergy and general sex offenders. The Static-99R differs from the Static-99 only on the way offender age is coded, with the Static-99R using a multi-level item with significantly decreasing scores for older offenders. Abuser age thus appears to have a significant impact on risk outlooks for clergy and appears to be a key consideration for valid risk assessment practices with this group.

Overall, results of the current study suggest that recidivism is indeed a concern for sexually abusive clergy and is so to a similar magnitude as documented in prior studies with general sex offenders. Proper management of sexually abusive clergy thus serves as an important consideration as sexually abusive clergy continue to integrate with the general community. In

terms of risk assessment practices, findings suggest the Static-99R is the best available option for use with sexually abusive clergy. The Static-99R predicted recidivism for clergy to a similar degree as it did for general sex offenders; however, the strength of these predictions was only modestly above chance (with recidivists scoring higher than non-recidivists 62% of the time). Considering the inverse perspective indicates *non-recidivists* had higher risk scores 38% of the time, even the strongest results suggest much room and need for improvement. Meanwhile, the other instruments examined in the current study cannot be recommended for practice in their current forms. Specifically, the RRASOR, Static-99, and MnSOST-R significantly predicted recidivism for general sex offenders but not for sexually abusive clergy. These instruments also performed more poorly with clergy than for first time offenders or general offenders with child victims only, suggesting that sexually abusive clergy represent a unique subset of sexual abusers not sufficiently accounted for in these measures.

Although Study 2 highlights the poor utility of many current risk assessment measures, little can be offered from the results of Study 2 with regard to suitable alternatives for assessing sexually abusive clergy. Given that predictions of recidivism significantly improved by reconfiguring a single variable (offender age, as evidenced by improved performance from the Static-99 to the Static-99R), it is possible that reconfiguration of other items may further strengthen predictions of recidivism with clergy. Consideration of additional factors may additionally contribute to this goal. The next study (Study 3) is designed to examine the extent that current risk items can be modified for better use with sexually abusive clergy. Specifically, Study 3 attempts to expand upon the findings of Study 2 by exploring the utility of modified risk items and additional static factors to assess recidivism risk with clergy.

## CHAPTER 13: STUDY THREE: EXPLORING FACTORS THAT IMPROVE RISK ASSESSMENT OF SEXUALLY ABUSIVE CLERGY

### Method

#### Data

To examine the utility of a modified risk assessment approach with sexually abusive clergy, data were based on the same sample detailed in Study 2. The sample included sexually abusive clergy for whom recidivism data were available and had no missing data points for risk assessment ( $N = 616$ ). As was the case in Study 2, cases were excluded if recidivism data could not be coded because clergy were no longer active in the Church at the time of the first sexual abuse allegation, resigned, were suspended with no record of reinstatement, or had no available information on the Church's response. Because factor analysis provided a critical component of analysis in Study 3, the clergy sample was separated into two groups: (1) an exploratory sample ( $n = 308$ ) and (2) a confirmatory sample ( $n = 308$ ). Cases were placed into one of these two groups via random selection. Comparisons between the two samples on risk scores for the instruments assessed in Study 2 revealed no significant differences between the samples, suggesting the samples presented with similar levels of risk prior to analysis. An additional matched sample of randomly selected general sex offenders was originally planned to be included for comparisons with the confirmatory sample; however, comparisons were not conducted because not all the data necessary to code the factors derived in Study 3 were available for the general sample. In response, comparisons between the confirmatory sample and the general sample were based on calculations derived from Study 2 (explained in further detail in the procedures section).

Data for Study 3 were aggregated from the data used in the two preceding studies. Recidivism data, scores for the included risk measures (Static-99, Static-99R, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R), and data related to the items from these risk measures were based on data from Study 2. In addition, data for considering additional risk items were derived from the John Jay College cleric and victim surveys described in Study 1. Victim survey data (e.g., type of sexual abuse, nature of clergy-victim relationship) were based on the first victim (or, in some cases, first victims) for whom clergy faced diocesan action, as the offense against this victim was considered the *index offense* for the purposes of the current study.

### **Procedure**

Data from half of the clergy sample were randomly selected to be included in exploratory factor analysis (EFA). EFA was attempted to evaluate the relationships among items from sex offender risk instruments the Static-99 (and its variants) and MnSOST-R to present a picture of what is being assessed and, in turn, assist in predicting which sexually abusive clergy do and do not recidivate. Several issues emerged, however, that hindered the ability to conduct factor analysis specifically of current risk items. First, factor analysis requires each included item to have some level of scoring variance. As presented in Study 2, several items from the evaluated risk measures had no variance across scores for clergy (e.g., stranger victims on the Static-99), with all clergy scoring the same on those items. Second, factor analysis requires items to be correlated with other items (e.g., above  $|.31|$  but below  $|.91|$ ) in order to produce meaningful, interpretable factors. Follow-up factor analysis was attempted after removing all items with no variance; however, correlations across items were almost universally poor (below  $.2$ ), with no items significantly correlating with more than two others. Indeed, overall correlations across items were nonsignificant,  $X^2 (df = 66) = 53.1, p = .87$ , rendering any results noninterpretable.

Follow-up steps considered were to only include those items that had significant differences between clergy recidivists and non-recidivists. As Study 2 illustrates, however, only three items met this criteria (abuser age, duration of offending, and multiple acts on a victim), an insufficient number of items from which to extract meaningful factors. In sum, substantial difficulties in completing a traditional exploratory factor analysis emerged and highlight how poorly these measures apply to sexually abusive clergy.

To address the issues faced when attempting factor analysis with the current risk measures, cleric and victim survey data were analyzed for additional variables that differentiated recidivists from non-recidivists. Those items with significant differences were included with the three significant items from our risk measures for EFA. Results of EFA provided the basis for selecting items to evaluate for inclusion on a modified risk measure. The two primary criteria for inclusion were (1) relevance to at least one factor derived from EFA and (2) significantly differentiated clergy recidivists from non-recidivists. Items were then analyzed for possible adjustments in coding (e.g., different coding scale for abuser age).

A series of ROC analyses were conducted with the resulting measure to assess its potential utility in predicting recidivism. The resulting measure was then evaluated with the second, randomly selected sample of clergy. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) evaluated the extent to which the modified measure fit the risk assessment model developed through EFA. A series of within-group analyses were again conducted to evaluate the modified measure's predictive validity for recidivism: its overall predictive validity with clergy and comparisons to the four measures evaluated in Study 2. Analysis of the modified measure with general sex offenders could not be completed for the current study because the modified measure included items that could not be coded from the data available for the general sample; however, AUC

comparisons were completed to examine the predictive validity of the modified measure with clergy relative to the predictive validity of existing measures with general sex offenders.

## CHAPTER 14: STUDY THREE RESULTS

The recidivism rate was slightly higher for the sample included for Study 3, with 117 of 616 (19.0%) clergy having committed another offense following diocesan action for a prior offense. These rates were nearly identical for the exploratory (58 of 308; 18.8%) and confirmatory (59 of 308; 19.2%) samples. The higher recidivism rate in Study 3 relative to Study 2 can likely be attributed to the more restrictive criteria used for Study 3, which required sufficient data to code recidivism, risk instruments, and additional factors. Only including cases with the most thorough data is more likely to identify recidivists, although the extent to which this represents a more accurate picture of recidivism rates is unclear.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis**

As previously discussed, data from the cleric and victim surveys from the original John Jay Study (2004) were analyzed to produce enough variables for EFA. Variables explored included those related to clergy background (e.g., own victimization history), index offense factors (e.g., provided alcohol or drugs to victim), or post-report outcomes (e.g., completed sex offense-related treatment). Table 3.1 includes the distribution information for these variables across recidivists and non-recidivists. Clergy recidivists were found to differ from non-recidivists on five of the included variables, four of which were included in EFA. Compared to non-recidivists, recidivists were significantly more likely to have had a mentorship role with the index victim (e.g., teacher, choir leader, Sunday School leader) or to have faced diocesan action within five years of the abuse. Recidivists were also significantly less likely to have given the victim alcohol or drugs during the commission of the abuse or to have engaged in reciprocated sex acts (i.e., both the clergy and victim performed the same sex act on each other). A fifth difference (with the strongest effect size) was identified: over half of clergy who were merely

reprimanded and returned to their diocese for the index offense recidivated (52.4%), a significantly higher rate than for clergy who faced additional action (e.g., evaluation or treatment; 13.9%). This variable was deemed irrelevant to future risk assessment of clergy, however. Conducting risk assessment with clergy who have been removed from the Church would inherently be more action against clergy than a reprimand and return to their post. As a result, this item was not included for EFA.

The above variables and variables from current risk measures with significant differences for clergy recidivists (abuser age, length of offending, and multiple acts on a victim) were included for EFA. Three variables were included as continuous variables: abuser age, length of offending, and gap between abuse and diocesan action. The other variables were included as dichotomous categorical variables (yes or no). A cutoff score of .40 was used, with only those items with at least one factor loading at that threshold being included. Sampling size was adequate for the analysis ( $KMO = .51$ ). Table 3.2 shows the resulting model and factor loadings after orthogonal rotation (varimax). The resulting three-factor model explained 72.9% of the variance. For an illustration of the resulting model for factors in assessing clergy recidivism, see Figure 3.1. Two items clustered onto each factor, for a total of six items: (1) time since abuse (gap between diocesan action and when abuse ended); (2) abuser age (at time of assessment, determined for current purposes as the time of first diocesan action); (3) reciprocated acts (clergy and victim performing the same sex act on each other); (4) multiple acts on the same victim; (5) length of offending (years of offending against index victim); and (6) mentorship role (clergy met victim through role as a teacher, club or social group leader, choir leader, or Sunday School teacher). The items that cluster on the same factor suggest the following factors:

Factor 1: Lapsed time (time since abuse, abuser age)

Factor 2: Diverse offending (reciprocated acts, multiple acts on same victim)

Factor 3: Extended relationship (length of offending, mentorship role)

### **Development of a Modified Risk Measure**

Items in these factors were considered for inclusion on a modified risk assessment measure for clergy. Of the six variables included in the model, three were approached categorically and dichotomously: reciprocated acts, multiple acts on a victim, and mentorship role. The other three variables were considered continuous in nature and thus approached separately: abuser age, time since abuse, and length of offending and reporting gap. Further analyses were conducted with these variables to determine cutoff points and weights for the risk measure.

