

Receding Waves:
Child Sex Abuse and Homosexual Priests since 2000

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Executive Summary

In a previous report I found that the share of homosexual Catholic priests was strongly related to the incidence and victim gender of minor sex abuse by Catholic priests from 1950 to 1999. This report examines whether this trend has continued since 2000. New data are examined from the database of Survivor Accounts of Catholic Clergy Abuse, Denial and Silence (SACCADAS).

Summary: Male victimization and homosexual priests rose in step through the 1980s and have since fallen in step, in twin waves that have largely receded. Female victimization has not fallen, persisting today at the same level as in the 1980s. See Figure 14.

Key Findings:

1. Abuse is recently rising: The priest sexual abuse of children dropped to an all-time low just after 2002 but has since disturbingly risen, though it remains well below its peak in the 1980s. Reports of current abuse averaged 7.0 per year from 2005-09, rising to 8.2 per year from 2010-14, a 17% increase. In the 1980s there were an average 26.2 reports of current abuse per year.

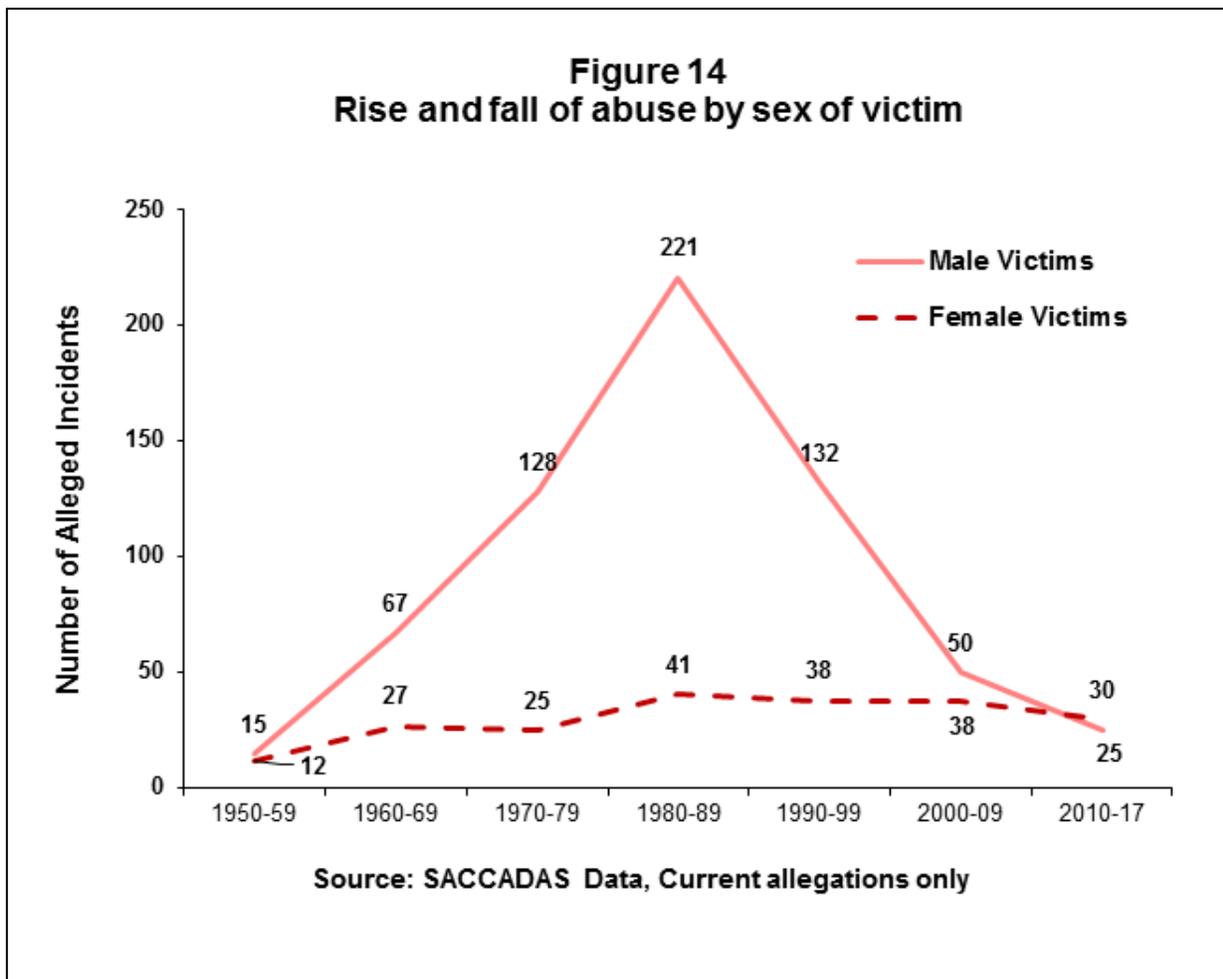
Recent Abuse is Different:

2. Far fewer males: The percent of abuse victims who were male plummeted from 74% in 2000 to only 34% by 2016, averaging 62% over the period. In 1985 males comprised 92% of victims, and averaged 82% from 1950-1999.
3. Older victims: Recent abuse has involved more older victims past puberty. Since 2000 half (50%) of abuse victims were teenagers aged 14-17; before 2000 only a third (33%) were this old.
4. Mostly not by new priests: Since 2000 only a small fraction (11%) of abuse has been perpetrated by newly ordained priests (less than 10 years), while over half (52%) of abuse has been perpetrated by priests ordained 30 years or more. This reverses the pattern prior to 2000, when a third (31%) of abuse was due to newly ordained priests and only 10% by priests ordained 30 years or more.

Recently Ordained Priests are Different:

5. Very few are homosexual: We do not have data on homosexual ordinations after 2000, but statistical projections estimate that recent ordination classes have contained very few homosexual men. This is a sharp decline from the 1980s, when as many as half of new ordinations were of homosexual men.
6. Orthodox, faithful younger priests: Concurrent with the drop in homosexual ordinations is the rise of a cohort of young, orthodox vocations and seminary directors who exclude homosexual men from the path to priesthood, in line with longstanding papal instruction and a theology of priestly celibacy as a vocation reserved to marriageable heterosexual men.

7. Aging homosexual priests: Despite few recent homosexual ordinations, the share of homosexual priests has risen since 2000 due to the declining number of ordinations, aging of the priesthood and the large number of homosexual priests ordained earlier. Today half of all Catholic priests are between the ages of 60 and 84, and about one in five of these priests is homosexual; but less than one in thirty priests under age 50 is homosexual. As the wave of older homosexual priests passes on in coming years, the share of homosexual men in the Catholic priesthood will drop rapidly.
8. Since the 1960s, priests engaged in child sex abuse have been relatively concentrated in two cohorts: one ordained in the late 1960s and the other ordained in the early 1980s.
9. As the twin waves of male victimization and homosexual priests recede, the prevailing concern for child safety relative to Catholic priests is the persisting sexual abuse of girls.



Introduction

The year 2018 brought renewed attention to the problem of child sexual abuse by Catholic clergy in the United States, when on August 12, 2018, a statewide grand jury reported that over 250 priests in 6 dioceses in Pennsylvania had over a period of decades sexually victimized over 1,000 children. The aggregate information in the Pennsylvania grand jury report (hereafter “GJR data”) reaffirmed previous incidence data collected by the U.S. bishops¹ showing that the overwhelming majority of the victims—83% of those over the age of 7—were boys. This preponderance of male victims suggested that a preponderance of the priest perpetrators were sexually attracted to males.

In an earlier study² (hereafter “CSA1”, for “Clergy Sex Abuse study 1”) I addressed the question whether the abuse was related to homosexual³ priests, re-examining analyses from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice’s 2011 report on the causes and context of Catholic clergy sex abuse⁴ using previously unexamined survey data on clergy sexual orientation.⁵ I found that from 1950 to 2001 the percentage of homosexual men in the Catholic priesthood, abetted by the presence of subcultures of sexually active homosexual priests and faculty in Catholic seminaries,

¹ John Jay College, “The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the US.,” Commissioned by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, February 27, 2004, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/The-Nature-and-Scope-of-Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-and-Deacons-in-the-United-States-1950-2002.pdf>.

² Donald Paul Sullins, “Is Catholic Clergy Sex Abuse Related to Homosexual Priests?,” *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2019). Preprint available at <http://www.ruthinstitute.org/clergy-sex-abuse-statistical-analysis> or https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3276082.

³ In order to be consistent with the usage of the John Jay Reports and the survey data, in this report I use the word “homosexual”, rather than the more precise term “same-sex attracted”, to designate men whose predominant or exclusive sexual attraction is to males. For the same reason I refer to an “orientation” rather than an inclination or tendency.

⁴ John Jay College, “The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950-2010,” Commissioned by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, May 2011, 100, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/upload/The-Causes-and-Context-of-Sexual-Abuse-of-Minors-by-Catholic-Priests-in-the-United-States-1950-2010.pdf>.

⁵ Los Angeles Times Polls, “Catholic Priests in the United States [Machine-Readable Data File]. USLAT2002-471,” June 2002, Cornell University, Ithica, NY: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research.

correlated almost perfectly with the proportion and number of male victims,⁶ as the share of priests reporting homosexual attractions peaked above 16% in the 1980s coincident with the peak of reported current-year abuse. After the 1980s, abuse incidence dropped sharply, reaching a low point in the latter half of the last decade (2005-2009) before rising again in the current decade.

The GJR alleged that bishops had followed a policy of secrecy about the widespread abuse, deploying legal and financial resources to silence or ignore victims, keep criminal activity hidden and protect Catholic priests and institutions from consequences. This allegation gained credibility following the disclosure a few weeks earlier that a senior U.S. cardinal, Theodore McCarrick, had engaged in sexual abuse of seminarians and minors for decades with apparent impunity, silencing victims with financial settlements from Church funds and rising to be appointed archbishop of Washington, D.C. A federal grand jury has begun to investigate whether the U.S. bishops should be prosecuted under statutes applicable to organized crime.

Continued inattention by the U.S. bishops to the gravity of sexual misconduct and the enablement of primarily homosexual child sex abuse, coupled with news that the incidence of abuse may be rising, has raised questions among Catholics and non-Catholics alike about the current state of these activities. Could the pattern of adding homosexual men to the priesthood, with corresponding increases in child sex abuse, be recurring or persisting today? In the present study I examine this question, using newly available data that extends our detailed knowledge of the nature and scope of clergy sex abuse past 2001. Before examining the current relation of homosexual priests to child sex abuse, I address two preliminary questions: “What are the

⁶ See Sullins, “Is Catholic Clergy Sex Abuse Related to Homosexual Priests?,” 30, Table 1. The standardized regression coefficient for the share of homosexual priests with the preference for male victims was .98, and with the incidence of the abuse of boys was .96. A perfect association would be indicated by a coefficient of 1.0.

characteristics of current sex abuse or misconduct by Catholic clergy?” and “Is the proportion of homosexual priests today rising or falling?”

Data and Methods

The primary source of data for CSA 1⁷ was the comprehensive census of 10,667 minor sex abuse allegations commissioned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2002, which was collected and analyzed by researchers at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, resulting in two reports on the topic in 2004⁸ and 2011⁹ (“JJR Data” for “John Jay Reports Data”). These data were augmented by annual reports on new abuse allegations collected annually since 2003 for the USCCB audits of compliance and progress in implementing the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (“Audit Data”); information on 964 incidents of abuse alleged in the August 2018 report of the Pennsylvania grand jury (“GJR Data” for “Grand Jury Report Data”); and a 2002 nationwide survey of Catholic priests by the Los Angeles Times newspaper that provided a reliable measure of priests’ sexual orientation (“LA Times Data”). For readers interested, CSA 1 describes each of these data sources in much greater detail.

While these data sources, taken together, provide a rich body of data about the character of clergy sex abuse in the Catholic Church from 1950 through 2002, information about abuse after 2002 is severely limited. The JJR Data and LA Times Data include no information past 2002. The Audit Data reports a large number of allegations for each year since 2002, but only in summary statistics, not detailed incident data. For example, the age of victim and year of incident are reported only in the aggregate, in age and year ranges for all incidents nationwide.

⁷ Sullins, “Is Catholic Clergy Sex Abuse Related to Homosexual Priests?”

⁸ John Jay College, “Nature and Scope.”

⁹ John Jay College, “Causes and Context.”

The GJR Data, on the other hand, include detailed information on each incident of abuse, but too few incidents after 2000 (only 30) to support reliable analysis. For this reason it was not possible in CSA1 to consider the question of abuse and homosexual priests with respect to recent clergy sex abuse, that is, abuse since 2002.

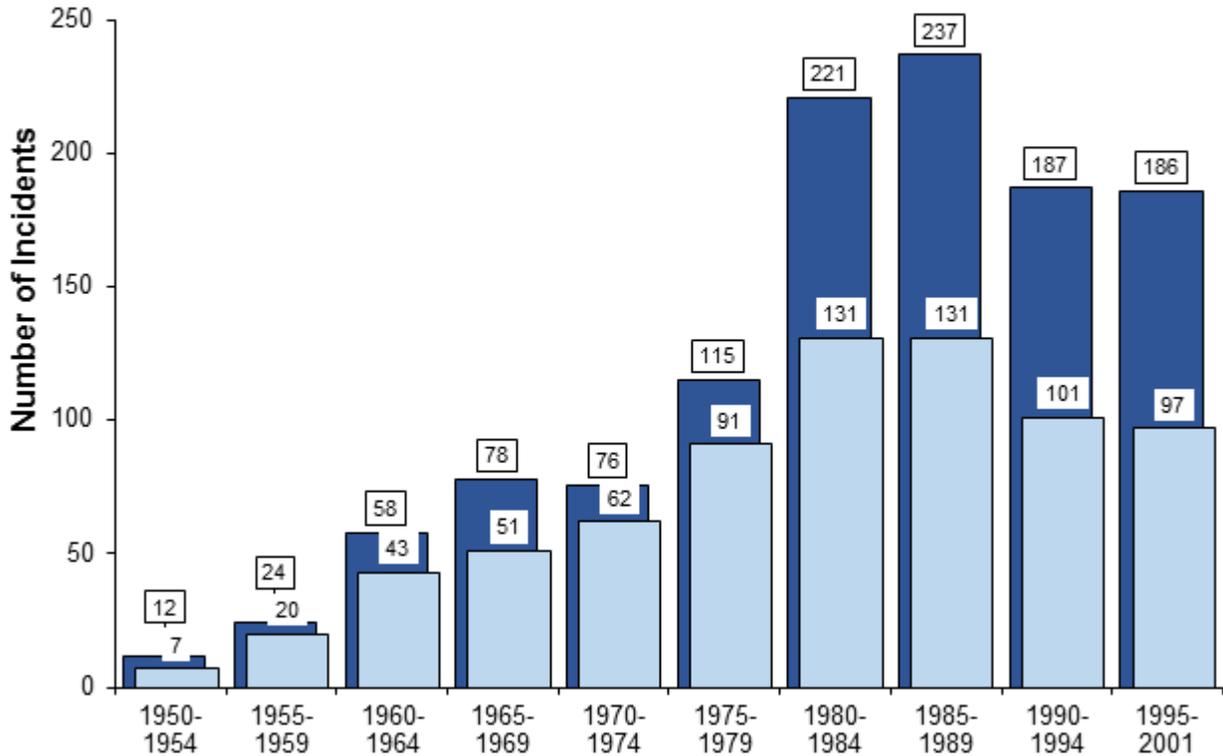
After publishing CSA1, the journalist G.R. Pafumi graciously offered the use of a comprehensive compilation of clergy sex abuse allegations he maintains which has been meticulously compiled from media reports, legal briefs, and other public documents. The purpose of the collection, titled the SACCADAS database (an acronym for Survivor Accounts of Catholic Clergy Abuse, Denial and Silence), is to help persons become aware of and understand the collective plight of the victims of priest sex abuse.¹⁰ Each recorded incidence of abuse is related to a specific media account or court record, and reports as much detail as possible on the extent and character of the victimization that occurred.

