

The Crimes of The Unidentified; A Need for The Typography for Child Victims

Kiera L. Duffy

Faculty of Arts, Psychology

PSYC 4100

Dr. Heather Price

The true character of a society is revealed in how it treats its children - Nelson Mandela

A Retrospective Revision of Child Exploitation from 2014-2022

From 2014 to 2020, there was a reported total of 10,739 incidents of online sexual offences against identified children and 29,028 incidents of online unidentified child pornography in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022). The organization: Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) describes child sexual abuse; “Child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse that includes sexual activity with a minor. A child cannot consent to any form of sexual activity, period.” (RAINN 2022). This description creates a large umbrella term for what is deemed as child sexual abuse, which is beneficial to ensuring the culpability of the offender. During this period of time (2014-2020), roughly 77% of the online sexual offences against children involved luring, 11% of the online sexual offences involved the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, 8% involved an invitation to sexual touching, and the remaining ~5% were disclosed as other online sexual offences against children (Statistics Canada, 2022).

The coronavirus pandemic altered many aspects of what was once considered ‘normal’, this impact was felt amongst every living being on earth, including the youth of the world. When the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) declared that the coronavirus was a pandemic, everything was transitioned into the virtual world. This led to an unprecedented time where everything faced disruption: from social norms, social structures, to every day activities (jobs, schools, religious activities, etc) (Jones, et al. 2021). The impact was faced by the majority of youth in the school system, as this meant that everything in their lives had to be in the virtual world; education, socialization, and for some self-realization and actualization. All these areas of life had to be empowered from within each child and is a testament to the resilience of children. However, resilience isn’t all a child needs, as a vulnerable sector of society, children and young people were at risk of the negative implications the pandemic brought forth (Jones, et al. 2021).

The Executive Director of The Global Partnership to End Violence, Dr. Taylor stated that the pandemic brought forward a rise in screen time for the youth of the world (Taylor, 2021), this was also reflected in an article by the Covid-19 Advisory board for Ontario in 2022, where they stated that the reasoning for youths increased screen time was due to the health measures that were implemented (Science Table, 2022). The UN stated in 2020 that this increased screen time within the pandemic raised safety risks for “millions of young people”, and was a direct correlation to the isolation that occurred within the pandemic (UN, 2020), and another article suggested that this was partially due to increased and uncensored activity that was made available during the pandemic (Ghosh et al., 2020). Now upon reflection of the pandemic, it was shown through medical literature that children are less susceptible to the virus (COVID-19), but it is now clear that they were the most impacted psychosocially (Ghosh et al., 2020). It was speculated by the United Nations that this exact increase could be correlated to risk factors surrounding predators and grooming in online settings (UN, 2020). The UN agency suggested that due to limited socialization or “face-to-face” contact with people outside of a child’s household, the child was potentially more at risk to engage in heightened activities like sharing or saving lewd or sexual images or videos. They also go on to suggest that this increased screen time can often be unstructured, which could lead a child to become exposed to harmful, violent, or psychologically damaging content (UN, 2022). In 2020, Canadian police forces reported that the rate of online child pornography access and distribution went up 35%, compared to 2019, and the rate of online sexual offences against children went up 10% in the same year (Statistics Canada, 2022). Around four in ten (44%) of police-reported incidents of online sexual offences against children were solved, but a staggering 85% of the incidents involving child pornography were not solved (Statistics Canada, 2022).