As in Study 2, abuser age was determined by the age at which clergy first faced diocesan action, at which point clergy had “opportunity” to recidivate. Using this frame of reference, clergy had a median and mean age of 48.0 ( $M = 48.0$ ,  $SD = 12.4$ ), with an age range of 25 to 77. Table 3.3 presents the recidivism rates of clergy by age decade (i.e., 20-29, 30-39, etc.). The table illustrates an overall negative relationship between age and recidivism, with recidivism rates decreasing for each age group (with the exception of a minor inflation from 40-49 to 50-59). Indeed, logistic regression analysis suggested a significant negative relationship between abuser age and recidivism,  $\chi^2$  ( $df = 1$ ) = 12.3,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .06$ ). The odds ratio of .96 (95% CI = .93 to .98) represents a 4% decrease in recidivism risk with each year increase in age. To test for potential non-linear relationships between age and recidivism, an additional logistic regression step was added to include age squared. Adding the squared age factor did not significantly change the model,  $\chi^2$  change = 1.1,  $p = .29$ ), which suggests an overall linear relationship between age and recidivism for the exploratory clergy sample.

To modify the coding of age for risk assessment purposes given this new information, methods similar to those used to develop the revised age factor of the Static-99R were used (see Helmus, Thornton, Hanson, & Babchishin, 2012). Median age (48.0) was used as a base score, meaning that ages 40-49 would receive a score of 0. Recidivism rates for other age brackets were compared to the 16.1% recidivism rate for the 40-49 age bracket to determine weights. The following age coding scheme was developed based on these comparisons: 20-29 = 3; 30-39 = 1; 40-59 = 0; 60-69 = -1; and 70 and older = -3.

The mean time between abuse and diocesan action was 11.0 years (SD = 11.1), with a median gap of 8.0 years. Logistic regression analysis suggested a significant negative relationship between time since abuse and recidivism,  $\chi^2$  (df = 1) = 6.1,  $p = .01$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .03$ ). The odds ratio of .97 (95% CI = .94 to .99) represents a 3% decrease in recidivism risk with each year passing between abuse and diocesan action. Adding a squared factor did not significantly change the model,  $\chi^2$  change = .3,  $p = .87$ ). Similar methods were used to code for time since abuse as were conducted for the age variable, using one-year cutoffs. Results suggested a single cutoff at five years, with those facing action in five years or less having higher risk.

The mean duration of offending was 5.8 years (SD = 7.6), with a median gap of 2.0 years. Logistic regression analysis suggested a significant positive relationship between offense duration and recidivism,  $\chi^2$  (df = 1) = 83.3,  $p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .39$ ). The odds ratio of 1.21 (95% CI = 1.15 to 1.27) suggests clergy were 1.21 times more likely to have recidivated with each additional year of abuse. Adding a squared factor did not significantly change the model,  $\chi^2$  change = 3.1,  $p = .09$ ). Similar methods were used to code for duration of offending as were conducted for the age and time gap variables, using one-year cutoffs. Results suggested a single

cutoff at one year, with those who abused the index victim for one year or less having higher risk.

Reliance on archival data for the current series of studies limited the available information related to the three factors derived from EFA. Combined with the trend that few variables significantly differentiated clergy recidivists and non-recidivists, no additional variables were identified for inclusion on the modified risk measure. Appendix E presents the modified risk measure resulting from the preceding analysis. A six-item scale was developed, with each of the three factors (lapsed time, diverse offending, and extended relationship) represented by two items. The following is a brief overview of the items included on the modified measure:

1. *Abuser age*. This item refers to the clergy's age at the time of assessment.
2. *Action within 5 years*. This item refers to the lapsed time from when the index abuse ended to the time abuse was addressed. In the context of the Church's current stance on sexual abuse, banishment (or any other sanction) would qualify as the start of abuse being addressed.
3. *Reciprocated acts*. This item refers to whether the sexual abuse committed by the clergy involved victim and clergy performing the same sexual acts on each other. Only sexual acts involving physical contact are considered. Examples of possible reciprocated acts include over-the-clothes fondling, mutual masturbation, oral sex, and sexual penetration.
4. *Multiple acts on same victim*. This item was originally based on the MnSOST-R item and uses the same criteria for determining multiple acts. Fondling, kissing, forced masturbation in view of the clergy, oral sex, and sexual penetration are

considered different acts. Unlike the original MnSOST-R item, the current item does not require evidence that multiple acts occurred during the same sexual incident (only against the same victim).

5. *Index abuse lasted over one year.* This item refers to the length of time from the onset of abuse against the index victim to the last known incident with the victim. A single incident represents less than one year. Evidence that abuse was continually ongoing throughout this time is not required.
6. *Abuser in mentorship role.* This item refers to the context in which the clergy met his victim. Mentorship is defined as delivering guidance or teaching in a non-public, organized, and small-scale context while in a position of trust or authority. Parochial teachers, Sunday School teachers, choir leaders, Church group leaders, and social club leaders are all considered mentorship roles. Meeting the victim during general Church service or social events (e.g., dinner with the family) is not considered mentorship.

Items from the measure were coded for the exploratory sample, as well as a total score ranging from -3 to 8. The distribution of scores across recidivists and non-recidivists are displayed in Table 3.4. An overall normal distribution of scores can be observed, with few clergy receiving scores at either extreme (low or high). Clergy had a mean score of 2.8 (SD = 1.8) and a median score of 3.0. A positive relationship between risk score and recidivism rate was observed (point biserial  $r = .22, p < .001$ ), with increasing risk scores predicting increased recidivism rates,  $\chi^2(df = 1) = 12.6, p < .001$ , Nagelkerke  $R^2 = .08$ . Odds ratios suggest recidivism being 1.4 times more likely with each increasing risk score (95% CI = 1.2 to 1.7). Based on this linear increase in recidivism risk, chi-square and logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine cutoffs

for possible risk categories. Both differences in recidivism rates and distribution of cases were considered when evaluating cutoffs. Three risk categories were derived based on these analyses: *Low* (scores -3 to 0), *Moderate* (scores 1 to 3), and *High* (scores 4 to 8). One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) suggests significant differences in recidivism rates across risk categories ( $F(2, 235) = 5.99, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Post-hoc (Tukey's B) analysis indicates a significantly higher rate of clergy in the High Risk category recidivating when compared to those in the Low Risk ( $p = .01$ ) and Moderate Risk ( $p = .01$ ) categories. Differences between the recidivism rates of those in the Low and Moderate Risk categories were not statistically significant ( $p = .60$ ).

### **Application of Results to Confirmatory Sample**

The modified risk measure was evaluated with a separate sample of sexually abusive clergy ( $n = 308$ ) of equal size and recidivism rate to the exploratory sample. Risk score distributions were similar to those from the exploratory sample, with a mean total score of 2.7 ( $SD = 2.0$ ) and a median score of 3.0. Evaluation of the measure focused on two fronts: whether the measure covered the three factors identified in EFA and the utility of the measure in predicting recidivism by clergy. Fit between the modified measure and the developed model in Figure 3.1 was analyzed through CFA. A non-significant  $p$ -value would suggest the measure is no different from the proposed model and is indicative of a good fit. Indeed, CFA results indicate the three-factor model successfully fits the data ( $df = 6, \chi^2 = 11.04, p = .09$ ). Using cutoff scores used in other forensic research (e.g., Zapf, Skeem, & Golding, 2005), CFA results suggest the measure has good consistency with the model of clergy recidivism developed through EFA (Goodness of Fit Index = .99, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = .05).

ROC analysis was conducted with the confirmatory sample to assess the modified risk measure's predictive validity for recidivism with sexually abusive clergy. The modified measure

was a significant predictor of recidivism by clergy, ( $AUC = .68, p < .001; d = .66$ ). A series of ROC analyses were again conducted with the confirmatory sample to compare the performance of this measure to the four other risk measures with regard to predicting clergy recidivism. As presented in Study 2, the Static-99, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R performed significantly better for general sex offenders than for sexually abusive clergy. To compare the performance of the modified measure's utility with clergy with the performance of current risk measures with sex offenders, results of the current study were compared to the AUC results for general sex offenders in Study 2.

Results of AUC comparisons are included in Table 3.5. As discussed in Study 2, three measures—Static-99, RRASOR, and MnSOST-R—did not significantly predict recidivism for sexually abusive clergy. In terms of predictive validity, the modified risk measure outperformed these three measures (all  $p < .001$ ). The Static-99R, which significantly predicted recidivism for clergy in Study 2, again was a significant predictor of clergy recidivism with the confirmatory sample ( $AUC = .61, p = .01; d = .41$ ). The AUC of the modified measure was stronger than that of the Static-99R ( $AUC_{diff} = .07$ ). Although this difference was not statistically significant ( $p = .13$ ), the modified measure appears to have more potential for predicting recidivism for sexually abusive clergy than do current measures. When compared to the predictive validity of current risk measures with general sex offenders, validity of the modified measure with clergy was on par with that of the Static-99 and Static-99R for its target group (i.e., general sex offenders). A trend toward significance ( $p = .09$ ) suggests the modified measure's performance with clergy may outperform that of the MnSOST-R with its target group ( $AUC_{diff} = .06$ ), and the modified measure was a stronger predictor of recidivism for its target group than the RRASOR ( $AUC_{diff} = .08, p = .04$ ). In all, the modified risk measure performed as well or better than current risk

measures in predicting recidivism for its targeted population (clergy for the modified measure, general sex offenders for the established measures), although the strength of these predictions remained below targeted levels.