The SACCADAS database contains records on 6,945 incidents of sex abuse and misconduct by Catholic clergy worldwide from 1926 to 2018. In the United States from 1950 to 2001—the space and time covered by the JJR data—SACCADAS contains information on 5,318 incidents, including the 964 incidents described in the August 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury report. This total is just under half as many as reported in the JJR data (10,667), suggesting that only about half of clergy abuse incidents known to dioceses have been reported in the media or legal discovery.

The relative trends and characteristics of abuse victims reported in the SACCADAS data are very similar to those in the JJR data, and when looking only at current allegations, which

¹⁰ The SACCADAS database is described, with related reports and publications on offer, at the website <http://victimsspeakdb.org/index.html>.

Figure 1
Incidence of current abuse by 5-year periods 1950-2001,
comparing JJR and SACCADAS data



Source: JJR and USCCB data for dark blue bars; SACCADAS data for light blue bars. "Current abuse" is defined as reported abuse that occurred within the current or prior year.

present a more reliable indicator of changes over time, they are virtually identical.¹¹ Figure 1 overlays the incidents reported in the JJR data with those in the SACCADAS data, by five-year period. Table 1 compares other characteristics of the two distributions. The SACCADAS allegations report a slightly higher proportion of male victims (2.1%), a lower mean age of

¹¹ Because the SACCADAS information originates in media or legal reports that occur continuously, unlike the JJR data which derives from retrospective reports collected at a single point in time, current year incidents in this study are defined as allegations of abuse that occurred within the current or immediate past calendar year. Otherwise, incidents reported in January that occurred in December of the prior year, perhaps only a few weeks or days previous to the report, would not be classified as current abuse.

victim (0.3 years) and an earlier average year of incident (by 1.3 years), but the differences are all very small. To the extent that the reports can be considered representative samples, the differences in mean victim age in categories and the percent of male victims are within the range of possible variation due to random sampling.

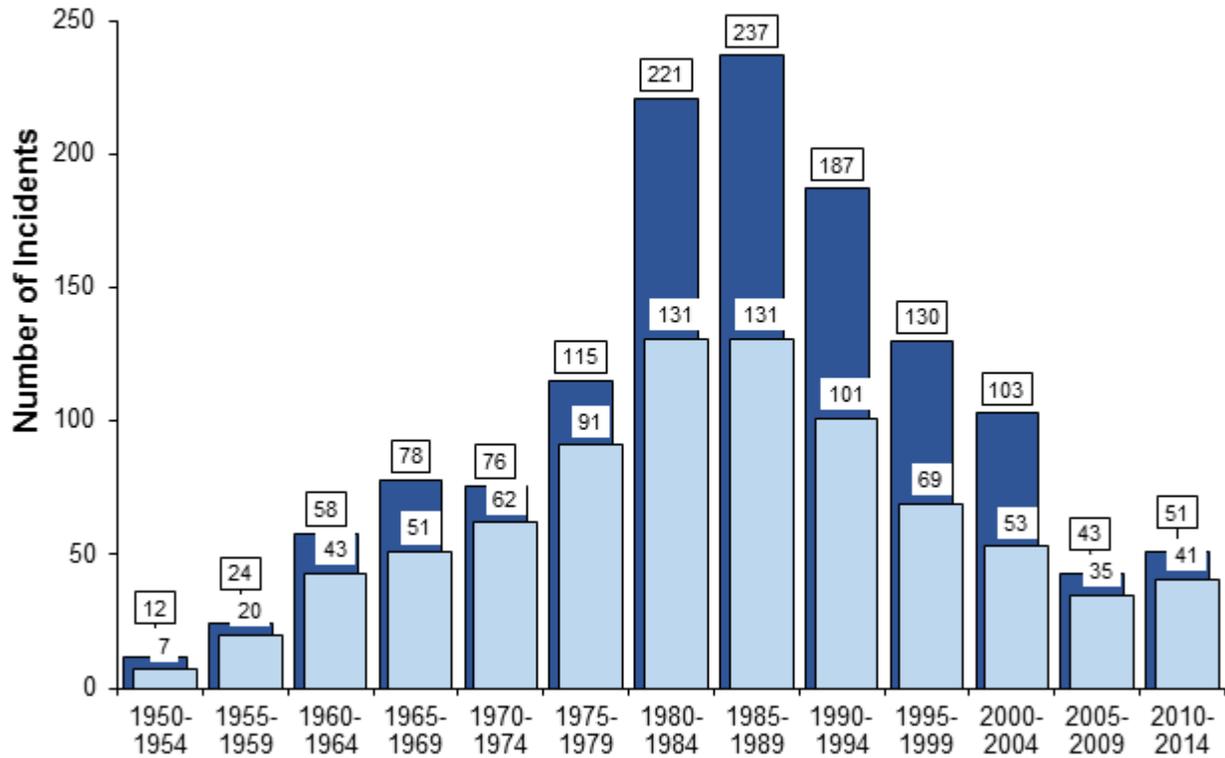
Table 1. Comparison of selected variables in JJR and SACCADAS data, current incidents only, minor victims 1950-2001

Variable	JJR (n = 1013)	SACCADAS (n = 627)	Significantly different *
Percent of all allegations	11.9	12.5	
Percent male victims	77.3	79.4	No
Mean age of victim	13.5	13.2	Yes
Mean incident year	1983.1	1981.8	Yes
Percent of victims in age categories: 0-7; 8-11; 12-17.	2.6; 17.4 ; 80.0	3.7; 18.7; 77.7	No
Correlation of incident year with:			
Victim's sex	.074	.061	No
Victim's age	.144	.149	No
Victims per abuser	-.225	-.256	No
N	1194	734	

* Reports whether the difference between the values was statistically significant at .05 or stronger, by t-test. Current incident is defined as an allegation of abuse that occurred within the past two years. Note: Only 8,517 JJR cases and 5,000 SACCADAS cases had information on all listed variables within the year range specified.

The trends over time reflected in the two sets of data are even more congruent. As Table 1 reports, the correlation of incident year with the sex and age of victims and with the number of victims per offender are not different between the two datasets, within sampling variation. The correlation of the number of incidents per year in the two datasets is .83 by single year; by 5-year period as shown in Figure 1, the correlation of the incidence trends is an almost perfect .97.

Figure 2
Incidence of current abuse by 5-year periods 1950-2014,
comparing JJR, USCCB and SACCADAS data



Source: JJR and USCCB data for dark blue bars; SACCADAS data for light blue bars.
 "Current abuse" is defined as reported abuse that occurred within the current or prior year.

Nature and scope of recent child sex abuse

Figure 2 extends the incidence trends shown in Figure 1 past the year 2002, supplementing the JJR numbers with aggregate numbers from the USCCB audit reports. The figure illustrates that the overall incidence of abuse remains highly correlated between the JJR/Audit data and SACCADAS data past 2002 up through 2014. Both trends use only allegations of current abuse, thus avoiding any bias or exaggeration of past abuse due to retrospective disclosure. The light blue bars showing the SACCADAS numbers overlay the

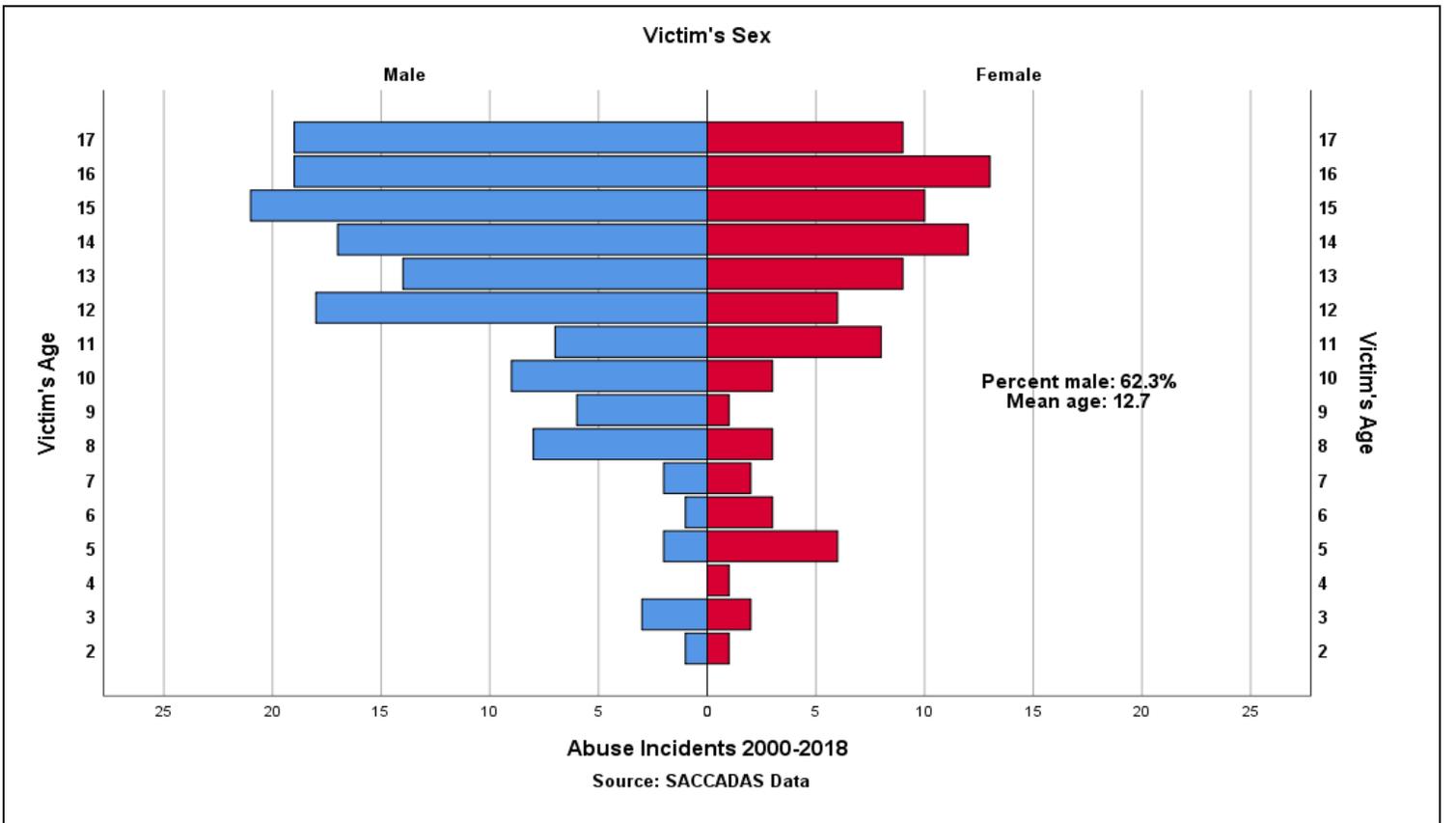
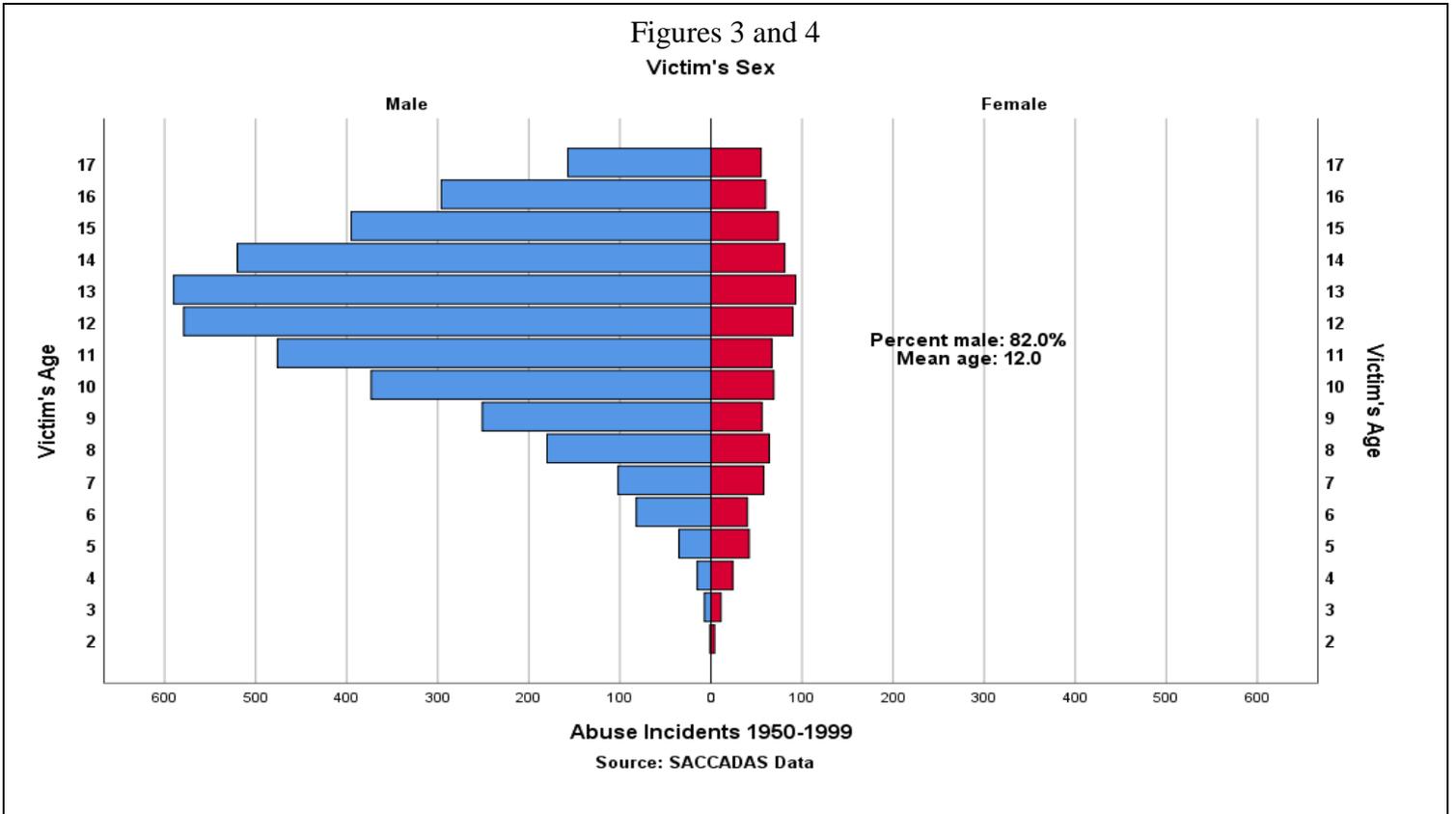
corresponding dark blue bars showing the JJR/Audit numbers. Both sets of data trace the general trend of abuse reported in CSA1: The abuse of children rose steadily from the 1950s to a peak in the 1980s, then declined by 75-80% to a low point during 2005-2009, before rising moderately in the current decade. The average annual number of incidents shown in the SACCADAS data in Figure 2 drops from 26.2 per year during the 1980s to 7.0 per year during 2005-2009, before rising (by 17%) to 8.2 per year during 2010-2014.