The Department of Justice Canada has stated that many factors contribute to the sexual abuse and exploitation of children and youth in Canada, but to date there is not an official, outlined typology for child victims of sexual exploitation. The Department goes on to say that at the societal level, the manner in which a child is socialized, the societal denial of child sexual abuse, and the ease of child exploitation collectively create an environment where abuse and exploitation can easily take place. At the community level, the resources made available to children in need; sufficient safety precautions, educational supports (including but not limited to religious, cultural, recreational, child care, educational, and residential supports) and therapeutic options are essential in avoiding children and youth being placed in high-risk situations (Department of Justice Canada, 2022). In the report from the Department of Justice Canada, they dissected an article written by Walsh et al., where the authors attribute some intergenerational patterns of abuse including substance abuse and inadequate supervision of the child to also be considered as risk factors for the victim. At the level of the individual, the age and gender of the victim can also be considered risk factors. The Department of Justice states that there is a complex culmination of possible risk factors, which is why any child or youth has the potential to be considered at risk. The most relevant component of the report was brought forward in the article “Restoring Dignity: Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions: by Dr. Hylton, with the assistance of Bird, Eddy, Sinclair & Stenerson, this component features the effects of isolation and marginalization risk factors. These factors included poverty, disability, racism, and many other forms of discrimination. This article also touches on risk factors for Aboriginal peoples, by comprehending the consequences of colonization, through the disruption of traditional beliefs, values and familial structures.

Although this knowledge can be advantageous to parents, guardians, and children themselves, it does not create any strong qualifications for who can become a victim, especially in online settings where typography is even more limited. This only enables the cycle to repeat, and this is where further research is needed. In only 5.6% of the material featuring unidentifiable children, the offender was recorded and made known to law enforcement. On the other side, in 5.3% of cases where the victim **was** identified, the offender was **not** identified (INTERPOL, 2018). These statistics go to show that overall if the child victim can be identified there is a high chance that the offender can be tried and often charged for their committed acts against the victims. The victim experience ranges from one individual to the next, but the offenders all engage in either sexual abuse and/or exploitation of a child.

The offences committed against children vary in severity, characterization, gender, age, ethnicity, and in the actual acts committed. The only standardization of the cases is what the nature of the offence most likely features: “Generally, in the Canadian legal context, the crime of online child sexual exploitation and abuse includes child sexual abuse material, self-generated materials and sexting, sextortion, grooming and luring, live child sexual abuse streaming and made-to-order content” (Public Safety Canada 2022). In the many reported and documented cases of child exploitation within Canada, no case is like another, making the profile for what a child victim looks like, to be incredibly difficult. Every child deserves the fundamental human right of protection, and through victim typologies, a rough outline of the typical traits or characteristics of the victims could lead to positive predictive factors, protecting the children and youth of Canada. Due to the lack of typography for child victims of online sexual exploitation, I

will be asking the following question: What details about child victims of online exploitation are provided in cases that can be used to create a typology?

Identified and Unidentified Victims of Child Exploitation

A victim being identified enables the opportunity for support and protection of this child, and furthers the possibility of eradicating crimes against children, by creating a typology. However, this is limited to some of the victims declining to be identified and/or assisted. In Canada, the RCMP plays an important role in identifying these victims, through services like; Cybertip.ca Reporting Form, The National Child Exploitation Crime Centre (NCECC), and the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT). Alongside these services, there are many podcasts like Safe To Net, Hunting Warhead, Canadian True Crime, and many others, all of which discuss past and active cases of crime committed globally, and feature some stories that are not as documented or reported as others. Shedding light on people and their stories who may have otherwise had their cases remain unsolved or forgotten. Today, little is known about the amount or frequency of online child exploitation within the context of Canada. The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR), and the Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS), found that when a sexual offence involves child victims, it is likely to be underreported (Statistics Canada, 2022), this could be due to the age of the child - younger children would be less likely to know how to seek aid, in addition, the victims may fear asking for help, fear reporting or simply don't know how to report. This was also seen in online sexual offences with child victims but was not as heavily reported on due to the limitations that come with online platforms (Statistics Canada, 2022). When the child victims are identified, the cases are then reported to UCR, as the most serious violation of sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or other sexual violations against children. Meaning those

child victims who can be identified have a higher possibility of their cases being solved, and their offender charged.