## CHAPTER 15: STUDY THREE DISCUSSION

Results from Study 2 suggested that current risk measures, although able to predict recidivism for the general sex offenders for which they were developed, were of poor value with sexually abusive clergy. Only one measure (Static-99R) performed at levels approaching that for general sex offenders, but much room remained for improvement. The current study was designed to explore possible revisions to the existing risk measures in an effort to better assess recidivism risk with sexually abusive clergy. Given the reliance on a restricted set of archival data, the modified risk measure in the current study is *not* intended to be an official risk measure and is not recommended for prospective use with sexually abusive clergy. Instead, the modified risk measure is intended to establish a framework to inform future investigations. Specifically, the modified measure identifies overarching factors that can present themselves in different forms in the community and may be a focus of community management with sexually abusive clergy. Results may thus serve as a guide for aspects worth exploring as research and community involvement with sexually abusive clergy grows.

Although results from Study 2 established the poor utility of current risk measures with sexually abusive clergy, these conclusions were exemplified by initial attempts in the current study to examine relevant targets of clergy risk assessment through exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Such analyses could not be completed with current risk measures because (1) so few variables differentiated clergy recidivists and non-recidivists at all and (2) those variables that did differentiate demonstrated no significant relationship with one another. An examination of other variables not otherwise included in current risk measures identified some additional variables with significant differences between clergy recidivists and non-recidivists. Compared to non-recidivists, more clergy recidivists were in a mentorship role with victims and faced

diocesan action relatively soon after offenses. Meanwhile, fewer clergy recidivists supplied illicit substance to victims or were involved with reciprocated sex acts. As an aside, a noteworthy finding was the elevated recidivism rate for clergy who were only reprimanded following a report of abuse without additional consequence or action. In contrast to the clergy recidivism rates of between 13-19% established throughout Studies 2 and 3, the majority of clergy (52.4%) who were only reprimanded went on to sexually abuse again. Although this finding does not have direct applications for risk assessment, it serves as an additional reminder of the damage that can result from not properly addressing sexually abusive clergy.

Three factors relevant to clergy recidivism were elicited from EFA that could potentially guide risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy: lapsed time, diverse offending, and extended relationships. All three of these factors appear to present themselves to some degree in current risk measures. This suggests that although specific identifiers of recidivism risk may differ across clergy and general sex offenders, the overarching themes that cover these specific items are similar.

To examine the extent that revisions could be made to improve assessment of sexually abusive clergy, a modified risk assessment scale for clergy was constructed from items related to both clergy recidivism and at least one of the three factors identified through EFA. As stated previously, the modified measure is not considered an official scale for use with sexually abusive clergy but is instead intended to provide insight into the potential to improve clergy risk assessment by focusing on factors empirically demonstrated to predict recidivism. The six-item scale included three items covered in current risk measures (abuser age, duration of offending, multiple acts on a victim), but the ways in which these items are scored differ across the measures. The other three items (reciprocated acts, time lapse since abuse, mentorship

relationship) could be considered unique to the modified measure. CFA results confirmed that the modified measure consisted of items covering the three factors of clergy recidivism identified through EFA.

Overall, the modified measure appeared to be a stronger predictor of clergy recidivism than the measures currently available, with the Static-99R being the only measure with comparable predictive accuracy. Further, the predictive accuracy of this measure with sexually abusive clergy was comparable to that of current risk measures with general sex offenders. It should be noted that although a significant predictor of clergy recidivism, the modified measure's AUC of .68 is still considered poor overall (see Wallach, 2000) with a 32% chance that a non-recidivist would receive a higher score than a recidivist. The modified measure's accuracy in the current study is considered strong relative to the options currently available; however, even the strength of the strongest option in the current study (the modified risk measure) remains below what would arguably be considered acceptable levels for a valid risk measure.

Taken together, the results of Study 3 offer encouragement for the prospects of assessing recidivism risk of sexually abusive clergy. By considering additional contextual factors and focusing on those variables empirically associated with recidivism, the utility of risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy can surpass that of available risk measures in their current forms and, at the very least, reach levels comparable to current practices with general sex offenders. Specifically, consideration of variables related to lapsed time since the abuse, diversity of acts committed during offending, and the extent of the abuser-victim relationship are likely to strengthen risk assessment practices with sexually abusive clergy. Reliance on archival case data derived from the original John Jay College study of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church (2004)

limited the precision of analysis for the current study, as additional variables potentially related to clergy sexual abuse could not be examined. The current findings are thus limited in the scope of conclusions offered. In addition, the modified measure used to predict clergy recidivism, which was based on the limited findings of the current study, should not be considered a final product to be put to use in the community. Nonetheless, the findings do offer a foundation from which future research on risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy can be developed.

## CHAPTER 16: OVERALL DISCUSSION

Sex offender risk assessment is a widespread practice used to assist in the prevention of sexual violence. Empirical research to date has most strongly supported the use of actuarial risk assessment instruments for evaluating sex offenders' risk for re-offending. These instruments (e.g., Static-99R and MnSOST-R) are based on decades of research with sex offenders and variables found to be associated with recidivism. Proper use of these measures increases the likelihood of effective sex offender management practices, which in turn contributes to increased public safety. Improper use of these instruments, however, has the potential to create an inaccurate view of an offender's risk level, which may decrease the effectiveness of management practices. As such, considerations when using sex offender risk instruments should include the scope of its supported purposes and the contexts in which the instrument has been validated.

One consideration often overlooked in both the research and clinical practice of sex offender risk assessment is the appropriateness these risk instruments with different subgroups of sex offenders. Certain subgroups of sex offenders are likely to be underrepresented during the development of different risk instruments, which increases risk that these instruments may not approach recidivism risk in ways that directly apply to more unique offender subgroups. As such, it is important to identify and acknowledge sex offender subgroups with defining or otherwise notable differences that impact recidivism risk and, in turn, limit the utility of risk assessment instruments in particular contexts. One sex offender subgroup that has been overlooked in the development of most currently available risk measures is sexually abusive clergy. The fact that current risk measures were developed without accounting for sexually abusive clergy is understandable, as sexual abuse by clergy was addressed almost exclusively within the Church at the time these measures were developed. Because of the closed nature of the handling of clergy

sexual abuse, little research has included sexually abusive clergy in any capacity, let alone for development of risk measures.

As trends in the response to clergy sexual abuse have changed, so too will the need for sexually abusive clergy to be included in sex offender management research. With sexually abusive clergy likely to be managed in the general community in the upcoming years, it is important to understand the extent that our current understanding of and approach to sex offending are directly applicable to clergy. As research with sexually abusive clergy developed following the John Jay College (2004) investigation into sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, some findings that were related to variables considered in actuarial risk instruments were in contrast with the established findings in the sex offender literature. For example, unlike general sex offenders, sexually abusive clergy appeared to be more likely to offend against male victims, did not have related victims, and were generally older. Given that factors such as these impact risk assessment scores, it appeared that available risk measures would produce different pictures of risk if applied to sexually abusive clergy, which in turn may limit their utility with this group. Nonetheless, without an empirically supported approach to risk assessment tailored to sexually abusive clergy, clinicians have resorted to a best-available-option approach by using available instruments (e.g., Static-99). Clinicians who conduct sex offender risk assessments will have increased contact with sexually abusive clergy as they are removed from the Church and more integrated into the general community. As such, it is important to consider the validity of measures available to clinicians when applied with sexually abusive clergy in order to best direct proper practices with sexually abusive clergy.

### **Current Studies and Summary of Results**

With concerns about the ability of current sex offender instruments to be directly applied

to address sexually abusive clergy, the current series of studies were designed to incrementally examine the current state and future outlook on assessing this unique offender subgroup. Using archival data derived from the original John Jay College (2004) investigation into the nature and scope of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and an examination of sex offender management in New Jersey, three studies were developed with three primary aims in mind: (1) to examine the extent that offender and offense patterns differ for sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders, (2) to evaluate changes in the predictive validity of current risk measures when applied to sexually abusive clergy, and (3) to explore the prospects of applying current risk techniques to clergy through modifications of current risk measures. Together, these studies contribute a better understanding of the current state of risk assessment as applied to sexually abusive clergy and how current sex offender management practices may be extended to prevent reoffending by sexually abusive clergy.

Study 1 provided an overall snapshot of offending patterns and offender characteristics for sexually abusive clergy on variables that are included on current risk assessment measures, patterns that were then compared to those for general sex offenders. In contrast to findings with general sex offenders, sexually abusive clergy displayed uniform or near-uniform trends on several variables when categorized the way they are in existing risk assessment measures. All sexually abusive clergy in the current sample, for example, abused against an unrelated victim. On other items for which clergy had a variance of scores, trends for sexually abusive clergy remained significantly different than general sex offenders on several of these items, sometimes to large effect. By demonstrating different patterns for sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders on most variables relevant to risk assessment, results suggest sexually abusive clergy indeed appear to be a unique subgroup of sex offender in ways likely to be meaningful to

offender management. This uniqueness does not appear directly attributable to similarities to other sex offender subgroups (e.g., those with only child victims), as differences remained when clergy were compared specifically to sex offenders with only child victims or those of higher education (although the robustness of these differences weakened to a degree for comparisons with the latter group). The results suggested that if current risk measures were applied to sexually abusive clergy, score distributions (both for individual items and sum scores) and score associations with recidivism would likely deviate from what would be expected with general sex offenders. The differences observed in Study 1 failed to follow a consistent pattern, however, that would suggest a higher or lower risk for recidivism. Some factors appeared to elevate risk for clergy (e.g., having more male victims or never being married), but others appeared to decrease risk (e.g., less likely to use physical force). As such, Study 1 suggests that current approaches to sexual risk assessment would likely produce different outcomes for sexually abusive clergy, but the results do not carry implications for the direction, magnitude, and impact of these differences on the validity of risk instruments with clergy.

