

A New Look at the Female Offender

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Saradjian Study of Female Offenders

N = 50 perpetrators

36 controls

Criteria case	Substantiated
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Admissions	49 of 50 (Saradjian, 1996)
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Sample Characteristics

Social Class	All Homeless to aristocracy
Education & IQ	6 university degrees 4 borderline IQ
Race	All Caucasian
Employment	Most short term, unskilled

(Saradjian, 1996)

Types

-  **Independent – Victims < 6**
-  **Independent – Adolescent Victims**
-  **Initially Coerced**

Mean Age Gap Between Women & Victims

	Victims	Age Gap in Years
A	<6	18
B	Ages 11 - 17	16.6
C	Coerced by Male	18.5

(Saradjian, 1996)

What Difference Did Type Make?

Sexual Motivations

All offender groups: Sex with adults
negative but met some
need

Controls Sex rated positively

(Saradjian, 1996)

Victims Young Children

Motivations

Positive physical experience	All
Power and control	All
Wanted to hurt them	9
Merger	8
Feel loved	8

(Saradjian, 1996)

“Having sex with my sons was more enjoyable than having sex with a man and that was because I had some control over what was going to happen.”

(Matthews et al., 1990, p. 206)

“I was sexually aroused . . . Felt very powerful.”

(Matthews et al., 1990, p. 206)

Merger

“She wanted me to love her like her own mother did when she was little and sick. It makes me nauseated to think about it. She used me to maintain her own sick pleasure. I was mother, father, husband, sister, lover and friend to her when I needed a mother.”




(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 29)

Fusion

“I was not a separate person to her. In her mind we were fused.”

(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 31)

Who was the Mother?

 Child is the mother	83%
 No	9%
 ?	7%

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Fear of Mother Dying

“I used to worry about this all the time and her death was extremely traumatic for me. I never made the connection – it’s fusion!”

(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 32)

Violence

“My mother threatened to burn my hair/me if I did not comply. I was given beer to drink. I was beaten and there were threats I would be burned if I wasn’t quiet. Sometimes I was slightly burned on the butt with lit cigarettes. I learned not to cry and to stop screaming.”

(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 111)

Disclosure

Attempts to tell in childhood	5%
Did tell	3%
Threatened to tell	2%

(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 39)

Victims Young Children

Motivations

**All had sexual thoughts of children
All experienced arousal
Few called it arousal
Unable to identify emotional states
Feelings in terms of sensations**

(Saradjian, 1996)

Motivations

Group B: Victims Adolescents

**Romanticized relationship
Frequent sexual thoughts
80% masturbated to thoughts
Equal in every way
Victims instigators**

(Saradjian, 1996)

“We had an affair, a love affair. Isn’t that ridiculous? I’m 40 years old! And I had an affair with a 14-year-old kid, which is totally ridiculous. And I was in love – not I loved him – but in love!”

(Matthews et al., 1990, p.209)

Motivations

Group C Initially coerced by male perps

Negative feelings during sex w/ child

Give pleasure, bonding with male

(Saradjian, 1996)

“I wasn’t a whole person unless there was somebody else with me. That’s pretty much what it’s been like for a long time. There had to be a male in my life, otherwise I would think I was nobody.”

(Matthews et al., 1990, p. 212)

Group C **Motivations**
Initially coerced by male perps
N = 12

Thoughts of sex with children 12

Arousal or neutral 9

Repulsive 3

(Saradjian, 1996)

Motivations
Subgroup of C: Initially coerced, later alone
N = 7

Power and control

Hurt someone

(Saradjian, 1996)

Types of Female Sex Offenders
N = 16

Minnesota Outpatients

 **Teacher / Lover**

 **Predisposed**

 **Male Coerced**

(Mathews et al., 1989)

**Types of Female Sex Offenders
Teacher/Lover**

- No “malice” toward children
- “Fell in love”

(Matthews, 1989)

**Types of Female Sex Offenders
Predisposed**

- Acted alone
- Difficulty with male relationships
- Seeking intimacy (or fusion)

(Matthews et al., 1989)

Types of Female Sex Offenders

Male-Coerced

- Felt powerless in relationships
- Sexually abused as children
- Abusive male relationships

(Matthews et al., 1989)

Acting Alone vs. With Other

- Acting Alone 71%
- Acting with Other 29%

(Bespalec, unpublished)

Severity of Abuse

Insertion into Orifices

	Vagina	Rectum
Fingers	46%	34%
Objects	38%	51%

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Sadism

“When she wanted to do it do me, she’d say he told her to and I could never really be sure whether he had or not. She used to threaten me that. . . If I told anyone what was going on . . . I’d be in for ‘it’ and ‘it’ was really, really bad. I’d had ‘it’ before and I never wanted to ever feel that bad again. The more I hurt the faster she’d come . . . she knew just how to hurt me and I knew that she’d really ‘get off on’ getting him to hurt me . . . I never would have told because I was just too scared.”