In a study from The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL, 2018), it was found that in an analysis of over 1 million media files and records within the ICSE (International Child Sexual Exploitation Database) INTERPOL Database, of child sexual exploitation and abusive materials, only 47% of the child victims have been identified by law enforcement, and the remaining 53% were unidentified. This study from INTERPOL using the ICSE sought child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and child sexual abuse exploitation material (CSEM), to develop descriptive typography of the unidentified child victims. Cases of unidentified children, are reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, and would be reported as the most serious violation of “child pornography”, this differs greatly when the child can be identified as once the victim can be identified, change can be made. After a child is identified, the local police can be contacted to remove the child from the scene, Cybertip.ca can also be used to initially identify the victim, NeedHelpNow can be reached to remove the evidence from the internet, and other resources can be accessed for the victim, but without identification, the intervention becomes inhibited. At the level of the individual, The Department of Justice of Canada said that age and gender can be considered to be risk factors, that exist outside of whether the child is identified or not, as they can suggest what features are considered as desirable to offender’s at a certain time or location (Department of Justice Canada, 2022).

The Correlation of Gender and Child Exploitation

It was reported by INTERPOL that 72.4% of cases had the gender of the victim recorded (INTERPOL, 2018). Of these cases where gender was recorded, 64.8% were female-identifying

children, 4.1% involved both female and male-identifying children, and the remaining 31.1% were male-identifying child victims - cases involving male-identifying children who experienced often more severe or paraphilic events. Gender is an important characteristic as victims are often believed to be female-identifying, and reasonably so with 64.8% being female-identifying, however the male-identifying victims, although a smaller pool, had harsher acts committed against them (Statistics Canada, 2022). The classification of children into gender-based categories is often convoluted due to boys being underrepresented and their abuse, under evaluated; "...the few studies that have investigated the scope of boys' victimization have shown that boy victims represented in sexual exploitation materials were often very young and highly sexualized" (Josenhans et al., 2020). Articles have been accumulating for more than 100 years surrounding the sexual abuse of underage boys by adults in their lives, but these findings have led to the recent discovery that boy victims of child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA), often experience more severe acts at younger ages (Josenhans et al., 2020). The U.K. Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre surveyed a random sample of 24,550 sexualized images of children and found that 20.1% of the children depicted in these images were recognized as boys (Quayle et al., 2011). Although males were not the more sought out gender, when comparing the images of male children to the images of female children, male children were more likely to be prepubescent at 73% of the total population (25.4% at the pubescent stage) (Quayle et al., 2011). It is also important to note that this sample of images found that prepubescent boys who held more feminine features were often seen at higher rates, perhaps insinuating that having a more youthful or feminine quality could increase the likelihood of being recruited for victimization, compared to older male children (Ricardo et al., 2008). Certain

studies have gone to great lengths to get an in depth analysis of high risk areas, an example would be one by Ramiro et al, in 2019.

In late 2019, an ethnographic qualitative study was conducted where two communities in Metro Manila were examined for what the ‘drivers’ of online child sexual exploitation and abuse among Filipino children and youth were for this area (Ramiro et al., 2019). The study involved one hundred and forty-four males and females of varying age groups, to participate as informants; political officials, police officers, and even internet shop managers were all involved as well in interviews. With the focus on understanding the drivers of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), reported in two communities; classified as “Brgy, A” and “Brgy, B” totalling 144 victims of OCSEA. The first community Brgy, A, reported the following: 3 (4.2%) male victims of OCSEA, 35 (48.6) female victims of OCSEA, 2 (2.8%) LGBT victims of OCSEA, 15 (20.8%) were classified as “All gender” victims of OCSEA, and 17 (23.6%) of the victims had no gender mentioned. In the second community Brgy, B, reported that 2 (2.8%) male victims of OCSEA, 55 (76.4%) female victims of OCSEA, 0 (0.0%) LGBT victims of OCSEA, 6 (8.3%) were classified as “All gender” victims of OCSEA, and 9 (12.5%) of the victims had no gender mentioned. This study focused on relatively active or recently occurring situations, but some studies have examined past context to understand how or if certain measures within exploitation are still verifiable. One study that did this was conducted where they examine the case history of convicted people within Ontario, Canada.