Study 2 expanded upon the results of Study 1 by examining recidivism and its relationship to risk measure outcomes for sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders. A retrospective risk assessment approach was taken, using the first diocesan action as a reference point for scoring risk items and determining subsequent recidivism. Adaptations for coding risk items and recidivism for clergy were made in line with recommendations in the Static-99R manual (Harris et al., 2003). Following these procedures resulted in a clergy recidivism rate of 14%, well within the range of recidivism rates derived from large-scale studies of general sex offenders. As expected from the results of Study 1, sexually abusive clergy (recidivists and non-recidivists alike) had minimal variance on many risk measure items and, in turn, had minimal

variance on risk measure total scores. Importantly, the selection of different risk measures appears to present starkly different pictures of risk for clergy. When compared to risk scores of general sex offenders, sexually abusive clergy score significantly higher (thus, presenting as higher risk) on the Static-99 and its variants; however, clergy score significantly lower (thus, presenting as *lower* risk) on the MnSOST-R. These findings again highlight the importance of critically considering the use of specific risk measures in different contexts.

Although risk measures predicted recidivism for general sex offenders at a level similar to that found in prior research, different patterns emerged when applied to sexually abusive clergy. Instead, only one of the four measures evaluated (Static-99R) predicted recidivism for clergy to any degree (with AUCs, although significant, suggesting poor predictive accuracy nonetheless). As was done in Study 1, follow-up analyses were conducted with subgroups of general sex offenders to examine the extent that differences could be attributed to the uniqueness of sexually abusive clergy. Of particular importance in this follow-up analysis was the focus on first-time offenders, as this restriction helped address potential concerns about the retrospective approach with clergy that used initial diocesan action as a reference point for risk assessment. These follow-up analyses did not alter the overall trends of initial results, suggesting poor utility of these risk measures is specific to sexually abusive clergy. Overall, results of Study 2 can only offer weak support for the use of the Static-99R with sexually abusive clergy and do not support the use of the RRASOR, Static-99, or MnSOST-R with this unique subgroup.

Although Study 2 suggests current risk measures are generally of poor utility with sexually abusive clergy, results did not offer much with regard to how to improve risk assessment for this group. In an effort to clarify the prospects of risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy, Study 3 expanded upon the results of Study 2 by examining additional variables

and modifying existing risk items. Through a series of efforts in EFA (detailed in the Study 3 Method section), three factors were identified as potentially important to risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy: lapsed time, diverse offending, and extended relationships. Based on variables within these factors found to differentiate clergy recidivists from non-recidivists, a modified six-item measure was designed to test whether such an approach would improve risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy. As discussed previously, this measure was designed to test these assumptions and establish a framework for future research and was not intended for use with sexually abusive clergy in the community. This measure was consistent with the three-factor model developed through EFA, as indicated by CFA results. Using this modified measure produced favorable results, as the measure significantly predicted clergy recidivism and appeared stronger than currently available options (though its superiority over the Static-99R was not statistically significant); however, its predictive accuracy remained below what may be considered minimum accepted levels for a valid risk measure. The results of Study 3 thus represent a positive step toward valid risk assessment practices with sexually abusive clergy that can be used to strengthen future research in this area.

### **Implications**

Through an incremental approach to analyzing offense patterns and trends, recidivism rates and trends, and risk score outcomes with a large sample of sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders, several conclusions can be derived from the results of the current series of studies. On the broad scale, the magnitude of performance deterioration when current risk measures were applied to sexually abusive clergy highlights the importance of considering unique offender subgroups that may differ from traditionally targeted populations in meaningful ways when conducting a risk assessment. Considerations for the appropriateness of a risk

measure with a given offender subgroup should include both how well the subgroup was represented in the development of the measure and whether an empirical or theoretical basis exists to presume that meaningful differences at the offense or offender level could impact risk outcomes. Based on the current studies, sexually abusive clergy appear to qualify as such a subgroup, but other subgroups are likely to exist or continue to emerge. For example, the surging development of online communication and social networking has seen an increase of internet-based sexual offending, such as the online solicitation of children for sexual purposes. These offenses were far less common when many of the current sex offender risk measures were developed (as would be expected because of technological advances over time). Given potential differences in social and personal factors for these offenders, findings such as those from the current studies serve a cautionary tale for applying current risk measures to sex offenders universally.

With regard specifically to sexually abusive clergy, results of the current studies suggest that sexually abusive clergy present with distinct offense patterns and personal characteristics when compared to the general scope of sex offenders. Because these offender and offense variables contribute to overall scores on risk measures, the combination of these differences creates markedly different pictures of risk for sexually abusive clergy, to the overall detriment of assessment with clergy. Contextual factors within the Church may help explain many of the differences observed. For example, the higher rate of clergy offending against male victims (which elevates risk scores on the Static-99, Static-99R, and RRASOR) is likely influenced by the structure of clergy life and opportunities to offend. The structure of programs such as the altar service program has generally meant that clergy had more unsupervised time with young adolescent males, which allows more opportunity for intimacy (social or otherwise). This would

additionally account for the elevated offense rates against victims between ages 13 and 15. Beyond unique trends for sexually abusive clergy as a function of environment and opportunity, the path clergy's careers undergo includes possible contributors to the unique offense patterns of clergy. These include the lengthy education and service prior to the different cleric roles with children (which may explain later onset of offending and being an older subgroup overall) and the vow of a celibate life (which precludes romantic/sexual relationships and may stunt development of social relationships). When comparing the two types of contextual factors discussed (opportunity and career path), those related to opportunity would appear more amenable to change following removal from the Church. In other words, as sexually abusive clergy are removed from the Church and return to the community, differences that were influenced by opportunity within the Church are more likely to be impacted and potentially weakened. Even so, as the factors identified can present themselves in different environments, these results offer insight into related issues in the community that would present an increased recidivism risk for sexually abusive clergy. For example, Study 3 identified extended victim relationships such as mentorship roles that increased risk for clergy. Similar roles in the community, where an adult has a personalized and authoritative role with children (e.g., sports coach or activity club leader), would increase recidivism risk in the community and should thus be avoided. Issues such as poor social relationships would likely require more direct time and effort to address.

Although several differences exist between sexually abusive clergy and general sex offenders, one apparent similarity clergy have with other sex offenders is their overall risk for recidivism. The recidivism rate for sexually abusive clergy (14%) is in line with rates found in the general community, making recidivism by sexually abusive clergy a real concern on par with

that of recidivism by other sex offenders. The identified recidivism rates by clergy suggest a need for valid risk assessment practices with sexually abusive clergy; however, results of the current series of studies reveal multiple concerns with applying current risk measures to clergy. If the aim of a risk measure is to help predict who is of greatest likelihood to recidivate, one would expect a valid risk measure to contain risk items that show different patterns for recidivists and non-recidivists. Such was not the case when current risk measures were extended to sexually abusive clergy. An overall uniformity across clergy on several risk items, including dichotomous yes-no items, suggests a significant portion of the sexual risk assessment literature may not apply to sexually abusive clergy. Indeed, when reviewing the individual items on risk measures, the vast majority of items included in current risk measures appear to be of poor relevance when assessing sexually abusive clergy.

Such issues at the item level would be less concerning if overall risk scores predicted recidivism. The research on sex offender risk assessment has suggested that actuarial measures are supported as a best-option approach; that is, actuarial risk measures that significantly predict recidivism for sex offenders are available, but the actual predictive strengths of many of these instruments leave great room for improvement (Boccaccini, Murrie, Caperton, & Hawes, 2009). Indeed, the predictive validity of risk assessment measures with general sex offenders (those expected to be similar to the offenders from which these measures were developed) in the current study followed this general trend of significant predictive values that left plenty of room for improvement. These risk measures, however, appear to be invalid measures of recidivism for sexually abusive clergy. The one exception was the Static-99R, which was a weak but significant predictor of recidivism for clergy.

Based on the current series of studies, only the Static-99R offers evidence of being a

valid (albeit weak) risk measure for use with sexually abusive clergy. Given that the Static-99R is an open access, freely available instrument to clinicians, there is neither an empirical nor a practical justification for assessing sexually abusive clergy with the RRASOR, Static-99, or MnSOST-R over the Static-99R. Clinicians should remain aware of the limited available support for using the Static-99R with clergy who committed their offenses within the Church and are encouraged to acknowledge these limitations when completing reports using the Static-99R with clergy. Based on the results of Study 3, additional possible factors to consider when conducting risk assessment with clergy include the lapsed time from abuse to action, diverse offending patterns, and whether the clergy abused while in a mentorship role. If choosing to consider such factors, caution should be given to the fact that there is currently no set method for using these factors to contribute to conclusions of risk for clergy, and caution with regard to the preliminary nature of their support should be explicitly mentioned.

The current series of studies reflects the poor utility of available risk measures with sexually abusive clergy. Nonetheless, the results of Study 3 regarding other possible markers for clergy recidivism demonstrate that current risk assessment can indeed be improved. Variables related to the three factors identified in Study 3 (lapsed time, diverse offending, and extended relationships) appear particularly important toward improving assessment of sexually abusive clergy, although exploration of additional factors may offer valuable contributions as well. Finally, the findings from Study 3 may also carry implications for addressing abuse by clergy. In particular, findings that clergy with particular relationships with victims may be at increased risk for recidivism (e.g., clergy offending in a mentorship role) suggest that treatment focusing on related issues such as positive social relationships, boundary issues, and emotional identification with children may be of importance to at-risk clergy preparing to reintegrate into the community.