The abuse came in a wave that crested in the 1980s and has now largely receded, though not entirely. It is not a problem that has gone away, as some have claimed. The SACCADAS data, in fact, confirm the JJR/USCCB audit data in reflecting that the incidence of abuse has risen in the past decade. But it is not only the incidence of abuse that has changed since the 1980s. Unlike the USCCB audit reports, which present only aggregate counts since 2002, the SACCADAS data also permit us to examine more closely the characteristics of recent clergy sex abuse. That information shows that the nature of the abuse in recent years has also changed dramatically.

Victims: From younger boys to older girls

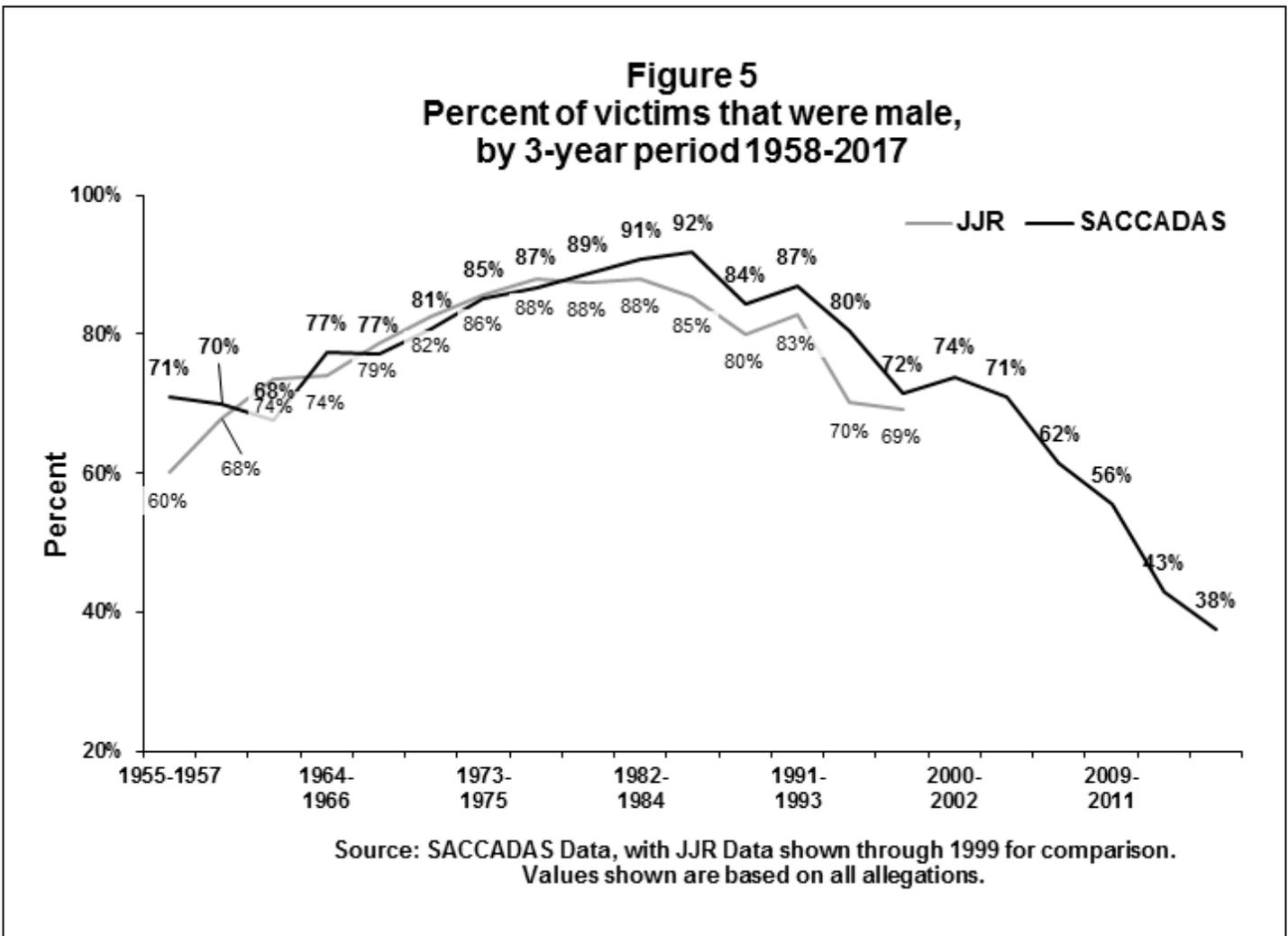
Figures 3 and 4 present population pyramid charts showing the combined distribution of the age and sex of victims of clergy sex abuse in the two periods up to and after the year 2002.¹² For the past abuse prior to 2000, shown in Figure 3, in every age band above age 5 the victims were predominantly male. The number and preference for male victims clustered around the age of puberty, increasing to age 13 before declining through age 17. Age 13 also had the highest number of female victims, but there were six times more male victims than female victims this

¹² The charts are based on all allegations, since there are too few current allegations after 2002 to fill the age by sex by year categories; but where the two can be compared, i.e., for the period 1950-2002, the distribution of age, sex, and year for current allegations is very similar to that of all allegations. See Figure A-2 in Appendix 1, which can be compared with Figure 3.



age; the focus on puberty, or on adolescent victims more generally, was thus overwhelmingly among boys. From age 11 through 14 the victims were 84-87% male; the proportion of male victims overall is 82%. While during this period the number of boys abused by age range up to almost 600 at age 13, with 300 or more victims for each age group of boys aged 10 to 15, the number of girls abused by age never exceeded 100.¹³

The age and sex structure is very different for more recent abuse after 2000, shown in Figure 4. The proportion of male victims dropped dramatically, from 82% for the earlier abuse



¹³ The age by sex structure of the corresponding John Jay data are very similar: The sex of victims were about equal through age 6, the highest number of male victims were at age 12, and 84-86% of victims aged 11 to 14 were male. See Appendix One, Figure A-1.

to just 62.3% for abuse in the present century. Only a minority (38%) of victims under age 8 were male. For both boys and girls, but especially boys, the focus is no longer on victims at puberty but on older victims approaching adulthood: for every age band above age 13 there are more victims than at age 13. Before 2000, only a third of victims (33.1%) were age 14 or older; after 2000, half (50.1%) were this age.

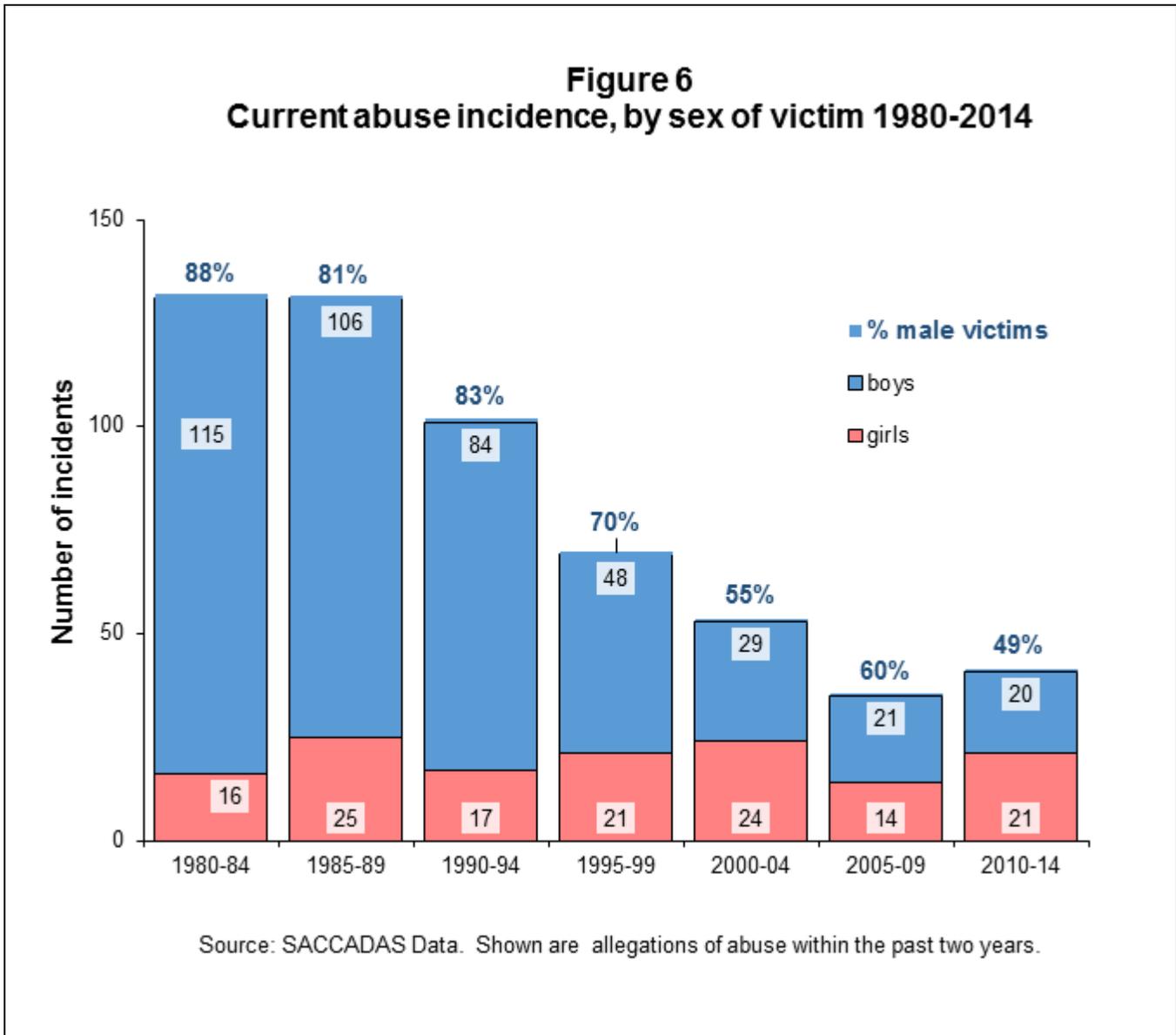
The proportion of male victims has dropped progressively since the turn of the century, continuing a trend that began in the 1980s. Figure 5 shows the trend. In the mid-1980s, over 90% of the victims were boys, but by the turn of the century the proportion of male victims had dropped by about 25%. Since 2000 the rate of decline has accelerated, with the proportion of male victims dropping by almost half since then, from 74% to 38%. In the present decade the majority of victims have been female.

The decline in male victims since the 1980s has not occurred due to a rise in the abuse of girls, but because of a dramatic drop in the abuse of boys. As Figure 6 shows, the number of current allegations involving female victims was about the same, in fact slightly less, in the 2000s (38) as it was in the 1980s (41).¹⁴ What has changed since then is not that more girls are being abused, but far fewer boys are being abused.

In sum, the victimization of children by Catholic priests in the past two decades (since 2000) has a very different character than it did during the previous five decades (1950-1999). Victimization today is no longer concentrated on males or focused so closely on puberty--there is a higher proportion of both older adolescent and younger pre-pubescent victims. Today the victim of clergy sex abuse is more likely to be a girl over age 14, and less likely to be a 13-year-old boy, than was true in the past. The substantial decline in abuse from its peak in the 1980s has

¹⁴ Presenting current allegations understates the total incidence of abuse in the interest of a more reliable comparison of periods over time.

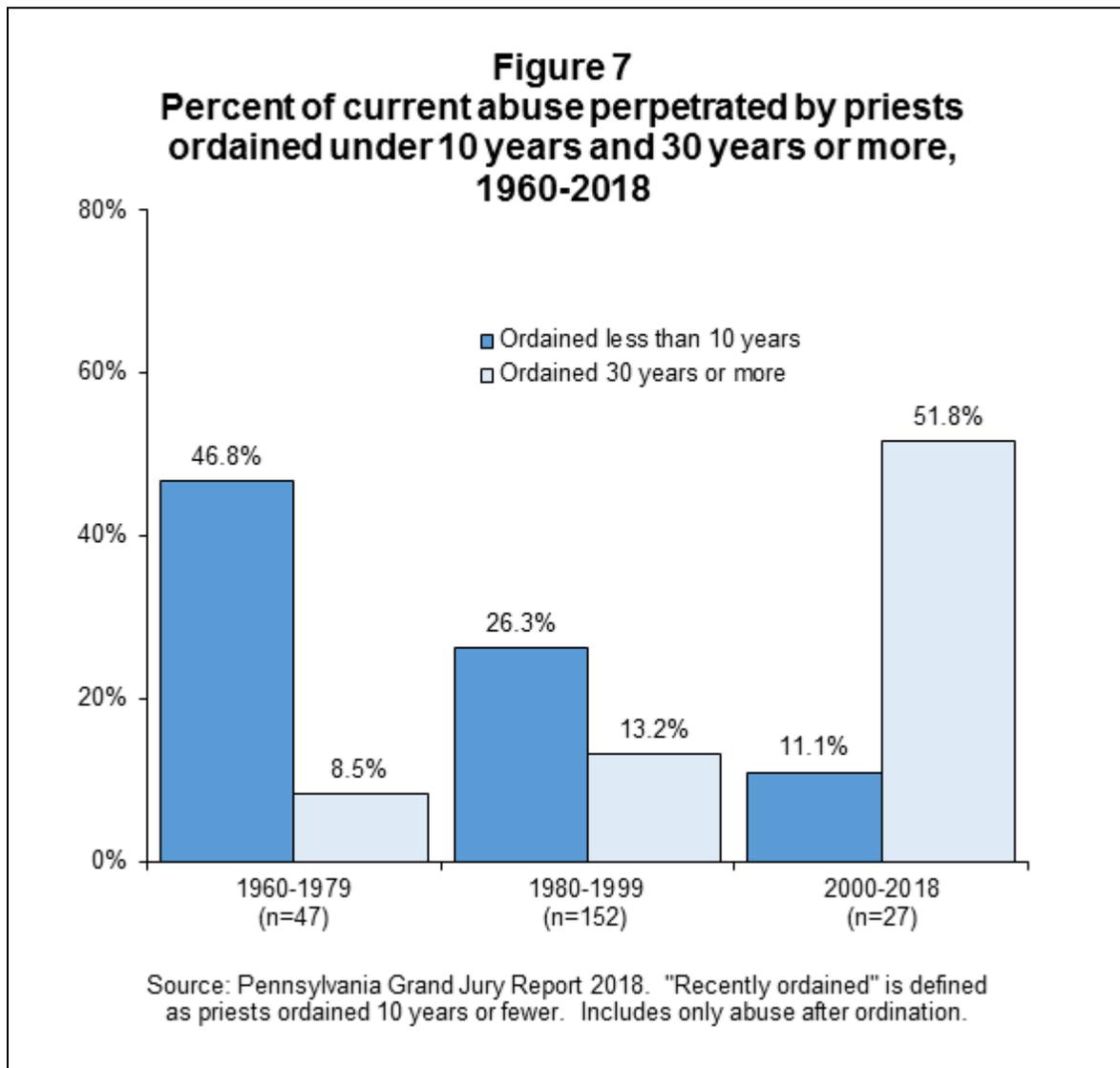
been entirely due to a dramatic drop in the abuse of boys. Over the past two decades the proportion of victims that were boys has continued to drop rapidly; in the current decade boys have been less likely to be victims than girls.