In 2011 a study was conducted in Ontario, Canada, where the history of seventy-one men convicted of CSEM offences (Child Sexual Exploitation Material) was examined, it was found that there was a potential correlation between gender and age when assessing CSEM. Although this material is dated and they have since found that there are usually compounding variables at

play when sexuality is involved; “Age and gender preferences suggested in an individual’s CSEM content does not rule out sexual interest in, or potential offending against, victims of other ages or gender” (Eke & Seto, 2022), they made an impactful finding with an urgency to be expanded upon; “Though we did find that men with more girl than boy CSEM offended against girls and men with more boy than girl content offended against boys, this was based on a small number of cases that should be replicated in larger or multiple samples” (Eke & Seto, 2022).

The Correlation of Age and Child Exploitation

Of the cases of unidentified victims from the INTERPOL study, 56.2% of cases depicted prepubescent children, 25.4% were pubescent, 4.3% were incredibly/ young children (infants and toddlers) and 14.1% had cases featuring multiple age groups. The importance of age being used in the typography is essential, as it was found that there was a correlation between the age of the victim and the severity of abuse that takes place, the younger the victim, the more severe the abuse (INTERPOL, 2018). In Canada, 25% of the victims of trafficking are under the age of 18, and again correlating with those facing the highest severity of the crime committed against them were in the categories of toddlers and infants (Statistics Canada, 2022).

In a study conducted by Kloess et al., the aim was to assess the reliability of CSEM classification in situations of an indecent nature. Their methods section had a sub-section ii: “estimate the approximate age of the child”, this section found some specific factors that impacted and in some cases inhibited their decision-making process. Factors that made the process of identifying age easier were: the presence of young facial/bodily features, developmental stages of early and later childhood (i.e., ≤ 10 years, and the developmental stages of early pubescence and adolescence (i.e., $\sim 12-13$ years) (Kloess et al., 2021). Factors that

made the process of identifying age difficult were: the discrepancy between facial and bodily features, natural variations in sexual development and general variability in development across ethnic groups, and alteration/staging of victim appearance. These factors were made after analyzing 100 images manually surveying them for age and indecency. The five participants estimated the ages of the victims in the photographs and across the five, the ages ranged from 1-16 years old with the mean age ranging from 4.06-7.68. The second component analyzed the severity of the offences, categorizing them under “Category A”, “Category B”, and “Category C”. Category A encompasses penetrative sexual activity, Category B encompasses non-penetrative sexual activity, Category C is defined as images of erotic posing, a broad spectrum would fall under this. Category A had a mean range of 34-39 counts, Category B had a mean range of 27-33 counts, and Category C had a mean range of 30-33 counts (Kloess et al, 2021). This signifies that the category with the highest range, was Category A; penetrative sexual activity, involving a minor. The mean ranges for age suggest that these Category A acts, most often happened to children aged 4-7 years old. Ellis et al., revised the statuses of child victims in the Pediatric Emergency Department at Cincinnati hospital in 2018, where they found that the average child was aged 11-17 years old in a total of 2,168 records. Of these records, 153 were randomly selected and reviewed, these were used for future use in screening victims, expanding the CSEC/CST indicators (Ellis et al., 2022). Screening can only assist in identifying, so prevention requires tools, a study from Anda et al., discusses new technology that is being created to improve facial identification of victims in online settings. They found that when it came to underage facial estimation, there were limitations due to the challenges they faced when trying to collect data due to ethics boards. “Age is a soft biometric trait that can aid law enforcement in the identification of victims of Child Sexual Exploitation Material

(CSEM)”(Anda et al., 2020), the impact of age on identifying victims cannot be left unaddressed, it is essential. Age alone cannot create an identification tool, but it is important to consider it as a main factor alongside gender. The Kloess et al. study examined age based risk-factors and additionally examined how there was variability in child development across ethnic groups, and suggests a need to examine another area that could be considered as a risk factor.

Ethnicity and Child Exploitation

Of the analyzed cases from Interpol (2018), 93.9% of the victims had their ethnicity determined. Of the 93.9%, 76.6% were Caucasian, 10.1% were Hispanic or Latino, 9.9% were of Asian descent, 2.1% depicted black victims, and the remaining 1.3% were of multiple ethnicities not disclosed. The ethnicity of a children can be used as a proxy indicator for the location where the abuse takes place, but this is restricted due to less than half of the world’s population not being connected to the ICSE Database. In Canada, a case study by Statista Canada in 2014, found that in acts of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, there was a higher distribution of “non-visible minorities” who experienced these acts of violence as compared to those of a visible minority (Statisticas, Canada; 2014). Ethnicity could be a potential component in creating typography for victims, but within the present study, there was an insignificant amount of evidence to create any foundational support for this theory.