## **Limitations**

Although the current series of studies offer a better understanding of the current state and future prospects of risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy, several limitations that may impact the direct use of these findings into practice should be acknowledged. First, results are based on archival file data, and the known limitations in interpreting findings from such data apply here. These concerns with reliance on archival data include issues with missing or incomplete data (which was observed in all three studies), which makes the reliability of the interpretations of these findings unknown. Reliance on available archival data also restricted the variables that could be explored in Study 3, which both restricted the extent that additional factors could be analyzed with clergy and prevented a direct application of this modified measure with the general sample. Second, data for the clergy and general samples were derived from different sources, as the samples were based on two independent investigations that were ongoing prior to the development of the current studies. The instruments used to gather data for the clergy sample used different wording for items than similar items used on the general sex offender data tool. Although these differences could potentially influence how data were coded across both independent investigations, many of the items from the Static-99 and MnSOST-R are fairly explicit in how they are operationalized, which likely helped minimize error from using multiple sources of data. Indeed, many of the trends identified in the current studies that used both databases were consistent with prior research (e.g., rates of offending against male victims for sexually abusive clergy compared to general sex offenders). One particular concern was the different timeframes that could be used to assess recidivism for clergy and general offenders. The timeframe for recidivism for sexually abusive clergy centered on the first allegation, while the general sample had offenders who were assessed at different points of their offending

careers. Both the difference in timeframes and the fact that the general sample could have artificially higher risk scores (by virtue of including offenders that had other offenses on record) were concerns; however, given that differences remained consistent when focusing specifically on general offenders on the same timeframe as sexually abusive clergy (i.e., after first facing action for a sex offense), it appears these concerns do not compromise the overriding conclusions from the studies. Relatedly, differences in the consequences after first offense for general sex offenders (prolonged incarceration) and sexually abusive clergy (more short-term, non-correctional efforts within the Church) may have impacted recidivism risk in ways that could limit how directly comparable recidivism trends across the two groups were. The general sex offenders in the current study faced more severe punishment for longer periods of time relative to clergy, which would likely have a stronger impact on reducing recidivism. Given the significantly elevated recidivism rate for clergy who were only reprimanded (over 50 percent), however, it appears the formal actions taken by the Church against clergy found to have sexually abused a child had a marked impact on reducing recidivism in their own right.

Lastly, it is unclear how well the retrospective approach to risk assessment in the current studies will translate into real-world, prospective risk assessment of sexually abusive clergy. In Studies 2 and 3, both initial offenses and recidivism occurred within the Church, as sexually abusive clergy generally returned to service within the Church at some point following allegations of child sexual abuse. The evolving stance of the Catholic Church, however, suggests that in the present and future, sexually abusive clergy will be removed from the Church and likely face criminal proceedings. This was uncommon prior to the publicized abuse scandal in the early 2000s, with fewer than 15% of clergy facing any police involvement prior to the publicized scandal and only 2% ultimately subjected to incarceration (Terry, 2008). Although

recidivism will undoubtedly remain a serious concern for sexually abusive clergy who return to the community, clergy returning to the community will face different circumstances than the clergy in the current studies. In the current series of studies, clergy generally returned to a similar environment (in some cases, the same environment) to which they had initially sexually abused a child, which was likely to include regular exposure and unsupervised access to children while in a position of authority, respect, and influence. This is no longer the case for clergy removed from the Church, as they will return to the general community. It remains unclear how significant this change in environment will impact future risk for clergy. On the one hand, sexually abusive clergy will be less likely to have unsupervised access to children while in a position of authority, respect, and influence. On the other hand, sexually abusive clergy may face additional issues known to increase risk of other sex offenders, including unstable employment, loss of social support, and general isolation and loneliness. Taken together, the changing environment clergy face after engaging in sexual abuse could, in many different ways, impact future risk for sexually abusive clergy who return to the community but no longer have their role within the Church.

### **Future Research with Sexually Abusive Clergy**

Despite the limitations noted above, the current series of studies offers important information about the present state of risk assessment with sexually abusive clergy and prospects for improved practice. Several avenues of research may extend from this research in an effort to address limitations of current research and, in turn, improve clergy and general sex offender management practices and reduce future sexual violence. As indicated in the previous section, the importance of certain risk factors for sexually abusive clergy may change by virtue of returning to a different environment outside the Church. In response, prospective investigations of recidivism and recidivism risk factors for sexually abusive clergy should examine any

evolving or additional obstacles clergy face once in the community that can be used to further refine any modified approaches to risk assessment. Prospective investigations would also clarify current risk trends for clergy, as prior research has suggested that overall offense trends for clergy can shift across time (e.g., differences in victim age and gender from the 1980s to the 1990s; see John Jay College, 2004). Such changes are likely influenced in part by shifting trends in the Church (e.g., increased presence of female children in the altar service program in the 1990s), making continued awareness of clergy offense patterns across time important to better understanding etiological factors underlying risk for sexually abusive clergy. A retrospective look at risk factor changes across decades is also recommended to identify the most stable, consistent trends in recidivism risk for clergy. Future research should also incorporate dynamic risk factors in order to better account for changes in risk for clergy. As clergy enter treatment programs with general sex offenders, research into the aspects that appear to be of critical focus for sexually abusive clergy (e.g., social relationships and sexual coping skills) may offer insight into both potential flags suggesting increasing risk and aspects of treatment that may of particular importance when working with sexually abusive clergy.

Finally, keeping an overall goal of child safety and prevention of sexual abuse in mind, future research should explore effective practices in primary prevention within the Church (and the general community). The bulk of sexual abuse research (including the current series of studies) focuses on those known to have already engaged in abuse. In order to maximize sexual abuse prevention efforts, awareness must be given to those practices that decrease risk of clergy engaging in sexual abuse in the first place. Although there has been a recent push for research in primary prevention of sexual abuse (e.g., Degue et al., 2012), such research in the community is currently in its infancy. Within the Church, some aspects of situational crime prevention (see

Terry & Ackerman, 2008) offer some insight into how to reduce opportunities for abuse to occur (e.g., increased structure for clergy interactions with children and increased awareness and/or supervision during those times). In addition, research into dynamic factors of risk for clergy may offer insight into flags for potentially vulnerable clergy and, on a broader scale, practices within the Church that can address these risk factors. For example, should dynamic risk research with clergy suggest poor social relationships with age-appropriate individuals, programs (formal or informal) aimed at engaging clergy in enjoyable social leisure activities (be they with clergy or general community members) may foster healthy age-appropriate relationships for clergy who may have otherwise remained isolated and turned to unhealthy relationships with children. Future research, however, is needed to confirm what factors are critical to promoting healthy relationships for clergy otherwise at risk for sexual abuse, decreasing opportunities and motivations for abuse, and, in turn, preventing sexual abuse.

Table 1.1: Means of sexual risk factors (whole sample)

Factor	<u>Clergy</u> M (SD)	<u>General</u> M (SD)	$\chi^2$	<u>V</u>
<i>Static-99 Factors</i>				
Prior sex offenses <sup>1</sup>	1.60 (.75)	.40 (.74)	3,655.0*	.80
Prior sentencing dates	.17 (.38)	.32 (.47)	165.2*	.17
Non-contact offenses	.03 (.18)	.08 (.27)	54.9*	.09
Prior non-sexual violence	.00 (.00)	.32 (.47)	1,488.6*	.49
Any unrelated victim <sup>1</sup>	1.00 (.00)	.76 (.43)	1,074.7*	.42
Any stranger victim	.00 (.00)	.20 (.40)	897.6*	.38
Any male victim <sup>1</sup>	.72 (.45)	.17 (.38)	1,666.7*	.52
Age (Static-99) <sup>1</sup>	.00 (.00)	.12 (.33)	276.7*	.26
Age (Static-99R)	-1.31 (1.31)	-.69 (1.25)	269.7*	.24
Live with lover 2+ yrs	.99 (.10)	.41 (.49)	2,816.9*	.68
<i>MnSOST-R Factors</i>				
Sex-related convictions	.87 (.99)	.81 (.98)	6.0	--
Duration of offending	.48 (1.73)	.13 (1.6)	65.3*	.10
Offense in public place	.55 (.89)	.38 (.79)	52.4*	.09
Use of threats/force	-2.83 (.69)	-.55 (1.16)	3,757.9*	.78
Multiple acts on victim	-.75 (.66)	.43 (.90)	2,231.3*	.59
Different age groups	.63 (1.26)	.65 (1.24)	.2	--
Victim age 13-15	.78 (.98)	.66 (.94)	20.8*	.07
Stranger victims	-1.00 (.00)	-.27 (1.52)	886.1*	.38
Adolescent antisocial	-1.00 (.00)	-.31 (1.14)	1,509.0*	.49
Substance abuse	-.69 (.73)	.05 (1.00)	936.1*	.39
Disciplined while incarcerated	.00 (.00)	.21 (.41)	941.3*	.39
Substance treatment	-.09 (.41)	-.30 (.81)	465.4*	.27
Sex offender treatment	-.22 (.42)	-.26 (.71)	229.9*	.19
Age 30 or younger	-.90 (.43)	-.48 (.88)	360.3*	.29

<sup>1</sup>Item included on RRASOR

\* $p < .001$

Table 1.2: Comparisons of sexual risk factors means for clergy to subgroups of general sex offenders

Factor	CM Only			Higher Education Only		
	M (SD)	$\chi^2$	V	M (SD)	$\chi^2$	V
<i>Static-99 Factors</i>						
Prior sex offenses <sup>1</sup>	.36 (.71)	3,620*	.83	.42 (.80)	2,902.7*	.85
Prior sentencing dates	.27 (.44)	68.0*	.11	.25 (.43)	12.1 <sup>+</sup>	.06
Non-contact offenses	.07 (.25)	31.3*	.07	.10 (.31)	39.5*	.09
Prior non-sexual violence	.32 (.47)	1,251.1*	.47	.24 (.43)	1,001.4*	.48
Any unrelated victim <sup>1</sup>	.72 (.45)	1,249.0*	.47	.80 (.40)	850.7*	.44
Any stranger victim	.14 (.35)	605.7*	.32	.24 (.43)	1,010.4*	.48
Any male victim <sup>1</sup>	.20 (.40)	1,297.5*	.48	.20 (.40)	388.5*	.30
Age (Static-99) <sup>1</sup>	.13 (.34)	300.5*	.29	.05 (.23)	112.9*	.22
Age (Static-99R)	-.72 (1.28)	216.7*	.23	-.83 (1.30)	50.4*	.14
Live with lover 2+ yrs	.40 (.49)	2,746.8*	.70	.37 (.48)	2,179.1*	.70
<i>MnSOST-R Factors</i>						
Sex-related convictions	.81 (.98)	5.5	--	.86 (.99)	.1	--
Duration of offending	.22 (1.7)	33.5*	.07	.11 (1.60)	15.4*	.06
Offense in public place	.31 (.73)	97.6*	.13	.43 (.82)	5.4 <sup>+</sup>	.04
Use of threats/force	-.63 (1.22)	3,305.3*	.75	-.70 (1.27)	1,580.2*	.60
Multiple acts on victim	.45 (.90)	2,067.0*	.60	.40 (.92)	717.8*	.40
Different age groups	.69 (1.27)	1.2	--	.61 (1.21)	2.1	--
Victim age 13-15	.76 (.97)	.3	--	.81 (.98)	.3	--
Stranger victims	-.47 (1.32)	637.2*	.33	-.12 (1.63)	1,008.6*	.48
Adolescent antisocial	-.36 (1.11)	1,405.2*	.49	-.73 (.73)	640.4*	.38
Substance abuse	-.01 (1.00)	728.7*	.35	-.29 (.96)	84.1*	.14
Disciplined while incarcerated	.19 (.39)	825.4*	.38	.14 (.35)	572.1*	.36
Substance treatment	-.30 (.82)	460.1*	.28	-.19 (.62)	86.2*	.14
Sex offender treatment	-.29 (.75)	300.3*	.23	-.30 (.63)	91.3*	.14
Age 30 or younger	-.48 (.88)	347.9*	.30	-.59 (.81)	108.7*	.21