Abusers: From younger, newly ordained to older, long-tenured priests

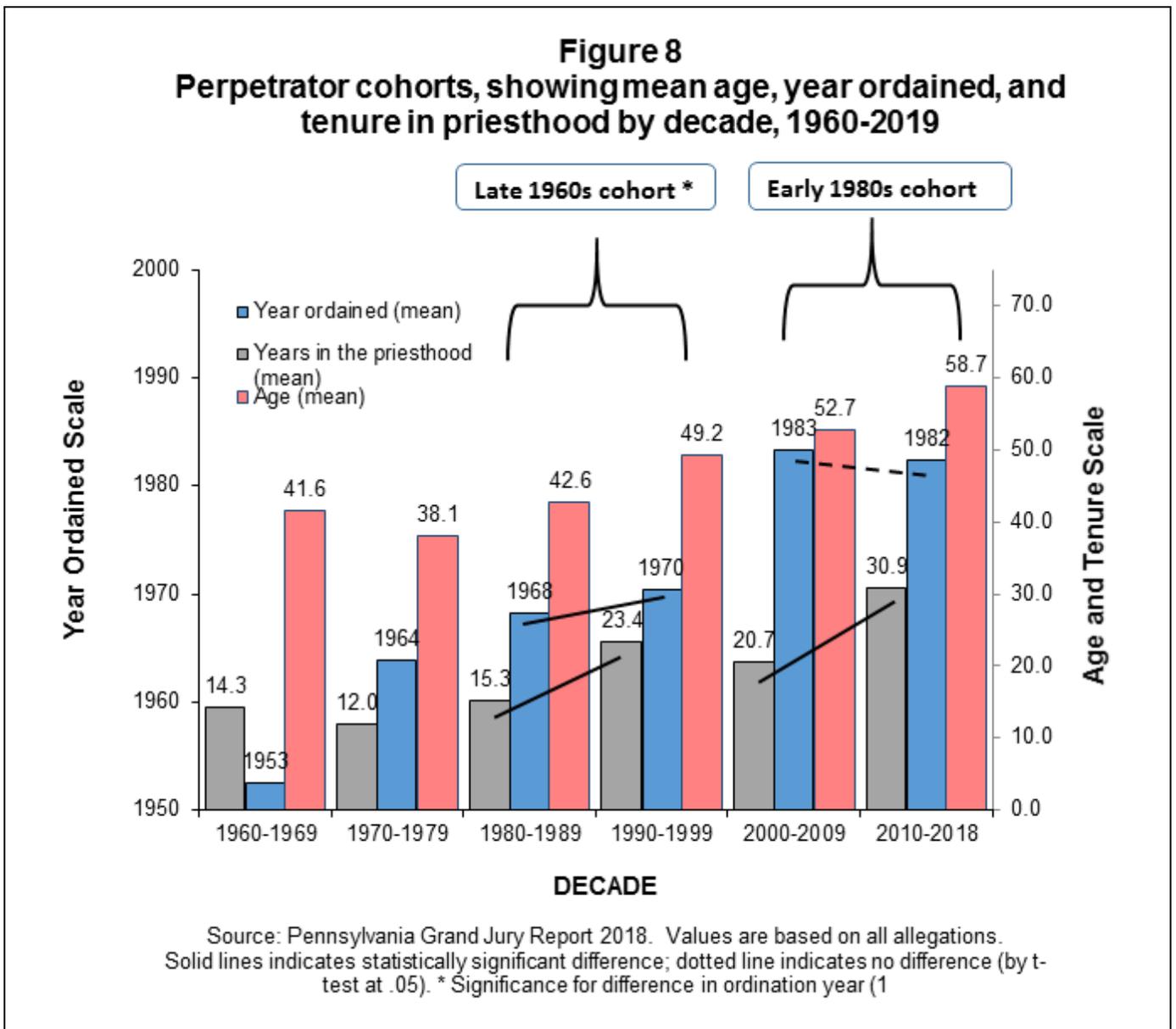
Like the victims, recent priest abusers also differ in significant ways from those in the past. Unlike earlier periods, in the past two decades the major contributors to ongoing child sex abuse have not been younger, newly ordained priests, but older men with long tenure in the

priesthood. Figure 7 shows the comparison, using the GJR Data, which includes the year of ordination for most perpetrators. Since 2000, only a tenth (11.1%) of current abuse has been committed by newly ordained men, compared to over a quarter (26.3%) two decades earlier, and almost half (46.8%) during the 1960s and 1970s. By contrast, the majority (51.8%) of recent abuse has been committed by priests ordained 30 years or more, compared to less than a fourth (13%) of this proportion in prior decades.



Abuser Cohorts

Over the three 20-year time periods since the 1960s shown in Figure 7, the mean age of abusers has also risen, from 39 to 45 to 56 (not shown). In part this rise reflects the rising average ordination age of all priests over these decades. A closer look, however, reveals that the pattern of age increase for abuser priests is very different than for all priests, as well as changes in year of ordination and tenure in the priesthood. Figure 8 puts all these trends together.



As Figure 8 shows, between the decade of the 2000s and the present decade beginning in 2010 the average tenure (number of years in the priesthood) of abuser priests in Pennsylvania increased by more than ten years (from 20.7 years in the 2000s to 30.9 years in the 2010s) while their average age rose by 6 years. At the same time the average year of ordination of abusers *did not change* between these decades. Abusers in the present decade were ordained a little earlier, in fact, than those from 2000-2009, though the difference is not statistically significant. This pattern is highlighted by lines connecting the pertinent bars in the chart. The pattern indicates that a disproportionate amount of the abuse in both decades was perpetrated by the same general cohort of priests, concentrated around ordination in the early 1980s (1982 or 1983).

A similar pattern, though less strong, can be observed during the 1980s and 1990s. Between these two decades the average tenure of abuser priests increased by more than eight years (from 15.3 years in the 1980s to 23.4 years in the 1990s) while their average age rose by 6.6 years. At the same time the average year of ordination rose by only two years, from 1968 during the 1980s to 1970 during the 1990s. This small difference is statistically significant, but just barely; the value measuring the variance (.048) is just below the cutoff for significance (.050). Abusers in the 1980s and 1990s were generally concentrated by year of ordination, but not as tightly or clear as they were from 2000-2018. For all Catholic priests, by comparison, over a shorter span of the same period the average tenure rose by only 3 years, from 24.9 to 27.9 and average age rose by only 4 years, from 52 to 56, both metrics reflecting the rising age of ordination since the 1960s; and year of ordination advanced 5 years, from 1960 to 1965, reflecting the declining numbers of priests ordained.¹⁵

¹⁵ Based on 1985 and 1993 surveys of Catholic priests reported in Dean R. Hoge, Joseph J. Shields, and Mary Jeanne Verdick, "Changing Age Distribution and Theological Attitudes of Catholic Priests, 1970-1985," *Sociological Analysis* 49, no. 3 (October 1, 1988): 264-80; Dean R. Hoge, Joseph J. Shields, and Douglas L. Griffin, "Changes in Satisfaction and Institutional Attitudes of Catholic Priests, 1970-1993," *Sociology of Religion* 56, no. 2 (July 1, 1995):

Taken together, these measures indicate that the priests engaged in child sex abuse since the 1960s have been concentrated, more or less, in two cohorts: one ordained in the late 1960s and the other ordained in the early 1980s. The late 1960s cohort was active in the spate of abuse reported in the JJR data, which peaked in the early 1980s. The average priest abuser in this era was born in the 1940s, ordained in the late 1960s, and was in his mid-40s at the time of abuse. Although a quarter of the abusers were newly ordained (meaning they had less than ten years in the priesthood), most (60%) had been in the priesthood between ten and thirty years. Their abuse was disproportionately male-on-male, and although ordained during a time when fewer homosexual priests were ordained, they abused during a time when the proportion of homosexual priests being ordained was very high.

More recent abuse (since 2000) has involved a different, much smaller but more defined, cohort of abuser priests. These men were born in the late 1950s, ordained in the early 1980s, and were in their mid-50s at the time of abuse. Only one in ten was newly ordained; over half had been ordained 30 years or more. The preference for male victims, as well as the rate of abuse, was much lower in this era than during the previous twenty years. Although ordained during a time when a very high proportion of homosexual priests were ordained, they abused during a time when the proportion of homosexual priests being ordained has been so low as to be practically non-existent; as the following sections will now endeavor to show.

The analysis in this section is based on the GJR data, which has all the relevant perpetrator information. These data mirror national trends in most respects,¹⁶ however it is possible that the abuser cohorts observed were unique to the abuse in Pennsylvania.

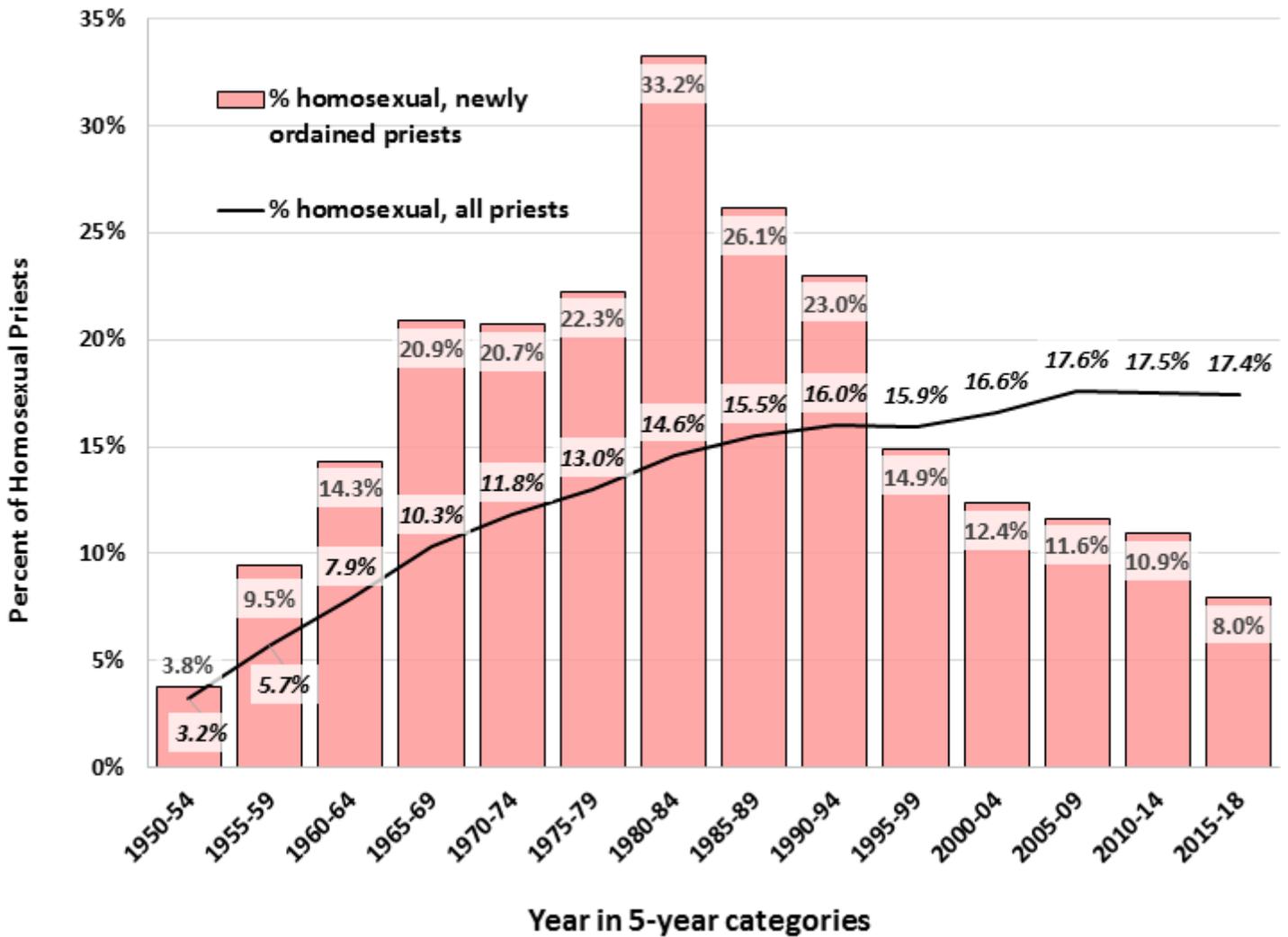
195–213 The data files used in these studies are available from the Association of Religion Data Archives, Department of Sociology, Pennsylvania State University, www.thearda.com.

¹⁶ Sullins, "Is Catholic Clergy Sex Abuse Related to Homosexual Priests?," 8, 13. Page numbers reference the preprint at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3276082.

Homosexual ordinations drop ...