The Nature of Abuse

Combating Paedophile Information Networks in Europe (COPINE), is a classification system used to rate the severity of victimization in online child sexual abuse material.

“COPINE level one; images or videos are considered to be at the ‘lower’ end of the spectrum, with ‘COPINE level 10’ indicating that the images depict more severe abuse or ‘problematic paraphilias,’ such as bestiality, sadism, humiliation, or necrophilia.” (Summary Report - INTERPOL 2018, pg 5). It was found that 84.2% of the analyzed materials would be classified as COPINE level six or higher. This means that these materials involved explicit erotic posing, explicit sexual activity, assault, sadism, or other paraphilias. Factoring in that when a younger male-identifying child victim, the COPINE rating was often found to be ranked at a level seven or higher. The severity of an act committed has the potential to weigh into the consideration of how an offender is tried and charged, but within the cases examined, later on, only one involved this: *R. v. Razon*, 2021.

The Present Study

In the present study, I will explore legal decisions involving online child exploitation in Canada, and within these cases, I will examine if the victims are identified or not. The details of these cases are pivotal in having the offender charged, creating a victim typology, and preventing future offences. Without specific details of the victim, there is a risk of not being able to prevent future crime, meaning the pattern will just continue to repeat itself. These cases are stored in The Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII), which is an online database. The Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII), provides real cases of child exploitation within Canada and the dates they took place. From just July 30th, 2021, to October 10th, 2022 there were a total of 500 reported and documented cases of child exploitation in Canada alone. These cases were all tried in a court of law, and the written legal decisions are made available to the public. These cases are the minority, not the majority, as it is likely that the true number of child exploitation acts go

undocumented, unreported, and undisclosed. Of these documented cases, many still featured unidentified child victims, this has a large impact on the typology which could be made for Canada.

Method

To examine the characteristics of children, offenders, and abuse involving online child exploitation in Canada, I selected 10 cases from the CanLII website using the following search criteria; child predator, child exploitation, online child exploitation, predator, online, and child luring. These keywords were vital to the selection of cases as they all encompassed children being the victims of multiple forms of sexual exploitation in an online setting. This search criterion revealed the following quantity of possible search results: child predator; 5,826 cases, child exploitation; 8,696 cases, online child exploitation 1,921 cases, predator; 21,893 cases, online; 38,555 cases, and child luring; 2,362 cases. With this many possible results, it was cross-referenced with a timeline restriction of two years; 2021-2022. After refining the search, I did an in-depth examination of 12 cases; *R. v. Ditoro* 2021, *R. v. Pye* 2021, *R. v. Dew* 2022, *R. v. Gould* 2022, *R. v. J.H.* 2022, *R. v. K.R.* 2022, *R. v. Mootoo* 2022, *R. v. Rodrigues* 2022, *R. v. R.R.* 2022, *R. v. R.S.F.* 2022, *R. v. Sinclair* 2022, *R. v. X.* 2022. Two additional cases were examined; *R. v. Collier* 2021, and *R. v. Razon* 2021, these cases were involved in a covert affair performed by Canadian police but still revealed interesting and relevant information, but were fabricated scenarios. The 12 cases that were selected were based on offenders who either sought out or acted on child victims in both online and in-person settings, in an attempt to fulfill a sexual fantasy or urge.

After identifying the 12 cases, I coded each for: the age of the victim, gender of the victim, ethnicity of the child, whether or not the child was identified, the nature of the offence, and the dates for when they occurred. The cases each read differently for each item I was coding for, and this was all dependent on the judge writing the report. The items that were coded for were found by dissecting and scanning the reports for a description of the history of the case in chronological order, as they again routinely followed a similar structure. This structure would examine the facts of the case at hand, the offence the accused offender was being charged and tried for, and a description of the nature of the abuse, then ordinarily they would report on the victim (this was followed by a history and description of the offender). The victim's description was consistently documented for age and gender (see Table 1. for further examination) but ethnicity was exclusively forgotten about.