<sup>1</sup>Item included on RRASOR

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

\* $p < .001$

Table 2.1: Distribution of risk scores for sexually abusive clergy

<i>Total Score</i>																
	-3 (%)	-2 (%)	-1 (%)	0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)	6+ (%)						
RRASOR	--	--	--	0 (0.0)	471 (22.4)	1634 (77.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	--	--						
Static-99	--	--	--	0 (0.0)	5 (0.2)	464 (22.0)	1543 (73.3)	90 (4.3)	3 (0.1)	0 (0.0)						
Static-99R	0 (0.0)	2 (0.1)	218 (10.4)	421 (20.0)	195 (9.3)	818 (38.9)	243 (11.5)	201 (9.5)	7 (0.3)	0 (0.0)						
<i>Risk Category</i>																
	Low			Medium-Low			Medium-High			High						
Static-99	5 (0.2)			2007 (95.3)			93 (4.4)			0 (0.0)						
Static-99R	836 (39.7)			1061 (50.4)			208 (9.9)			0 (0.0)						
<i>Scores: MnSOST-R</i>																
	-10 (%)	-9 (%)	-8 (%)	-7 (%)	-6 (%)	-5 (%)	-4 (%)	-3 (%)	-2 (%)	-1 (%)	0 (%)	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4+ (%)	
Historical	427 (10.4)	55 (1.3)	499 (12.2)	76 (1.9)	635 (15.5)	50 (1.2)	599 (14.6)	46 (1.1)	303 (7.4)	42 (1.0)	62 (1.5)	26 (0.6)	3 (0.1)	5 (0.1)	0	
Dynamic	--	--	--	--	--	--	52 (2.5)	52 (2.5)	653 (31.0)	1252 (59.5)	51 (2.4)	45 (2.1)	0	0	0	
Total	80 (4.9)	167 (10.3)	141 (8.7)	183 (11.3)	156 (9.6)	237 (14.6)	147 (9.1)	230 (14.2)	88 (5.4)	109 (6.7)	48 (3.0)	24 (1.5)	8 (0.5)	3 (0.2)	2 (0.1)	0 (0.0)

Table 2.2: Comparisons of risk measure scores for clergy with general sex offenders

Measure	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>General</u>			
	<u>M (SD)</u>	<u>All</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>CM only</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>Edu. Match</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>First Offense</u> <u>M (SD)</u>
Static-99 Total	2.82 (0.49)	2.45 (1.68)	2.42 (1.68)	2.40 (1.60)	2.51 (1.74)
Static-99R Total	1.86 (1.44)	1.89 (2.20)	1.74 (2.28)	1.75 (2.11)	1.86 (2.31)
RRASOR Total	1.79 (0.41)	1.19 (0.89)	1.20 (.90)	1.25 (0.85)	1.24 (.95)
MnSOST-R Historical	-6.05 (2.88)	0.76 (4.69)	0.63 (4.72)	-0.35 (4.36)	0.89 (4.79)
MnSOST-R Dynamic	-1.46 (0.86)	-0.92 (1.73)	-1.09 (1.75)	-0.94 (1.46)	-0.91 (1.79)
MnSOST-R Total	-7.35 (2.94)	-0.10 (4.96)	-0.36 (4.97)	-1.34 (4.60)	-0.01 (5.03)

Comparisons of risk measure scores for clergy with general sex offenders

Measure	<u>All</u>	<u>General</u>		
	<u>t (df)</u>	<u>CM only</u> <u>t (df)</u>	<u>Edu. Match</u> <u>t (df)</u>	<u>First Offense</u> <u>t (df)</u>
Static-99 Total	7.14* (1,640)	5.17* (592)	3.20 <sup>+</sup> (247)	4.08* (668)
Static-99R Total	-0.35 (1,700)	0.94 (747)	0.44 (361)	-0.03 (886)
RRASOR Total	19.71* (1,864)	13.55* (690)	8.01* (311)	12.69 (777)
MnSOST-R Historical	-41.48* (1,924)	-31.16* (1,107)	-17.14* (402)	-32.42 (1,142)
MnSOST-R Dynamic	-9.58* (2,058)	-4.85* (990)	-4.48* (380)	-7.18 (1,018)
MnSOST-R Total	-39.40* (1,369)	-29.89* (1,118)	-16.20* (391)	-31.54 (1,149)

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

\* $p < .001$

Table 2.3: Summary of risk factor scoring: Static-99, Static-99R, and RRASOR factors

Factor	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>General</u>			
	<u>M (SD)</u>	<u>All</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>CM only</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>Edu. Match</u> <u>M (SD)</u>	<u>First Offense</u> <u>M (SD)</u>
Prior sex offences <sup>1</sup>	.00 (0.00)	.40 (.74)	.36 (.71)	.42 (.80)	.24 (.57)
Prior sentencing dates	.00 (0.00)	.32 (.47)	.27 (.44)	.25 (.43)	.20 (.46)
Non-contact sex offences	.04 (0.20)	.08 (.27)	.07 (.25)	.10 (.31)	.07 (.26)
Index non-sexual violence	.01 (0.12)	.14 (.35)	.07 (.26)	.13 (.34)	.12 (.33)
Prior non-sexual violence	.00 (0.00)	.32 (.47)	.28 (.45)	.24 (.43)	.27 (.45)
Any unrelated victims <sup>1</sup>	1.00 (0.00)	.76 (.43)	.72 (.45)	.80 (.41)	.74 (.44)
Any stranger victims	.00 (0.00)	.20 (.40)	.14 (.35)	.24 (.43)	.14 (.35)
Any male victims <sup>1</sup>	.77 (0.42)	.17 (.38)	.20 (.40)	.20 (.40)	.13 (.34)
Age (Static-99) <sup>1</sup>	.00 (0.00)	.12 (.33)	.13 (.34)	.05 (.23)	.13 (.34)
Age (Static-99R)	-.96 (1.27)	-.69 (1.25)	-.72 (1.28)	-.83 (1.30)	-.78 (1.27)
Single	.98 (0.14)	.41 (.49)	.40 (.49)	.37 (.48)	.38 (.49)
Total score: RRASOR	1.79 (0.41)	1.45 (1.08)	1.40 (1.09)	1.47 (1.06)	1.24 (.95)
Total score: Static-99	2.82 (0.49)	2.93 (2.02)	2.64 (1.90)	2.83 (1.98)	2.51 (1.74)
Total score: Static-99R	1.86 (1.44)	2.29 (2.36)	1.99 (2.31)	1.75 (.80)	1.86 (2.31)

<sup>1</sup>Item included on RRASOR

Table 2.4: Chi-square comparing clergy to general sex offender subgroups: RRASOR, Static-99, Static-99R

Factor	General			
	All $\chi^2$ (V)	CM only $\chi^2$ (V)	Edu. Match $\chi^2$ (V)	First Offense $\chi^2$ (V)
Prior sex offences <sup>1</sup>	165.01* (.28)	174.00* (.35)	48.97* (.32)	176.98* (.35)
Prior sentencing dates	296.48* (.37)	240.00* (.41)	66.40* (.37)	295.69* (.45)
Non-contact sex offences	5.18 <sup>+</sup> (.05)	4.02 <sup>+</sup> (.05)	4.88 <sup>+</sup> (.10)	5.22 <sup>+</sup> (.06)
Index non-sexual violence	85.25* (.20)	93.31* (.26)	26.62* (.23)	75.96* (.23)
Prior non-sexual violence	303.81* (.38)	257.10* (.43)	65.11* (.36)	273.04* (.43)
Any unrelated victims <sup>1</sup>	290.01* (.37)	308.59* (.47)	69.67* (.38)	261.11* (.42)
Any stranger victims	143.22* (.26)	134.46* (.31)	52.34* (.33)	134.98* (.30)
Any male victims <sup>1</sup>	871.66* (.64)	480.70* (.59)	143.63* (.54)	567.41* (.62)
Age (Static-99) <sup>1</sup>	83.14* (.21)	86.68* (.28)	12.10 <sup>+</sup> (.17)	85.43* (.27)
Age (Static-99R)	22.17* (.10)	5.55 (--)	2.06 (--)	7.58 (--)
Single	822.08* (.62)	635.23* (.67)	222.09* (.67)	658.80* (.67)
Risk category: Static-99	495.58* (.51)	415.41* (.61)	139.07* (.59)	447.62* (.61)
Risk category: Static-99R	70.07* (.20)	49.72* (.22)	19.54* (.23)	60.53* (.23)

<sup>1</sup>Item included on RRASOR

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

<sup>\*</sup> $p < .001$

Table 2.5: Chi-square comparing clergy to general sex offender subgroups: MnSOST-R