In CSA1 I found that abuse and male victimization were related to the share of homosexual men in the priesthood prior to 2000. Is the reduced incidence and male victimization of recent abuse also related to a reduction in the share of homosexual priests? The 2002 survey data on clergy homosexuality used in CSA1 tracked a sharp decline in homosexual

Figure 9
Growth and decline of homosexual men in the priesthood, 1950-2018



Source: Los Angeles Times 2002 Survey of Catholic Priests (n=1,852) for 1950-1999. Values after 2000 report model-based estimates from SACCADAS Data (n=5,319).

ordinations after the early 1980s. After peaking at a third (33.2%) of ordinands during 1980-1984, the percent of homosexual men ordained to the Catholic priesthood dropped by over half, to only 15% by the late 1990s. Has this trend continued since then? To address this question I employed the statistical models developed in CSA 1 to estimate the share of priests with a homosexual orientation since 2000. The modeling procedure is described in detail in the Technical Supplement below. Figure 9 summarizes the results. From 1950-1999 the figure presents actual survey data already reported in CSA1;¹⁷ from 2000-2018 the figure shows the new model-based estimates based on the changed character of abuse. These estimates indicate that the proportion of homosexual priests ordained each year, shown in the bars, has continued to drop since 2000, though at a slightly slower pace, to only 8.0% in the most recent period (2015-2018). At 8.0%, the share of homosexual ordinands today is just a little over half (54%) of what it was in 2000, and is comparable to the proportion of homosexual men who were ordained in the 1950s.

... to very few

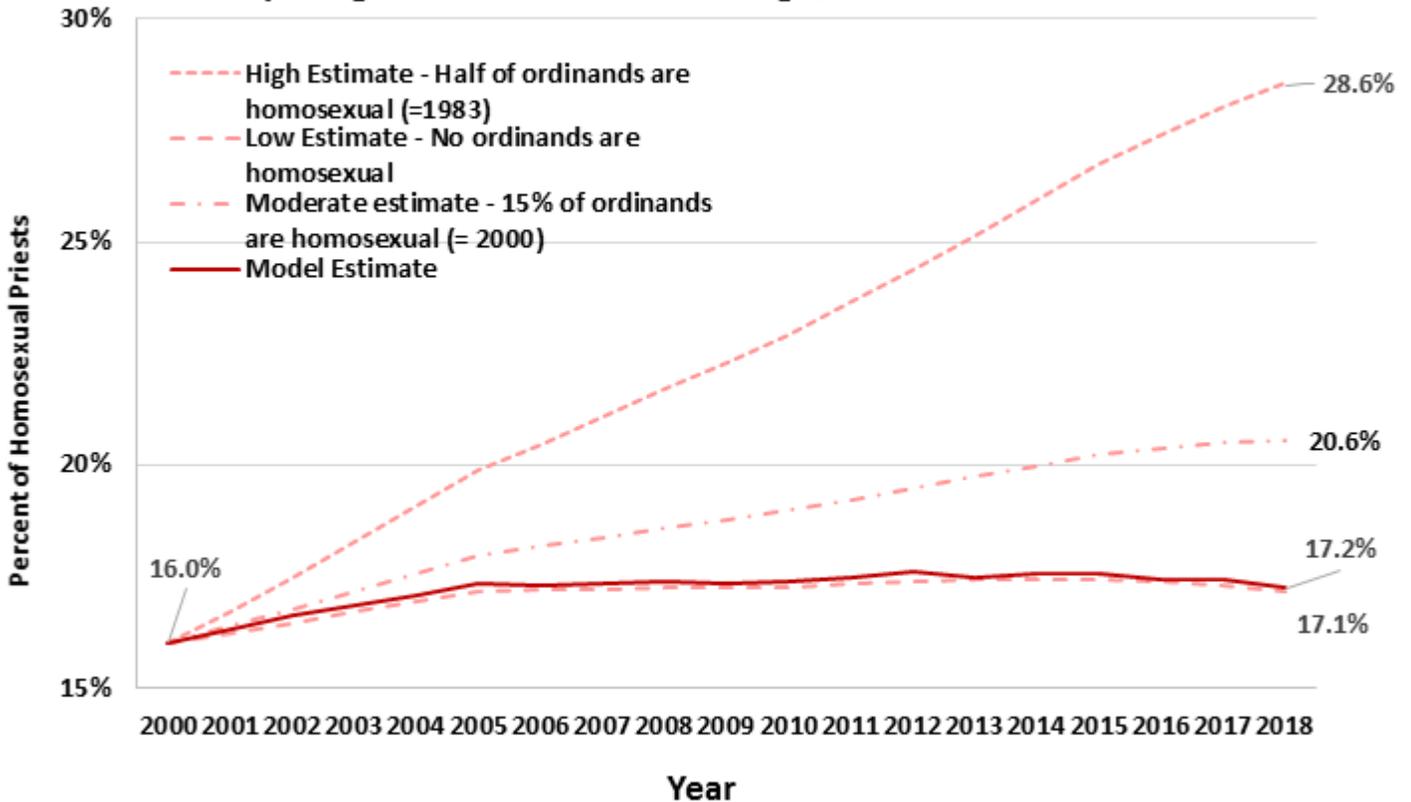
A closer look confirms that recent homosexual ordinations have been sparse. Figure 10 compares the results of the model-based estimate of the proportion of homosexual priests since 2000 (shown by single year instead of the 5-year groups shown in Figure 9), along with the projected proportion that would have existed under three hypothetical scenarios regarding the population of priests (high, low and moderate estimates). The high estimate assumes that since 2000 half of all priests ordained have been homosexual, matching the highest reported proportion prior to 2000, which occurred in 1983. The moderate estimate assumes that since 2000 there has been no change from the proportion of homosexual priests ordained in that year, which was

¹⁷ See Sullins, fig. 8.

about 16%. The low estimate assumes that no homosexual priests have been ordained since 2000. Unlike the model estimate, the three hypothetical projections do not depend in any way on survey data or information about the nature or incidence of child sex abuse, but use counts of the actual population of Catholic priests and ordinations each year reported by Church yearbooks, to independently project the proportion of homosexual priests that would exist under each of the three assumptions.¹⁸

Figure 10

Estimated growth of homosexual men in the priesthood since 2000, comparing model estimates with high, low and moderate estimates



Source: For projections, CARA reports of the number of ordinands and total priests by year. For model estimates, Los Angeles Times Survey and SACCADAS data as described in the text.

¹⁸ Counts of ordinations and total numbers of priests are reported by Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), “Frequently Requested Church Statistics,” accessed October 21, 2018, <https://cara.georgetown.edu/frequently-requested-church-statistics/>.

As Figure 10 shows clearly, the model estimate is only marginally different than the low population estimate, which projects the proportion of homosexual priests that would exist if none had been ordained since 2000. The final estimates for 2018 differ by only one-tenth of one percent, well within the range of possible error and/or random variation in the model estimate. The close similarity of these two estimates strongly suggests that very few homosexual men have been ordained to the Catholic priesthood in the United States in the past two decades.

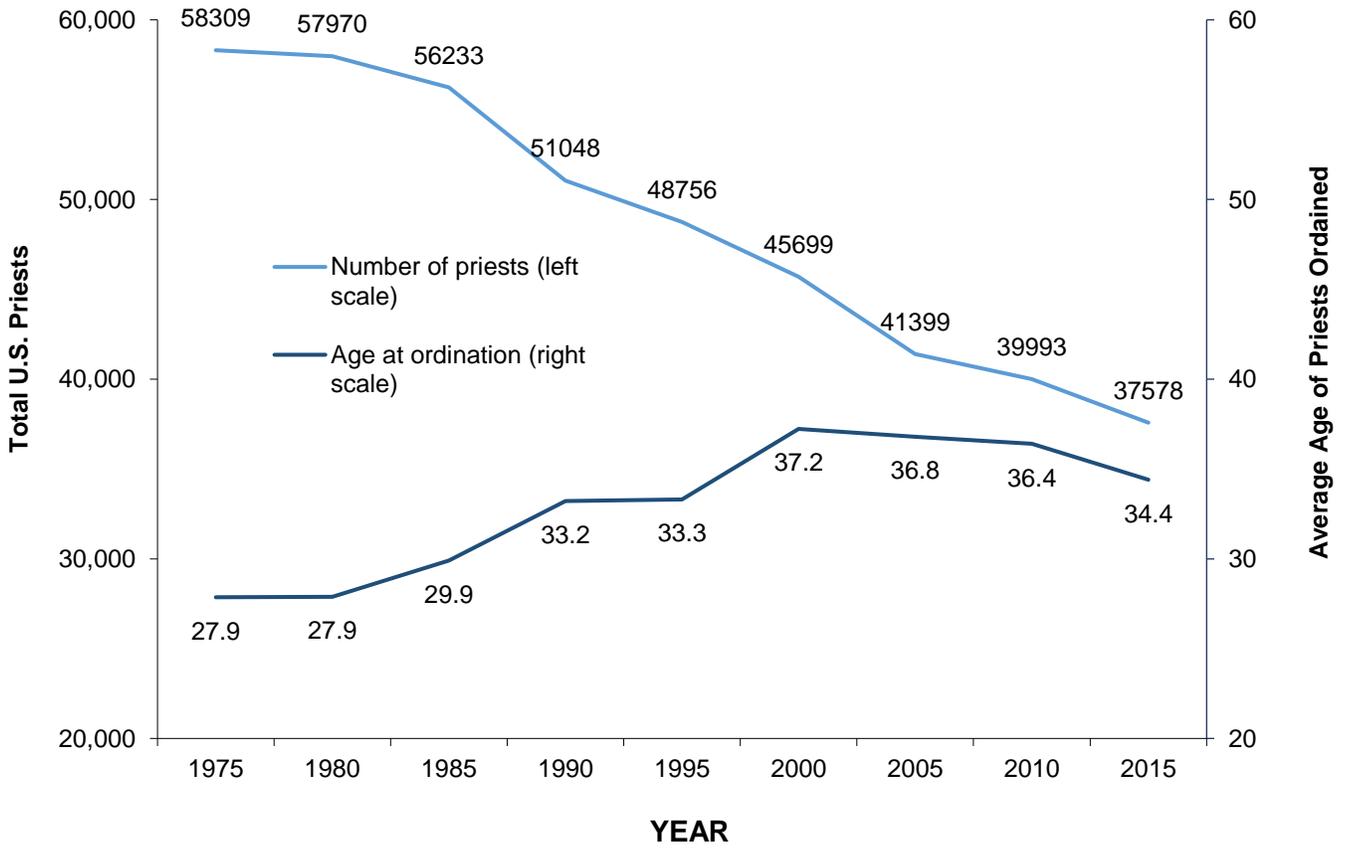
Surprisingly, despite the decline in homosexual priests *newly ordained* since 2000, the proportion of homosexual priests *overall* has continued to rise. As the line in Figure 9 shows, the overall share of homosexual priests has risen by about 1.5 percentage points since 2000. To understand how this can happen, as well as get a better picture of the current state of homosexual men in the priesthood, it will help to take a brief look at other long-term trends in the population of Catholic priests.

The homosexual population wave

Two thirty-year trends can help us to understand the significance of the rising proportion of homosexual priests. Both trends are illustrated in Figure 11. First, over the thirty years prior to 2000 the average age at ordination rose by ten years, from 27 in the five-year period ending in 1970 to over 37 for the five-year period ending in 2000. Second, over the same 30 years (1970-2000) the number of priests dropped sharply—from about 58,000 in 1970 to under 46,000 in 2000, a decline of over 20%—as ordinations failed to keep pace with deaths, defections and retirements.

During the first half of this period the percent of homosexual men ordained increased sharply, reaching a high in the early 1980s, when a third of all priests ordained were homosexual, as Figure 8 shows. After that time homosexual ordinations began to drop, but by then far fewer,

Figure 11
Age at ordination rises as number of priests ordained drops, 1975-2000

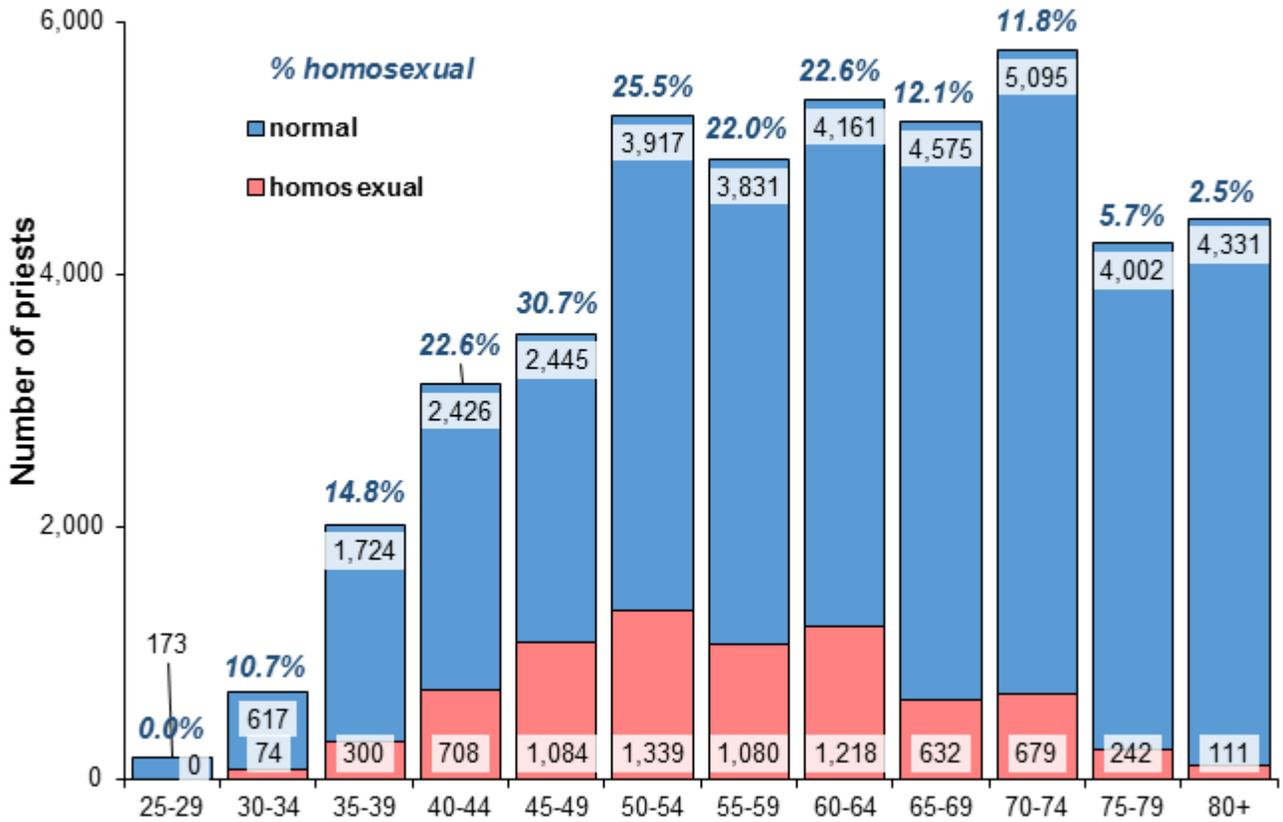


Source: For age at ordination, Los Angeles Times 2002 survey of Catholic priests (n=1852) through 2000 and USCCB ordination class surveys thereafter. For number of priests, Official Catholic Directory. Age at ordination value reports the average val

and older, men were being ordained each year. The combined effect of these trends by the year 2000 was a crowding of priests in middle age, a high proportion of whom were homosexual.