Table 1. Identification, Gender, and Age across 12 cases from 2021-2022.

Case: "Crown v. ____"	Identification Status:	Gender: (M/F)	Age: (Yrs/Old)
1. R. v. Ditoror 2021	Identified	M	14
2. R. v. Pye, 2021	Identified	M	6
3. R. v. Dew 2022	Identified	M	15
4. R. v. Gould 2022	Identified	M _____ F _____ M	12 _____ 13 _____ 13
5. R. v. J.H., 2022	Identified	F _____ M _____ M _____ M	8* ¹

6. R. v. K.R. 2022	Identified	M _____	5 _____
		F	6
7. R. v. Mootoo 2022	Identified	F	15
8. R. v. Rodrigues 2022	Unidentified	M _____	2-3 _____
		F	12-13
9. R. v. R.R., 2022	Identified	F	17 _____
			18
10. R. v. R.S.F. 2021	Some identified, some unidentified	F* ²	Toddlers to teens
11. R. v. Sinclair 2022	4 Identified _____	Female	12* ³
	8 Unidentified		
12. R. v. X. 2022	Identified	Female	12 - 15

*¹ Only the female-identifying child had her age identified.

*² Some were identified, some were not - no given figures. Majority of victims were identified as female. Ages were given in window.

*³ Age range was specified as 12 years-old and up, but no ages given beyond.

Table 2. Covert Cases

Cases:	Identified or Unidentified:	Gender: (M/F)	Age: (Yrs/Old)
1. R. v. Collier 2021	Identified - due to fabrication	"F"	"14"
2. R. v. Razan 2021	Identified - due to fabrication	"F"	"14"

Results

Amongst the initial 12 cases, there were many similarities between the given details of the victims. The majority of the cases featured the age of the victims, although in some of the cases like; R. v. Sinclair 2022, R. v. R.S.F. 2022, and R. v. J.H. 2022, the age is obscured and a

window is given rather than a clearly stated age. This restricts a better understanding for the most common ages of the victims of online child exploitation, which could assist in creating a typology. Gender was a fairly universally addressed feature of the victims, even in cases where there were unidentified victims, they were able to have the majority of the genders identified. Gender can be a major feature in creating a typology when cross-referenced with age, and other characteristics or qualities, as seen earlier in the article by Eke & Seto. The similarities lay heavily with age and gender within the cases, but ethnicity was not disclosed in any of the overall 14 cases examined, this includes the covert operations where the victim was fictionalized. Ethnicity can be a major indicator of the location where the offence is occurring (Interpol, 2018) or if there is any fetishizing of a certain ethnicity, again creating a possible location for the offence based on societal/cultural norms of a given geographical area.

Although the intent was to code for age, gender, ethnicity, and whether or not the victim was identified, I found myself concurrently coding for the presence of social media. *R. v. Ditoro*, *R. v. Rodrigues 2022*, and *R. v. Dew 2022* all either involved the usage of the applications: Discord, Snapchat, Instagram, or other online messaging services. Discord is an app that can be used for text chat, voice or video calls, and private networking. Discord is used by roughly 300 million people, and allows all 300 million individuals the ability to freely chat privately and unidentifiable (Discord, updated 2022). Snapchat is an app that enables its users to send and share pictures, chats, and videos to other users of the app. There are also call and video features of the app but the most essential component of the app is the ability to have disappearing messages. These pictures, videos or chats can be set to a specific display time, whether that be a picture for 1-10-infinite seconds, a video for 1 second - several minutes, or a chat that can