Factor	General			
	All $\chi^2$ (V)	CM only $\chi^2$ (V)	Edu. Match $\chi^2$ (V)	First Offense $\chi^2$ (V)
Sex-related offences	418.38* (.42)	405.67* (.51)	137.14* (.52)	411.03* (.51)
Length of offending history	126.16* (.24)	119.69* (.30)	13.83 <sup>+</sup> (.18)	106.33* (.28)
Under supervision	200.95* (.29)	185.23* (.35)	38.69* (.27)	188.01* (.35)
Public place offense	32.13* (.12)	20.97* (.12)	6.67 <sup>+</sup> (.11)	21.01* (.12)
Force or threat of force	1186.52* (.70)	818.20* (.73)	248.39* (.69)	845.97* (.73)
Multiple acts on a victim	783.48* (.57)	581.13* (.61)	193.64* (.61)	610.21* (.62)
Multiple age groups	189.72* (.28)	191.47* (.35)	46.22* (.30)	200.58* (.36)
Victim age 13-15	20.46* (.09)	27.05* (.14)	.52 (--)	11.37 <sup>+</sup> (.09)
Stranger victims	169.95* (.27)	152.84* (.31)	58.95* (.33)	169.51* (.33)
Adolescent antisocial behav.	307.52* (.36)	276.27* (.42)	37.32* (.27)	269.03* (.41)
Substance abuse	214.14* (.30)	126.91* (.29)	10.42 <sup>+</sup> (.14)	160.21* (.32)
Recent employment	486.71* (.45)	435.32* (.53)	82.84* (.40)	408.26* (.51)
Disciplined while incarcerated	199.73* (.29)	208.80* (.37)	34.45* (.26)	179.39* (.34)
Substance treatment	96.93* (.20)	109.51* (.27)	4.46 (--)	92.27* (.24)
Sex offender treatment	13.82 <sup>+</sup> (.08)	19.72* (.11)	3.76 (--)	15.73* (.10)
Age	83.47* (.20)	52.89* (.20)	16.23* (.20)	75.76* (.24)

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

\* $p < .001$

Table 2.6: Chi-square comparing clergy non-recidivists and recidivists: RRASOR, Static-99, Static-99R

Factor	Frequency ( <i>n</i> )	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	$\chi^2$ (V)
Prior sex offences <sup>1</sup>				-- (--)
0	890	765	125	
1	0	0	0	
Prior sentencing dates				-- (--)
0	890	765	125	
1	0	0	0	
Non-contact sex offences				.41 (ns)
0	852	731	121	
1	38	34	4	
Index non-sexual violence				.07 (.ns)
0	878	755	123	
1	12	10	2	
Prior non-sexual violence				-- (--)
0	890	765	125	
1	0	0	0	
Any unrelated victims <sup>1</sup>				-- (--)
0	0	0	0	
1	890	765	125	
Any stranger victims				-- (--)
0	890	765	125	
1	0	0	0	
Any male victims <sup>1</sup>				3.29 (ns)
0	206	185	21	
1	684	580	104	
Age (Static-99) <sup>1</sup>				-- (--)
0	0	0	0	
1	616	512	104	
Age (Static-99R)				19.90* (.18)
-3	128	116	12	
-1	311	265	46	
0	75	60	15	
1	102	71	31	
Single				.11 (ns)
0	18	15	3	
1	872	750	122	
Risk category: Static-99	495.58* (.51)	415.41* (.61)	139.07* (.59)	447.62* (.61)
Risk category: Static-99R	70.07* (.20)	49.72* (.22)	19.54* (.23)	60.53* (.23)

<sup>1</sup>Item included on RRASOR

Table 2.7: Chi-square comparing clergy non-recidivists and recidivists: MnSOST-R

Factor	Total	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	$\chi^2$ (V)
Sex-related offences				.03 (ns)
0	884	760	124	
2	6	5	1	
Length of offending history				13.01 <sup>+</sup> (.14)
-1	372	301	71	
0	34	31	3	
3	292	266	28	
Under supervision				-- (--)
0	890	765	125	
2	0	0	0	
Public place offense				.93 (ns)
0	667	569	98	
2	223	196	27	
Force or threat of force				.00 (ns)
-3	824	708	116	
0	66	57	9	
Multiple acts on a victim				4.49 <sup>+</sup> (.07)
-1	791	673	118	
1	99	92	7	
Multiple age groups				.16 (ns)
0	889	764	125	
3	1	1	0	
Victim age 13-15				1.40 (ns)
0	462	406	56	
2	333	283	50	
Stranger victims				-- (--)
-1	890	765	125	
3	0	0	0	
Adolescent antisocial behav.				-- (--)
-1	890	765	125	
0	0	0	0	
2	0	0	0	
Substance abuse				3.44 (ns)
-1	710	618	92	
1	180	147	33	
Recent employment				-- (--)
-2	890	765	125	
0	0	0	0	
1	0	0	0	

Disciplined while incarceration					-- (--)
0	890	765	125		
1	0	0	0		
Substance treatment					.12 (ns)
-2	51	43	8		
0	839	722	117		
Sex offender treatment					1.75 (ns)
-1	344	289	55		
0	546	476	70		
Age					22.21* (.19)
-1	571	486	85		
1	45	26	19		

---

Table 2.8: Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for risk measure scores

Risk Measure and Factors	<u>MS</u>	df	<u>F</u>	$\eta^2$
<b>RRASOR</b>				
Group (clergy or general)	91.45	1	160.13*	.08
Recidivism	10.04	1	17.57*	.01
Group x Recidivism	4.69	1	8.21 <sup>+</sup>	<.01
<b>Static-99</b>				
Group	21.70	1	12.08 <sup>+</sup>	.01
Recidivism	74.94	1	41.70*	.02
Group x Recidivism	66.20	1	36.83*	.02
<b>Static-99R</b>				
Group	.29	1	.08	--
Recidivism	259.44	1	72.89*	.04
Group x Recidivism	40.29	1	11.32 <sup>+</sup>	.01
<b>MnSOST-R</b>				
Group	13,194.70	1	655.25*	.24
Recidivism	149.71	1	7.44 <sup>+</sup>	<.01
Group x Recidivism	338.03	1	16.79*	.01

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

\* $p < .001$

Table 2.9: ROC analysis of risk scores predicting recidivism

## Clergy sample

Measure	AUC (95% C.I.)	S.E.	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
RRASOR	.53 (.47-.59)	.03	.33	--
Static-99	.52 (.46-.58)	.03	.63	--
Static-99R	.62 (.56-.68)	.03	< .001	.43
MnSOST-R	.46 (.40-.53)	.03	.31	--

## General sample

Measure	AUC (95% C.I.)	S.E.	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
RRASOR	.60 (.57-.64)	.02	< .001	.36
Static-99	.68 (.65-.71)	.02	< .001	.66
Static-99R	.68 (.65-.71)	.02	< .001	.66
MnSOST-R	.62 (.59-.65)	.02	< .001	.43

Table 2.10: ROC comparisons: clergy and general sex offender subgroups

Measure	<u>General</u>			
	<u>All</u> AUC <sub>diff</sub> (S.E.)	<u>CM only</u> AUC <sub>diff</sub> (S.E.)	<u>Edu. Match</u> AUC <sub>diff</sub> (S.E.)	<u>First Offense</u> AUC <sub>diff</sub> (S.E.)
RRASOR	-.07 <sup>+</sup> (.03)	-.08 <sup>+</sup> (.04)	.02 (.06)	-.09 <sup>+</sup> (.04)
Static-99	-.16* (.03)	-.16* (.04)	-.12 <sup>+</sup> (.07)	-.17* (.04)
Static-99R	-.06 (.03)	-.06 <sup>+</sup> (.04)	.01 (.06)	-.06 <sup>+</sup> (.04)
MnSOST-R	-.16* (.03)	-.17* (.04)	-.15 <sup>+</sup> (.07)	-.17* (.04)

Note: AUC<sub>diff</sub> = (AUC<sub>clergy</sub> - AUC<sub>community\_subgroup</sub>)

<sup>+</sup>p < .05

\*p < .001

Table 3.1: Clergy recidivism on additional contextual factors

Factor	Frequency ( <i>n</i> )	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	$\chi^2$	( <i>V</i> )
Victimization history				.13	(ns)
No	524	423	101		
Yes	76	60	16		
Other behavioral problems				.13	(ns)
No	449	367	82		
Yes	127	102	25		
Mentorship role				4.42 <sup>+</sup>	(.09)
No	494	418	76		
Yes	78	58	20		
Showed pornography				.91	(ns)
No	597	482	115		
Yes	19	17	2		
Gave gifts/privileges				.88	(ns)
No	423	345	78		
Yes	128	109	19		
Gave alcohol/drugs				7.04 <sup>+</sup>	(.11)
No	578	462	116		
Yes	38	37	1		
Offense during getaway				.13	(ns)
No	502	408	94		
Yes	114	91	23		
Reciprocated sex acts				9.70*	(.13)
No	586	424	112		
Yes	80	75	5		
Gap between act and action				15.42*	(.16)
5 years or fewer	284	211	73		
6 years or more	332	288	44		
Only reprimanded				68.77*	(.33)
No	534	460	74		
Yes	82	39	43		
Completed treatment				.90	(ns)
No	76	59	17		
Yes	306	252	54		

<sup>+</sup> $p < .05$

\* $p < .001$

Table 3.2: Exploratory factor analysis for clergy recidivism using significant predictors of recidivism ( $n = 308$ )

Item	Rotated Factor Loadings		
	1	2	3
Time since abuse	<b>.85</b>	.05	.22
Abuser age <sup>a</sup>	<b>.81</b>	-.10	-.05
Reciprocated acts	.01	<b>.71</b>	-.05
Multiple acts on a victim <sup>b</sup>	-.06	<b>.65</b>	.03
Length of offending <sup>b</sup>	.12	.12	<b>.51</b>
Mentorship role	-.09	-.13	<b>.40</b>
Eigenvalues	1.77	1.43	1.17
Variance (%)	29.50	23.84	19.54