Figure 12 reports the age structure of priests by sexual orientation in that year. The age groups of priests aged 50 to 74 are notably larger than those above and below these ages. Fully a quarter (24.7%) of the priests on the lower side of this bulge, from 45 to 64 years of age, was

Figure 12
Age Structure of Clergy Homosexuality in 2000



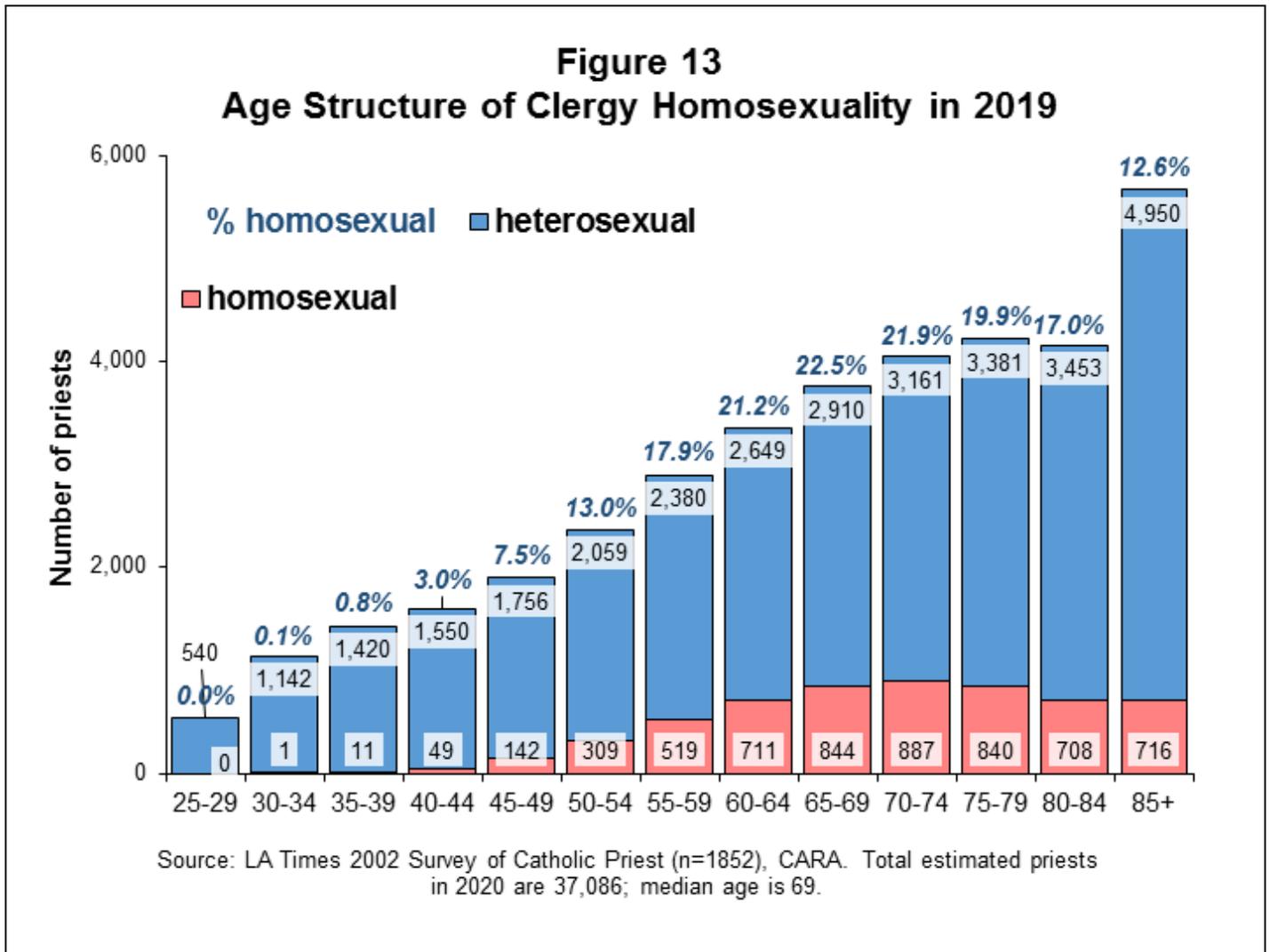
Source: LA Times 2002 Survey of Catholic Priests (n=1852). Shown are population estimates; in 2000 there were 45,699 U.S. Catholic priests.

homosexual. In stark contrast, less than a tenth (8.5%) of priests age 65 and above was homosexual in 2000. Priests at or below the average age of ordination (37) were much less likely to be homosexual than were priests who had been ordained two or three decades earlier. None of the priests under age 30 reported their sexual orientation as homosexual in 2000.

Since 2000 the drop in the number of priests has accelerated, as new ordinations have not

offset deaths and retirements. At the present time (2019) there are approximately 37,000 U.S. priests, a drop of 19% since 2000, or about one percent a year. The average age at ordination has stabilized at about 35, reducing further clustering, as the U.S. presbyterate has aged dramatically. See Figure 13. Today the median age of a Catholic priest in the United States is 69. Over two-thirds (67.9%) of all priests are age 60 or older; over a quarter (26.4%) are age 80 or older.

The cohorts of priests who have passed away thus far in the 21st century—the 75-79 and 80+ age groups shown in Figure 12—have been less homosexual than those remaining. As most of these oldest groups of priests have died during the past two decades, the men 45 and older in



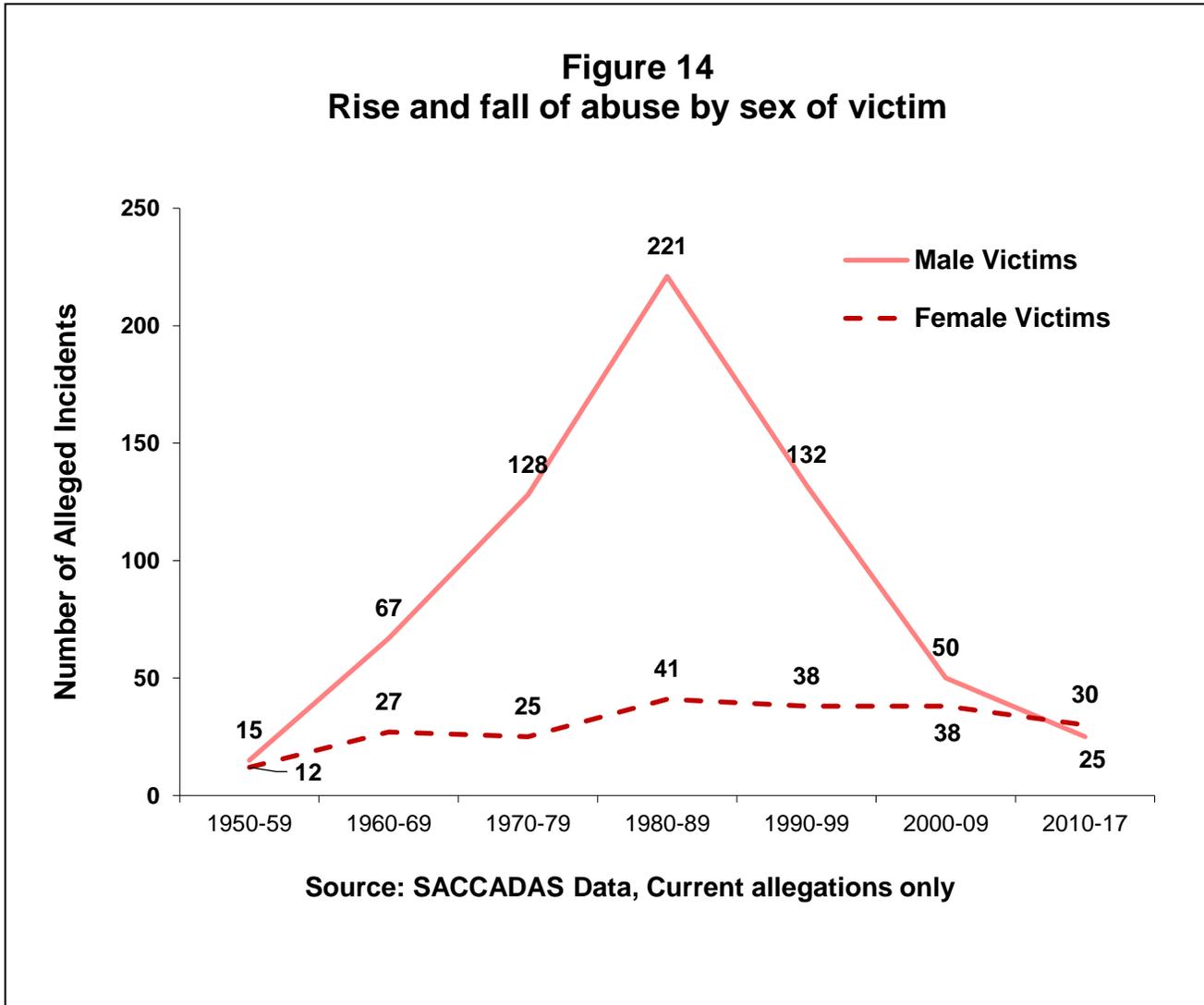
the year 2000, now aged 65 and older, have come to numerically dominate the priesthood, thereby increasing the overall proportion of homosexual priests despite very few new homosexual ordinations. But the remaining homosexual priests are concentrated among older priests. Today over one in five (20.4%) of priests aged 60-84—a group which comprises over half (52.7%) of all priests—is homosexual. By contrast, less than one in ten (9.0%) priests under age 60, and less than one in thirty (3.3%) under age 50, is homosexual. As the large wave of older priests with a high share of homosexual men begins to age out of the priest population over the next two or three decades, the proportion of homosexual priests will drop sharply.

Twin receding waves

According to the evidence presented above, both the sexual abuse of minors and the share of homosexual Catholic priests rose and then fell over the course of several decades, in twin waves that crested in or around the early 1980s. The wave of the minor sex abuse, shown in Figure 2, corresponds closely to the wave of homosexual priests, shown in Figure 9. The alignment of these two waves expresses the assumption of the statistical model that the strong correlation of child sex abuse with the proportion of homosexual priests observed through the 1990s has continued to the present day. If this assumption is true, then the comparatively low incidence of child sex abuse today implies, despite the complication of the population bulge of older homosexual priests, that the ordinations of new homosexual priests has also dropped sharply.

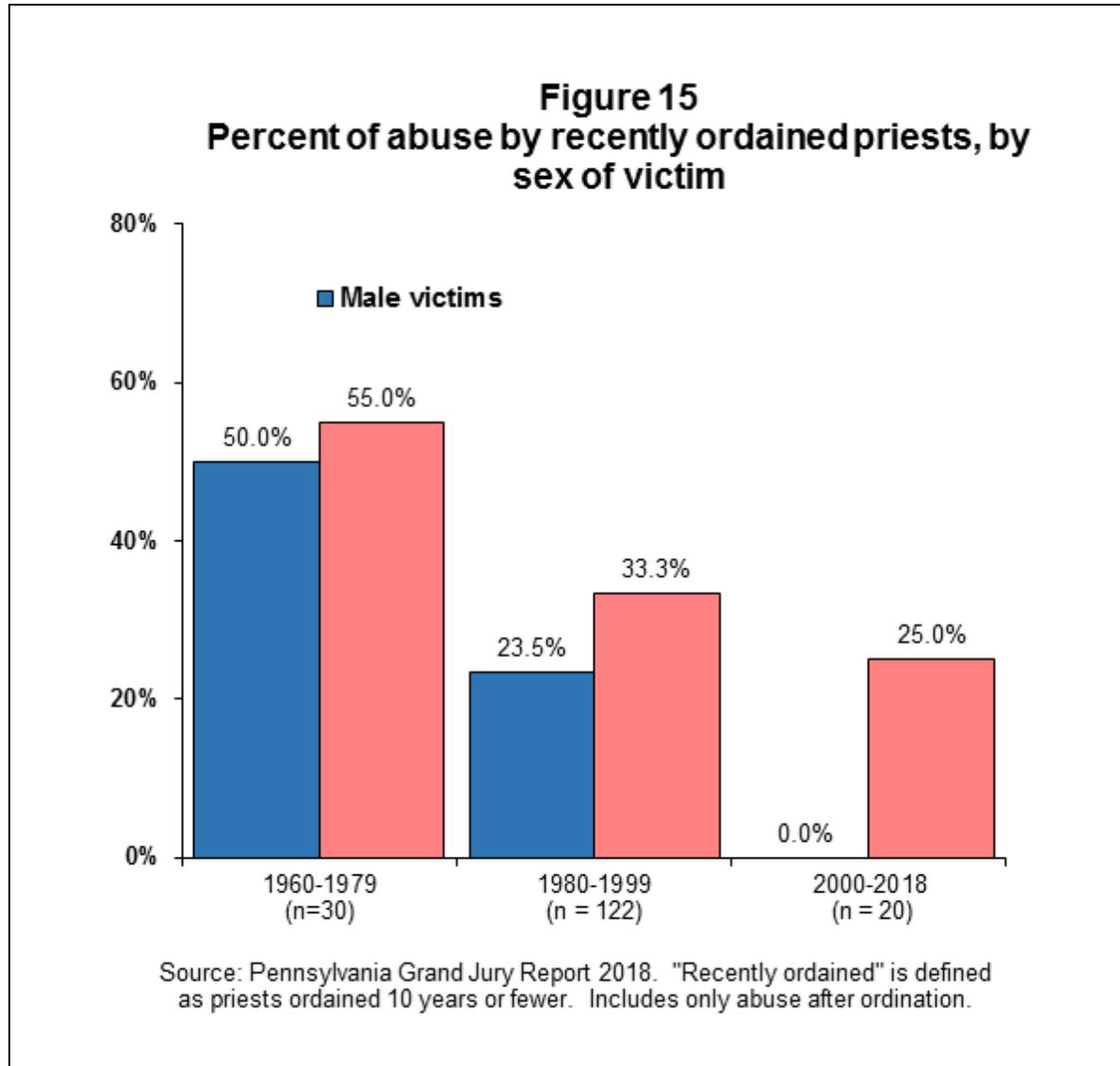
The estimated drop in recent homosexual ordinations is corroborated by several characteristics of the twin waves of abuse and homosexual priests. First, a look at the sex of victims over the long term illustrates that the rising and falling wave of child sex abuse by priests since 1950 was entirely comprised of the victimization of males. By contrast, the victimization

of females has remained relatively constant. Figure 14 shows the trends, extending data already presented in Figure 6 above. After increasing by about half (51%) since the 1960s, the sexual abuse of girls by priests has remained at a stable, and low, level since the 1980s.¹⁹ The abuse of boys, on the other hand, skyrocketed by the 1980s to over three times (330% of) the rate of the 1960s, before plummeting to a level less than half that of the 1960s (about 45%) in the current



¹⁹ If the annual rate for the 8 years of the most recent period (2010-2017) is extended to 10 years, to match the time span of the prior periods, the number of female victims will be 38, the same amount as in the two previous decades. Since the large majority of allegations, including reports of current allegations in previous years, have been reported or discovered only in the past 20 years, the incidence numbers for the 1950s are very likely too low due to mortality (the people affected died before they ever acknowledged making a report).

decade. The receding of male victimization, while female victimization persists, is consistent with the decline or disappearance of younger priests who prefer males as sexual victims.