(Saradjian, 1996, p. 36)

Objects Inserted

Enema equipment, sticks, candles, vibrators, pencils, keys, hairbrushes, hairbrush handles, light bulbs, soapy wash cloths, wooden spoons, various fruits and vegetables, knives, scissors, lit cigarettes, sock darning tools, surgical knives, hair rollers, religious metals, vacuum cleaner parts, goldfish

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Manipulation Vs. Coercion

Persuading Victims

Co-Offenders

Threatened death 23%

Threatened harm 36%

Independent

Expression of Love 13%

Games 27%

(David, Hislop & Dunbar, 1999)

Who Do They Victimize?

Victim Characteristics

Equally male and female

Relationship to Perpetrator

Biological	64%
Related	16.3%
Unrelated	19.1%

(Saradjian, 1996)

Who Did They Victimize?

N = 93

Biological children 93%

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Age It Began

Average Age It Began

3.2 yrs old

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Age It Ended

Average Age It Ended

17.3 yrs old

(Rosencrans, 1997)

Preventing Disclosure

Threats	Co-offenders	Independent
Death	31%	8%
Harm	38%	17%
Abandonment	19%	8%

(David, Hislop & Dunbar, 1999)

Why They Participated

Co-Offender Group

Threats

Abandonment	24%
Death	15%

(David, Hislop & Dunbar, 1999)

“I didn’t want my husband to leave me. I didn’t want to be alone. He always threatened to leave; ‘Do what I say.’”

(Matthews et al., 1990, p. 205)

Trauma Histories

Female Sex Offenders

N = 11 incarcerated female sex offenders

11 incarcerated non sex offenders

- More childhood sexual abuse**
- Victimized exclusively within the family**
- High incidence physical abuse**

(Kaplan & Green,1995)

If victim < 16;

48% - previous hx of psychiatric disorder

Females vs. Male Sex Offenders

- **More domestic violence**
- **More traumatic childhoods**
Physical, emotional, sexual abuse
- **More unstable marital relationships**
- **Less satisfied with marital partner**

(Allen, 1991)

Denial

Females vs. Male Sex Offenders

- **More denial**
- **Perceive sexual abuse as more deviant**
- **More resistant to investigation**
- **Fewer think behavior can be changed**

(Allen, 1991)

**Female Adolescent
Sex Offenders**

N = 67

Community/residential

 **Mood Disorder > 1/2**

 **PTSD nearly 1/2**

(Matthews et al., 1997)

**Female Adolescent
Sex Offenders**

 **More severe abuse**

 **Abuse started earlier**

 **More experienced force**

(Matthews et al., 1997)

**Comparison of Female & Male Adolescent Sex
Offenders Offending behaviors**

Similar

Frequency & Magnitude

(Matthews et al., 1997)

Female Adolescent Sex Offenders

- Repetitive patterns of offending
- Multiple victims
- Used force as frequently as males

(Matthews et al., 1997)

Female Adolescent Sex Offenders

	Female	Male
Number of molesters	4.5	1.4
No. w/ more than 1 molester	75%	10%
Gender of molester		
Male only	58%	80%
Female only	4%	13%
Both	38%	7%

(Matthews et al., 1997)

How Many?

Prevalence
Child Protection Agencies

3 to 5%

(Hislop, 2001)

Incarcerated Sex Offenders

Canadian sex offenders serving 2 years or more

< 1% female

(Motiuk & Belcourt, 1996)

Juvenile Sex Offenders

	Percent female
 HEW (1985)	8
 Pierce & Pierce (1987)	19
 Smith & Israel (1987)	20
 Ray & English (1995)	11
 Ryan et al. (1996)	2.6

(Hislop, 2001)

Child Care Cases

Faller (1988)	2% female alone 50% m. & f.
Williams & Farrell (1990)	38%
Finkelhor (1988)	40%
Margolin (1991)	16%

(Hislop, 2001)

How Many Victims Overall?

Female Victims

**23% females abused as children
5% of those have female offenders
Equals 1.5 million female victims &**

Male Victims

**6.75% of males abused as children
20% of those have female offenders
Equals 1.6 million male victims**

(Allen, 1991)

Talking With Others

Currently in therapy 81%

Talking with therapist 3%

Talking with therapeutic group 0

(Rosencrans, 1997, p. 40)