*Note:* Factor loadings greater than .40 are presented in bold

<sup>a</sup> Item derived from Static-99R

<sup>b</sup> Item originally from MnSOST-R

Table 3.3: Clergy recidivism rates across age brackets (exploratory sample)

Age	<i>n</i>	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	Recidivism %
20-29	14	8	6	42.9
30-39	73	54	19	26.0
40-49	87	73	14	16.1
50-59	76	63	13	17.1
60-69	41	36	5	12.2
70+	17	16	1	5.9

Table 3.4: Recidivism rates for clergy on a modified measure

Score	<i>n</i>	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	Recidivism %
-3	1	1	0	0.0
-2	1	1	0	0.0
-1	8	8	0	0.0
0	21	19	2	9.5
1	23	20	3	13.0
2	49	42	7	14.3
3	43	37	6	14.0
4	55	42	13	23.6
5	28	17	11	39.3
6	5	4	1	20.0
7	3	1	2	66.7
8	1	1	0	0.0

Category	<i>n</i>	Non-recidivists	Recidivists	Recidivism %
Low (-3 to 0)	31	29	2	6.6
Moderate (1 to 3)	115	99	16	13.9
High (4 to 8)	92	65	27	29.3

Table 3.5: ROC analysis of modified risk measure prediction of clergy recidivism

Measure	AUC (95% C.I.)	S.E.	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Modified measure	.68 (.60-.77)	.04	< .001	.66
Comparison measure	AUC <sub>diff</sub>	S.E.	<i>p</i>	
Clergy				
RRASOR*	.18	.06	< .001	
Static-99*	.19	.05	< .001	
Static-99R	.07	.06	.14	
MnSOST-R*	.24	.06	< .001	
General				
RRASOR <sup>+</sup>	.08	.05	.04	
Static-99	.00	.05	.48	
Static-99R	.00	.05	.47	
MnSOST-R	.06	.05	.09	

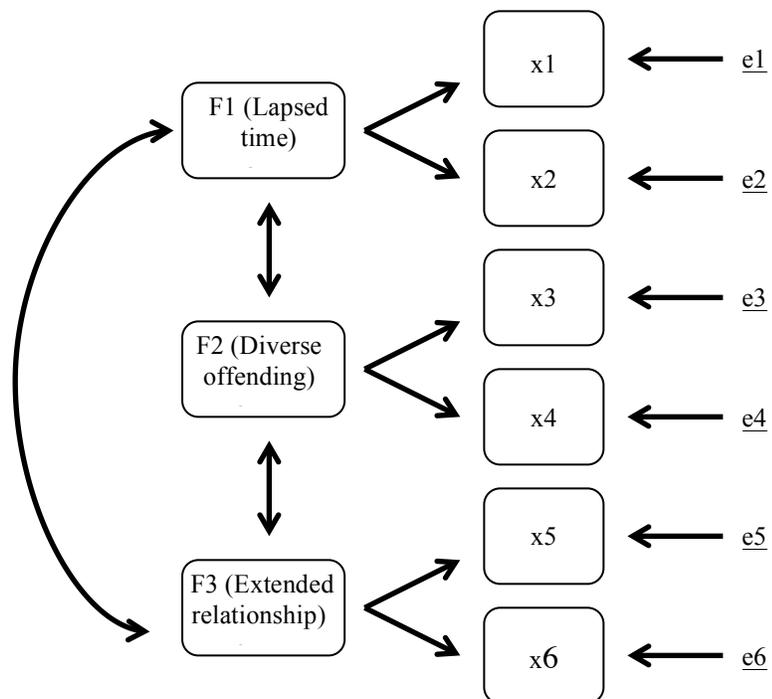
*Note: Comparison measure refers to AUC data for risk measures*

*Note: AUC<sub>diff</sub> = (AUC<sub>New</sub> - AUC<sub>Comparison</sub>)*

<sup>+</sup>Significant improvement at *p* < .05

\*Significant improvement at *p* < .001

Figure 3.1: Exploratory model of factors predicting recidivism by sexually abusive clergy.  $x_1$  = abuser age;  $x_2$  = time lapse for reporting abuse;  $x_3$  = reciprocated sex acts;  $x_4$  = multiple acts;  $x_5$  = duration of index abuse;  $x_6$  = mentorship role.



**APPENDIX A**  
Static-99

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Score</b>	
Prior sex offences	Charges	Convictions	
	None	None	0
	1-2	1	1
	3-5	2-3	2
	6+	4+	3
Prior sentencing dates (exclude index)	3 or fewer	0	
	4 or more	1	
Any convictions for non-contact sex offences	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Index non-sexual violence	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Prior non-sexual violence	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Any unrelated victims	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Any stranger victims	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Any male victims	No	0	
	Yes	1	
Young	Age 25 or older	0	
	Age 18-24.99	1	
Single (Ever live with lover for at least two years?)	Yes	0	
	No	1	
Total score	Add scores from individual risk factors		
	<b>Score</b>	<b>Risk category</b>	
	0,1	Low	
	2,3	Medium-Low	
	4,5	Medium-High	
	6+	High	

**Appendix B**  
Static-99R

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Codes</b>		<b>Score</b>
Age at release	Age 18 to 34.9		1
	Age 35 to 39.9		0
	Age 40 to 59.9		-1
	Age 60 or older		-3
Ever live with lover for at least two years?	Yes		0
	No		1
Index non-sexual violence- Any convictions	No		0
	Yes		1
Prior non-sexual violence- Any convictions	No		0
	Yes		1
Prior sex offences	Charges	Convictions	
	0	0	0
	1-2	1	1
	3-5	2-3	2
	6+	4+	3
Prior sentencing dates (exclude index)	3 or fewer		0
	4 or more		1
Any convictions for non-contact sex offences	No		0
	Yes		1
Any unrelated victims	No		0
	Yes		1
Any stranger victims	No		0
	Yes		1
Any male victims	No		0
	Yes		1
Total score	Add scores from individual risk factors		
	<b>Score</b>	<b>Risk category</b>	
	-3 through 1	Low	
	2,3	Low-Moderate	
	4,5	Moderate-High	
	6+	High	

**Appendix C**  
Rapid Risk Assessment for Sex Offence Recidivism (RRASOR)

<b>Risk Factor</b>	<b>Codes</b>		<b>Score</b>
Prior sex offenses	Charges	Convictions	
	None	None	0
	1-2	1	1
	3-5	2-3	2
	6+	4+	3
Age at release (current age)	More than 25		0
	Less than 25		1
Victim gender	Only females		0
	Any males		1
Relationship to victims	Only related		0
	Any non-related		1
Total score	Add scores from individual risk factors		

**Appendix D**  
Minnesota Sex Offender Screening Tool- Revised (MnSOST-R)

<b>Historical/static Factors</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Score</b>
Number of sex/sex-related convictions (including current)	1	0
	2 or more	+2
Length of sexual offending history	Less than 1 year	-1
	1-6 years	+3
	More than 6 years	0
Was offender under any form of supervision when he committed <i>any</i> sex offense for which he was eventually charged or convicted?	No	0
	Yes	+2
Was <i>any</i> sex offense (charged or convicted) committed in a public place?	No	0
	Yes	+2
Was force or the threat of force ever used to achieve compliance in <i>any</i> sex offense (charged or convicted)?	No	-3
	Force present in at least 1 offense	0
Has <i>any</i> sex offense (charged or convicted) involved multiple acts on a single victim within any single contact event?	No	-1
	Yes	+1
Number of different age groups victimized across all sex/sex-related offenses:	None or 1 age group	0
	2 or more age groups	+3
	___ Age 6 or younger	
	___ Age 7 to 12	
	___ Age 13 to 15 (and offender more than 5 years older)	
___ Age 16 or older		
Offended against a 13- to 15-year old victim <i>and</i> the offender was more than 5 years older than the victims at the time of the offense	No	0
	Yes	+2
Was the victim a stranger in <i>any</i> sex/sex-related offense (charged or convicted)?	None	-1
	At least 1 victim	+3
	Unknown	0
Is there evidence of adolescent antisocial behavior?	No indication	-1
	Some relatively isolated antisocial acts	0
	Persistent, repetitive pattern	+2

Pattern of substantial drug or alcohol abuse (12 months prior to arrest for the instant offense or revocation)	No	-1
	Yes	+1

Employment history (12 months prior to arrest for instant offense)	Stable for 1 year or longer	-2
	Homemaker, retired, full-time student, or disabled/unable to work	-2
	Part-time, seasonal, unstable employment	0
	Unemployed or significant history of unemployment	+1

*Historical/Static variable subtotal*

**Institutional/Dynamic Factors**

Discipline history while incarcerated (does  
not include discipline for failure to follow  
treatment directives)

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Score</b>
No major reports/infractions	0
1 or more major reports	+1

Chemical dependency treatment while  
incarcerated

None recommended/ Not enough time/ No opportunity	0
Recommended and successfully completed or in program at time of release	-2
Recommended but offender refused, quit, or did not pursue	+1
Recommended but terminated by staff	+4

Sex offender treatment history while  
incarcerated

None recommended/ Not enough time/ No opportunity	0
Recommended and successfully completed or in program at time of release	-1
Recommended but offender refused, quit, or did not pursue	0
Recommended but terminated by staff	+3

Age at time of release

Age 30 or younger	+1
Age 31 or older	-1

*Institutional/Dynamic subtotal*

*TOTAL SCORE (static + dynamic)*

**Appendix E**  
Modified risk scale based on exploratory factor analysis

Item	Code	Score
1. Abuser age	70+	-3
	60-69	-1
	40-59	0
	30-39	1
	20-29	3
2. Action within 5 years	No (longer)	0
	Yes	1
3. Reciprocated acts	Yes	0
	No	1
4. Multiple acts on same victim	Yes	0
	No	1
5. Index abuse lasted over one year	Yes	0
	No (shorter)	1
6. Abuser in mentorship role	No	0
	Yes	1
TOTAL SCORE		

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