Already in 2000 there are no homosexual men among the youngest priests, second, according to the age structure presented in Figure 12. Third, as Figure 7 showed above, the incidence of abuse perpetrated by recently ordained priests dropped sharply after 2000 to only 11%, less than half the proportion during the previous 20-year period (26%). If we consider the sex of victims, the difference of recently ordained priests is even more definitive regarding

homosexual ordinations. Figure 15 shows the comparison. Although after 2000 recently ordained priests were less likely to abuse both boys and girls, the drop in the victimization of boys was much steeper. In the dioceses covered by the report of the Pennsylvania grand jury, not a single incident of male victimization after 2000 (of 12 reported) was perpetrated by a recently ordained priest. Despite the relatively small number of cases, this notable finding supports the plausibility of the estimate that few recently ordained priests were homosexual men.

In addition to the characteristics of the data, a pattern of sparse ordinations of homosexual men reflects what we know both of Catholic standards for ordination and of the character of today's younger priests.

Ordaining with the Church

The Popes are clear: No homosexual ordinations

The exclusion of homosexual men from the priesthood reflects both the explicit norms of eligibility and the underlying theology and psychology of celibacy that has guided Catholic formation to the priesthood since Vatican Council II (1962-65). In 2005 Pope Benedict XVI's Congregation for Catholic Education, which has purview over the formation of priests, issued a papal Instruction on "the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies" which unmistakably barred the ordination of homosexual men: "the Church ...cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practice homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the so-called 'gay culture'." ²⁰ A past flirtation

²⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, "Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders," November 4, 2005, 2, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html.

with homosexual tendencies, for example during adolescence, were not necessarily a bar to ordination, the Congregation held, but “such tendencies must be clearly overcome at least three years before ordination.”²¹ This wording makes clear that any current or persistent same-sex attraction, whether or not there is current homosexual practice, precludes a man from the priesthood and the diaconate.

The 2005 Instruction did not impose a new discipline in the matter, but simply clarified earlier teaching. The Congregation for Catholic Education’s 1974 document *Formation in Celibacy*, which set forth instructions and norms to guide “the progressive development of a mature personality” called for in Pope Paul VI’s 1967 encyclical *On Priestly Celibacy*,²² made clear that the mature personality aimed for in priestly formation excluded homosexual attraction: “In order to talk about a person as mature, his sexual instinct must have overcome two immature tendencies, narcissism and homosexuality, and must have arrived at heterosexuality.”²³ Those in whom these tendencies persist are among those who, according to *On Priestly Celibacy*, are “unfit [for celibacy] for physical, psychological or moral reasons [and] should be quickly removed from the path to the priesthood” in order to avoid “resultant damage to himself or to the Church.”²⁴ The 2005 guidelines were definitively reaffirmed in an updated program for priestly formation issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2016.²⁵

²¹ Congregation for Catholic Education, 2.

²² Paul VI (Pope), *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, [Encyclical Letter on the Celibacy of the Priest] (Vatican City, 1967), sec. 1.

²³ Congregation for Catholic Education, “Education for Formation for Priestly Celibacy,” April 11, 1974, sec. 21, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19740411_celibato-sacerdotale_it.html.

²⁴ Paul VI (Pope), *Sacerdotalis Caelibatus*, sec. 61.

²⁵ Congregation for Catholic Education, “The Gift of the Priestly Vocation,” 2016, <http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/The%20Gift%20of%20the%20Priestly%20Vocation.pdf>.

New men restoring faithfulness

These guidelines obviously were not followed through the mid-1980s, when up to half of priests ordained each year were homosexual. Some, primarily gay advocacy groups and older bishops in the homosexual bulge (ages 65-85), still oppose or question them.²⁶ But if the above statistical evidence gives accurate witness, compliance with them has progressively improved since the 1980s, and in the present century has been virtually complete. Unlike in the 1980s, today Paul VI’s warning of possible “resultant damage ...to the Church” from homosexual priests is painfully obvious to most Catholics. Recurring scandals featuring the sexual predation of boys by priests—with deeply wounded victims, large financial payouts and scornful media exposure—would induce much greater caution in any rational bishop or Church leader when presented with homosexual applicants for priesthood.

A more powerful influence on this trend, however, has been the rise of a younger generation of priests and priest applicants far more devoted to orthodox faith and practice than were their predecessors.²⁷ Influenced by the pontificate and person of Pope John Paul II (1978-2005), this cohort of more traditional, evangelical young men began to populate ordination classes in significant numbers beginning in the late 1990s and are the dominant presence among new ordinations today. The coming of these “John Paul II priests” has contributed to the reduction in recent ordinations of homosexual men in at least two ways.

²⁶ Ken Stone, “Bishop McElroy Grilled on Gay Clergy, Catholic Sex-Abuse Crisis,” *Times of San Diego* (blog), October 2, 2018, <https://timesofsandiego.com/life/2018/10/01/bishop-mcelroy-grilled-on-gay-clergy-catholic-sex-abuse-crisis/>; “New Vatican Document Forbidding Gay Priests ‘Damaging,’ Says Gay Catholic Group | DignityUSA,” December 8, 2016, <https://www.dignityusa.org/article/new-vatican-document-forbidding-gay-priests-%E2%80%9Cdamaging%E2%80%9D-says-gay-catholic-group>.

²⁷ Profiles of the distinctive character of young priests are presented in Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, *Evolving Visions of the Priesthood: Changes from Vatican II to the Turn of the New Century* (Liturgical Press, 2003), 61–78; S. J. Rossetti, *Why Priests Are Happy: A Study of the Psychological and Spiritual Health of Priests* (Ave Maria Press, 2011), 177–94; Donald Paul Sullins, *Keeping the Vow: The Untold Story of Married Catholic Priests* (Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 41–43.

First, unlike a generation ago, new aspirants to priesthood today who experience homosexual inclinations are much more aware, or soon become more aware, of the contradictions involved from the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy. In contrast to their counterparts a generation ago, these men are much more likely to voluntarily forego seeking priesthood if their attractions persist. Dr. Timothy Lock of Divine Mercy University, who has counselled many Catholic seminarians and priests struggling with same-sex attraction over several decades, confirms from his experience: "Today's same-sex attracted seminarians, raised on the pontificate of John Paul II and the theology of the body, are seriously committed to following Christ in the teachings of the Church, even if that may mean withdrawing from the seminary."²⁸

Second, the younger priests have themselves moved relatively quickly into positions of influence in the selection and screening of new candidates for priesthood. As new ordinations declined following the 1960s, dioceses increasingly emphasized the need to actively recruit eligible young men for priesthood. Diocesan recruitment processes, including vocations directors and seminary formators, increasingly became staffed by younger priests, who were valued for their ability to attract and relate to young men who may consider a priestly vocation. As the young cohort of John Paul II priests have moved into these positions, they have brought a renewed commitment to faithfully follow the papal restrictions on homosexual candidates reviewed above. Not only have they followed the rules more strictly, they have also begun to renew and develop to the underlying reasons for the rules in the articulation of a positive, joyful, resolutely heterosexual understanding of priestly celibacy.

²⁸ Electronic mail communication, February 11, 2019.

Real renunciation for spiritual fatherhood

In the assertively masculine understanding of these young priests, priestly celibacy offers an explicit, muscular rejoinder to the cheap sex and transient relationships spawned by the sexual revolution. Although in common parlance the word “celibacy” is generally understood to mean abstinence from sex relations, in Catholic usage the word actually signifies something deeper: abstinence from marriage. While all Christians are called to abstain from sex relations (called “continence”) outside of marriage and persons in religious life vow perpetual continence, priestly celibacy is something more than this. In the commitment to celibacy, the priest does not merely forego sex experience: he offers up the real possibility of marriage and children for the sake of the kingdom of God. Priestly spirituality has long recognized that in this renunciation the priest becomes, in a sense, married to Christ and the Church. As one bishop writes to his priests: “When we committed our lives to celibacy, we made a complete gift of ourselves—a sacrifice—to the Lord and the Church, as a husband to his wife.”²⁹ What the new theology emphasizes is that in renouncing sexual expression and children for the sake of the kingdom of God, priests also affirm and ennoble human sexuality, as embodied in their own masculinity, as a good that is ordained to higher, transcendent purposes.

Father Carter Griffin, a vocations director and John Paul II priest, proposes that priestly celibacy is properly understood as a kind of exchange in which the priest offers “the conscious and sacrificial renunciation of biologically generative sexual union for the sake of a higher generativity in the order of grace.”³⁰ Earthly fatherhood is renounced for the sake of spiritual fatherhood. In this exchange, what the priest offers to God is not sexual experience generically,

²⁹ J. Peter Sartain, *Strengthen Your Brothers: Letters of Encouragement from an Archbishop to His Priests* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 18.

³⁰ Carter Griffin, *The Fatherhood of the Celibate Priest* (Emmaus Press, 2019), 52.

but sexual union with a woman. Specifically, and not coincidentally, it is precisely that “conjugal act which is suitable in itself for the procreation of offspring” which is essential for Catholic marriage.³¹

Consequently, only men capable of marriage are capable of priesthood. A homosexual man, whose attractions to men effectively nullify his natural generative potential, is no more able to enter into Catholic priesthood than he is to enter into Catholic marriage to a man. Pope Benedict XVI, commenting on the question of homosexuality and priesthood in 2011, stated with typical clarity: “Homosexuality is incompatible with the priestly vocation. Otherwise, celibacy itself would lose its meaning as a renunciation.”³²

Furthermore, because in Catholic thinking sexuality is not merely biological desire but “acquires its authentic meaning and reveals its function of self-giving in the reciprocity of the relationship between man and woman”,³³ the homosexual orientation away from seeking sexual union with a woman also inhibits the attainment of certain elements of maturity in the sexual dimension of interpersonal emotions (or “affectivity”).³⁴ Father Earl Fernandes, writing as the young dean of a large seminary, states the connection clearly: “One who cannot give himself to another in authentic love is not suitable for either marriage or priesthood.”³⁵ As another seminary rector, a John Paul II priest, explained to me, “If a young man cannot picture himself married to a woman and fathering children, we would not accept him into the seminary.”

³¹ “Code of Canon Law” (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.d.), pt. 1061, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM.

³² Pope Benedict XVI and Peter Seewald, *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times* (Ignatius Press, 2010), 152.

³³ Fr Earl Fernandes, “Seminary Formation and Homosexuality: Changing Sexual Morality and the Church’s Response,” *The Linacre Quarterly* 78, no. 3 (2011): 321.

³⁴ See also Conrad W. Baars, *I Will Give Them a New Heart: Reflections on the Priesthood and the Renewal of the Church* (New York: Alba House, 2007).

³⁵ Fernandes, “Seminary Formation and Homosexuality,” 321.

Elusive chastity

Not only would admitting homosexual men to priesthood be harmful to the Church, the young priests respectfully point out, it would also be harmful to those candidates, who will have a much harder struggle to achieve chastity, and even if they achieve it, will still not be able to thereby achieve true celibacy. Fr. Griffin writes:

It is not bigotry or cruelty or homophobia that rules out homosexual candidates for the priesthood; it is charity both to the people of God and to the man in question, for whom such a life is manifestly unsuitable and perhaps perilous. The emphasis on the paternity of the celibate priesthood helps to confirm the Church's proscription on the ordination of men with same-sex attraction, not because such men are incapable of remaining continent or of achieving great sanctity, but because their struggle weakens their own masculine identity and their capacity to exercise celibate paternity fruitfully and joyfully.³⁶

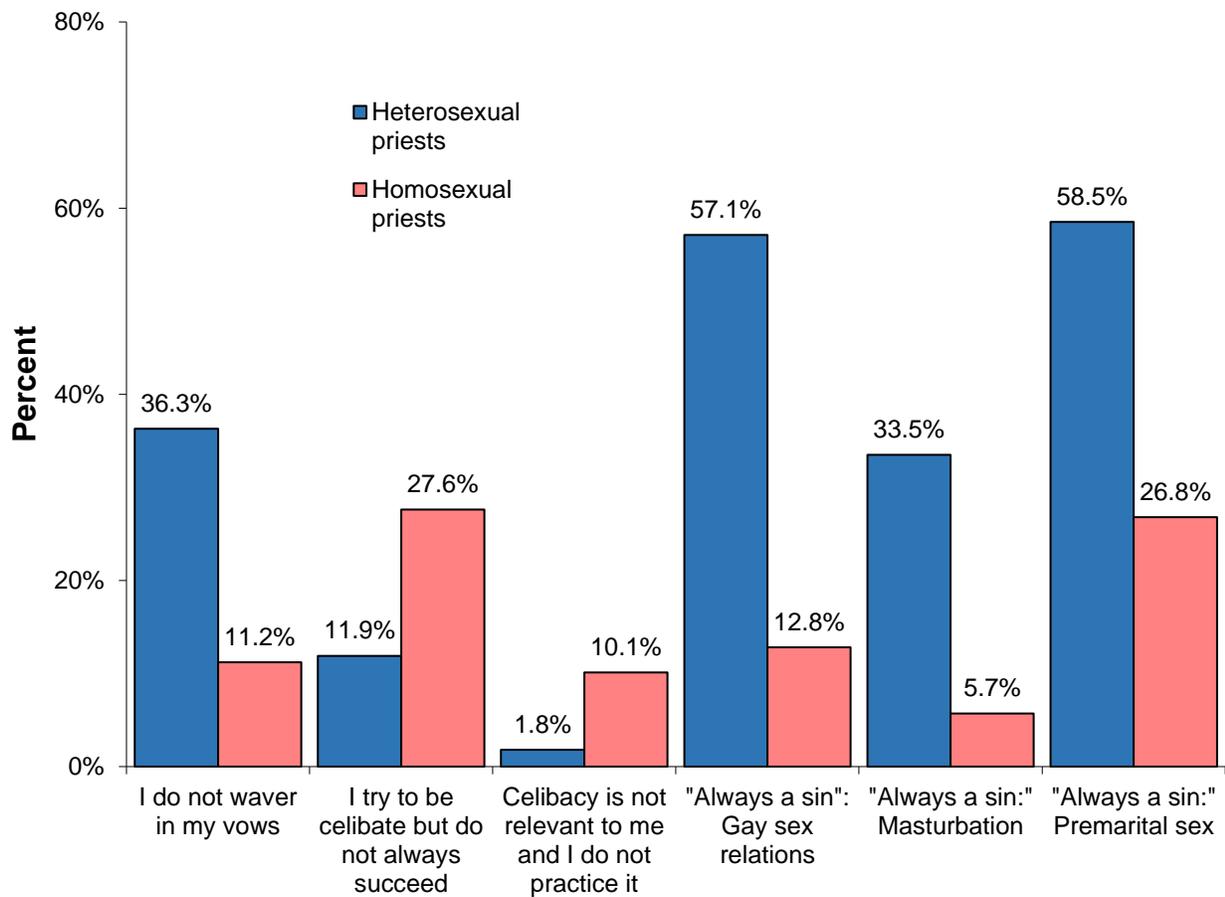
The wisdom of these words is borne out by evidence that homosexual priests are much less likely to succeed in the practice of celibacy. The 2002 LA Times priest survey asked responding priests about characterize “how you feel about the role that celibacy plays in your life” by selecting one of four responses: 1) Celibacy is not a problem for me and I do not waver in my vows. 2) Celibacy takes time to achieve and I consider it an ongoing journey. 3) Celibacy is a discipline I try to follow, but I do not always succeed. 4) Celibacy is not relevant to my priesthood and I do not observe it. Figure 16 presents percentage responses by priest sexual orientation. Statement 2 (not shown) was chosen by half of the priests regardless of sexual orientation (51% of homosexual priests and 50% of heterosexual priests). The relevance of this statement to the priest's persistence in celibacy is unclear. The other three statements (1,3 and 4) are each clearly related to success or failure in maintaining celibacy.

For all three of these measures of persistence in celibacy or chastity, the homosexual

³⁶ Griffin, *The Fatherhood of the Celibate Priest*, 54.

priests reported much lower success than did the heterosexual priests. One in three heterosexual priests (36%), but only one in ten homosexual priests (11%), reported that they did not waver in their celibate vows. At the other extreme, one in ten homosexual priests responded that they did not attempt to practice celibacy; less than one in fifty heterosexual priests (2%) gave this response. Over one in four homosexual priests (28%) reported that they tried unsuccessfully to be celibate, compared to less than half that many heterosexual priests (12%). Awareness of the

Figure 16
Persistence in celibacy by sexual orientation,
US Catholic priests 2002 (in percent)



Source: Los Angeles Times 2002 survey of Catholic priests (n=1852).

sinfulness of related sexual moral violations was also much lower among the homosexual priests. Heterosexual priests were over four times more likely than homosexual priests to agree with the Church's teaching that homosexual sex relations were always sinful (57% to 13%), and over five times more likely to agree that masturbation was always sinful (34% to 6%). From this evidence, it is clear that practicing celibacy and supporting the Church's standards for sexual morality present a much greater challenge to homosexual priests than they do to heterosexual priests.

Conclusion

Does recent child sex abuse in Catholic settings suggest a continuing concentration or influx homosexual priests, with attendant male-on-male abuse?

From the evidence examined in this report, the answer to this question is negative. Both homosexual Catholic priests and the spate of male-on-male abuse have come and gone, in twin waves that crested thirty years ago and have now receded to almost nothing. Recent abuse increasingly involves older girls, not younger boys. With the rise of a new generation of faithful young leaders in priestly formation, the exclusion of homosexual men from ordination, which has been the Church's consistent standard since Vatican II, appears to be faithfully followed to an extent that was not true through the 1980s. The new priests tend to understand priestly celibacy as a vocation reserved to marriageable, heterosexual men. From as much as half of new ordinations in the 1980s, since 2000 the ordinations of homosexual men have been extremely sparse.

Neither of the twin waves of male abuse and homosexual priests were regular or persistent features of Catholic life, but have come and gone in waves that rose and fell over the course of several decades. Less dramatic but more enduring is the sexual abuse of females,

which, over the same period of time, has taken place at a relatively constant rate that persists undiminished to the present day. The receding of homosexual priests and the sexual abuse of boys will thus bring welcome reduction and change, but not an end, to Catholic clergy sex abuse. As the wave of male victimization dissipates, concern for child safety amid potential abuse by Catholic priests will need to confront the problem of persisting sexual abuse, at smaller levels and involving mostly girls, that is not related to homosexual priests.

Appendix: Supplemental Data Figures and Tables

Figure S-1
Sex of Victim

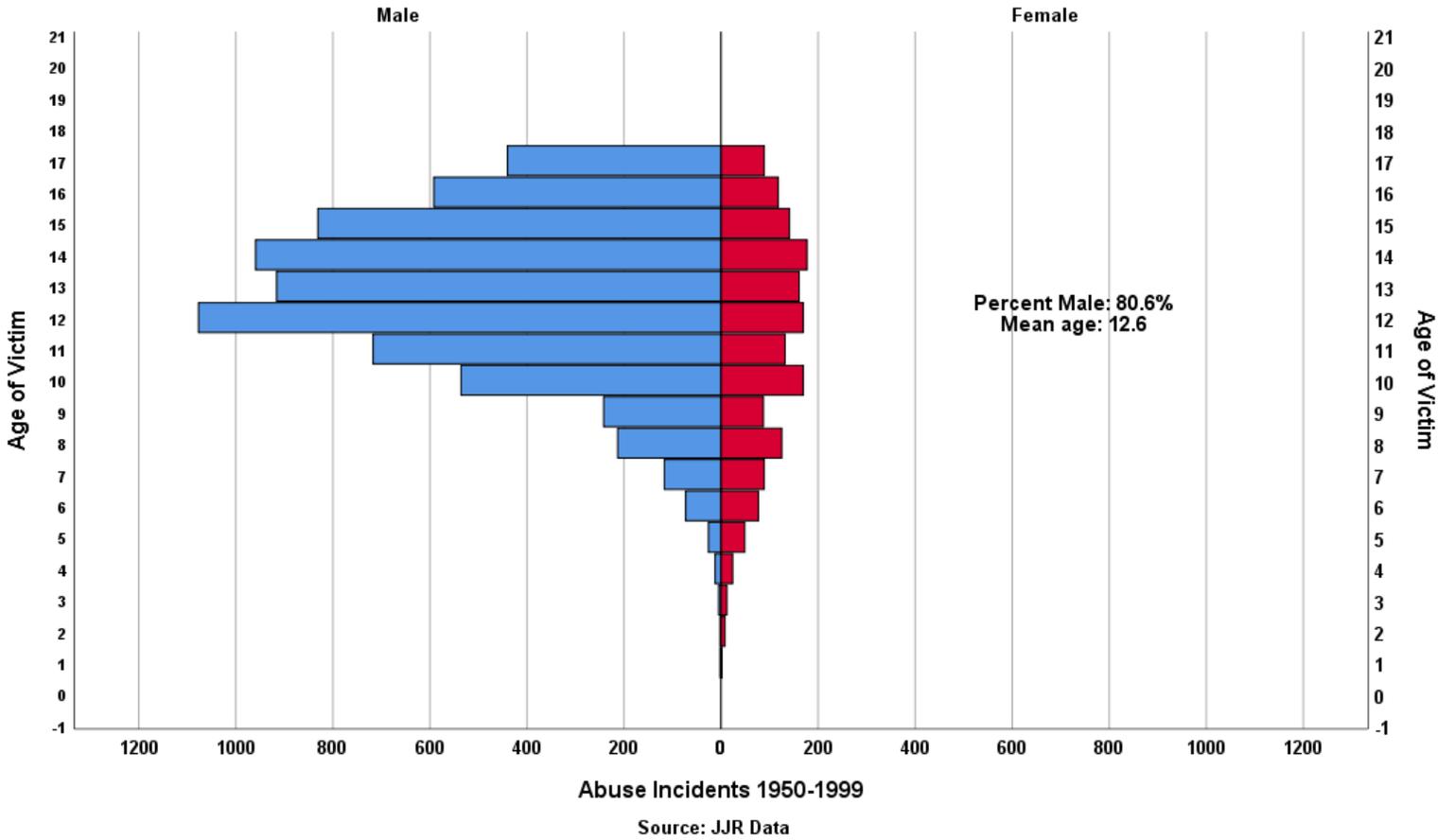


Table S-1. Standardized regression coefficients for the association of abuse with homosexual priests and seminary subcultures, by year: JJR Data (n=51)

Predictors	Outcome	Percent male victims		Percent male victims (multiple offenders)		Percent male victims (under age 8)		Male victims only		Abuse incidence	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Homosexual priests (%)		.98***	.87***	.81***	.63*	.77***	.66*	.96***	.44 ¹	.93***	.46*
Seminary subculture (%)			.12		.20		.20		.62**		.49**
Mean age at ordination by year of abuse		-.97***	-.97**	-.86**	-.86***	-.57**	-.61**	-.40**	-.41**	-.20	-.20
Highest VIF		1.8	5.5	2.0	5.7	1.7	6.4	1.8	6.4	2.0	3.8
Model fit (Multiple R)		.79	.80	.58	.65	.58	.58	.75	.80	.80	.83
R-square		.63	.63	.34	.42	.34	.34	.57	.64	.65	.70

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$. ¹ $P < 0.06$; Shown are standardized coefficients. To reduce multicollinearity age at ordination was polynomially transformed. Outcomes reference current allegations only.

Table S-2. Standardized regression coefficients for the association of abuse with homosexual priests and seminary subcultures, by year: SACCADAS Data (n=51)

Predictors	Outcome	Percent male victims		Percent male victims (multiple offenders)		Percent male victims (under age 8)		Male victims only		Abuse incidence	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Homosexual priests (%)		.88***	.32	.51**	-.23	.45*	.22	.97***	.63**	.94***	.62**
Seminary subculture (%)			.62**		.83**		.26		.38 ¹		.36 ¹
Mean age at ordination		-.42*	-.42**	-.23	-.23	-.04	-.04	-.48***	-.48***	-.33**	-.33**
Highest VIF		2.1	5.8	1.8	5.5	1.7	5.5	1.8	5.5	1.8	5.5
Model fit (Multiple R)		.64	.70	.40	.56	.42	.44	.75	.77	.77	.79
R-square		.41	.50	.16	.31	.18	.19	.55	.59	.59	.62

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$. ¹ $P < 0.07$; Shown are standardized coefficients. To reduce multicollinearity age at ordination was polynomially transformed. Outcomes reference current allegations only.

Table S-3. Estimates for homosexual priests ordained 2000-2014 under various imputation models: SACCADAS Data (n=69)

Time Period	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
2000-2004	.143	.132	.124
2005-2009	.121	.092	.116
2010-2014	.155	.096	.109
2015-2018	.102	.073	.080
Correlation (single year)	-.10	-.27	-.23
Relative efficiency	.965	.987	.991
Predictors			
Percent male victims	*	*	*
Current abuse	*	*	*
Ordination age		*	*
Percent victims over age 14			*

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$. ¹ $P < 0.06$; Shown are standardized coefficients. To reduce multicollinearity age at ordination was polynomially transformed. Outcomes reference current allegations only.

Technical Supplement: Estimating the proportion of homosexual priests

In CSA 1 I found, using the JJR data 1950-1999 adjusted for age at ordination, three least squares regression models showing a very strong association of homosexual priests with two key variables: the preference for male victims and the incidence of current abuse. These associations are very similar in the SACCADAS data.³⁷ The standardized regression coefficients for the association by year of homosexual priests with the percent of male victims, number of male victims and overall incidence of current abuse in the JJR data is respectively .98, .96 and .93. The corresponding coefficients in the SACCADAS data are .88, .97 and .94. For the period 2000-2018, we do not (to my knowledge) have any direct information on the proportion of homosexual priests, but the SACCADAS data report the two key variables. Statistics on U.S. priests—the number of priests ordained each year, total number of priests, and the net growth or decline in total priests—were taken from public data reported by CARA, interpolating intermediate values.³⁸ The average age at ordination 1998-2018 was taken from the annual ordination class surveys provided by by CARA and Dean Hoge for the USCCB.³⁹ From these measures it was possible to estimate the share of homosexual men in the Catholic presbyterate in recent years. As in CSA 1, the share of all U.S. priests that are homosexual in a given year was identified as the proportion of all priests ordained prior to and including that year who reported a homosexual orientation.

The share of homosexual ordinands per year was estimated from the percent of male

³⁷ See Appendix 1, Tables A-1 and A-2. The standardized regression coefficients for the association by year of homosexual priests with the percent of male victims, number of male victims and overall incidence of current abuse in the JJR data is respectively .98, .96 and .93. The corresponding coefficients in the SACCADAS data are .88, .97 and .94.

³⁸ Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), “Frequently Requested Church Statistics.”

³⁹ These are archived (as of December 15, 2018) at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/vocations/ordination-class/index.cfm> .

victims, incidence of current abuse, average age of men ordained, and the percent of victims over age 14, using regression models that impute missing or unknown quantities from the combination of all linear patterns in the included variables. Estimation was performed in IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Ten imputation models were computed, then their results were pooled to produce the parameter estimates reported in Table S-3 and in the main paper.

Table S-3 compares the estimates for the percent of homosexual men ordained under three successively more complex prediction models, predicting from the percent of male victims and current abuse incidence (Model 1), then adding age at ordination (Model 2), then the proportion of victims over age 14 (Model 3). All three models estimate a similar trend in which the percent homosexual ordained declined since 2000, from 12-14% during 2000-2004 to 7-10% during 2015-2018. For all three the chronological correlation of year with homosexual ordinands is negative.⁴⁰ In Model 1 the period 2010-2014 is an outlier from the general trend of decline. Including ordination age results in a clearer, monotonic predicted trend over the period (in Model 2 compared to Model 1), as does the percent of minor victims aged 15-17 (Model 3 compared to Model 2), with a slightly less steep decline. The relative efficiency, a measure of model fit which compares the pooled variance of the predicted values to a theoretical ideal prediction, is also highest for Model 3. Model 3 is thus the preferred estimate for this analysis. However, Model 2's estimates of homosexual priests ordained differ only trivially from Model 3, and using any of the three models in the table results in almost the same estimate of the proportion of homosexual priests overall.

⁴⁰ None of the differences in period differences or correlations shown in Table S-3 are “statistically significant”, meaning they exceed values that may be present due to random variation in a population sample. However, these data are not a population sample, but a census, intended to be complete, of the entire population of abusers described in media and legal reports. These reports correlate highly with survey samples, as I have shown, but the accuracy of their aggregate portrayal of priest sex abuse rests on substantive and journalistic grounds, not statistical representation.

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