disappear immediately after opening - or over 24 hours later, or potentially 'saved' forever. All these features have the ability for users to save certain objects to the conversation without the permission of the other (Phys Org, 2018). Lastly, the application Instagram has a direct messaging (DM) feature that allows strangers to privately message any other user using the app. Although Instagram has worked to create some restrictions on who can message whom, the platform remains a fairly non-privatized chat service, one that is not supervised or patrolled routinely (Instagram, 2022). All of these applications allow for anonymous conversation to take place and all do not have a screening process for who can use the application. This is a major concern and something that may be pivotal in preventing future offences. In the case of *R. v. Ditoror*, Mr. Ditoro faced sentencing which involved a probationary period where certain conditions had to be met, a stand-out condition was the following: "Do not access, use or participate in any online social media, social network or social networking application for any reason whatsoever including, but not limited to, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest or any similar social media, social network or social networking application." (CanLII, *R. v. Ditoror*, 2021), this limitation could imply that this judge viewed all possible forms of social media as potential areas of risk for child endangerment. *R.v. Rodrigues*, and *R. v. Dew*, both involved the usage of other communication applications, both with the intention to privatize their interactions and accessibility of certain content involving child victims.

Discussion

Of the 12 cases, 4 involved female children, 4 involved male children, and 4 involved both female and male children, making gender alone not a strong enough description to predict these types of offences. Of these 12 cases, ages ranged from 2-18, with the mode age being

around 12-15 but with such strong outliers, it would also be difficult to utilize age alone as a characteristic for these types of offences. The age of the victim being cross-correlated with their gender could possibly assist in creating a typology by examining if there is desirability of gender based on a given time period/age. This might be something worth examining but would require a larger pool of subject cases to determine this to be something valid and reliable. Ethnicity was not discussed in any of the cases examined and could prove to be a pivotal characteristic involved in the typography of child victims, but this would be at the hand of the legal system in deciding what characteristics need to be reported on. Interestingly enough, cases with information stated about the age, gender, and whether or not the victim had been identified, still occasionally had unidentifiable victims being involved in the offences. This would suggest that the basic characteristics given in these cases, is possibly not sufficient to create a victimology. The features I examined were the basic features reported on in INTERPOL's 2018 study and were on par with what the cases disclosed within their reporting. Genders of the victims in the 12 cases, 7 of the 12 involved male children, and 9 of the 12 involved female children, these results are slightly different than what was seen in the INTERPOL 2018 study that identified 64.8% of the victims were female-identifying, and 31.1% were male-identifying. This might translate to there being an insufficient amount of details about the child victims in these cases. Kloess et al. stated that amongst their study they found that the ages of the victims within their study ranged from 1-16 years old with the mean age ranging from 4.06-7.68, which was close to what was found in the present study with ages ranging from 2 (or undisclosed "toddler") to 18, with a mean of roughly 10.3. Although the mean age was slightly higher than what was reported by Kloess et al., there are many factors that can impact this, with the most relevant being the pool of cases examined within the present study. Ethnicity not being reported on within these Canadian

cases does not correlate to anything seen on the Global scale, and could be due to again a limited pool of cases examined, but could also be an area that needs expansion within the Canadian legal system.

The covert cases relied heavily on the usage of the internet as a means of communication, and although not stated what application was used, both covert cases involved a chat platform. Although this limited the search for victim's identifying features, it did show that there was an interest in younger females from older adult males (R. v. Collier 2021, R. v. Razan 2021)

Creating victimology is pivotal in diminishing future offences and protecting children globally. However, in cases where the child has been identified, post-identification can have some impairments; “emerging evidence strongly suggests that online sexual exploitation adversely impacts the mental health in children and adolescents, improved detection and prevention is critical.” (Eke et al., 2022). That being said, with more advancements in the understanding of life for victims and the development of prevention tools, we are reaching toward a more supportive system.

Child exploitation is not an isolated personal issue, nor is it an isolated Canadian issue, child exploitation is a global issue, and its effects are irreversibly damaging and can affect generations. Future research is essential in changing the future for the youth of the world. There are limitations to studies, through ethical stand-points or financial stand-points, but when the alternative is prolonged harm, the decision should be clear-cut. Hoeffler & Fearon reported in 2014 that the estimated cost of violent acts committed against children had a global economic impact costing roughly 3.6 trillion USD annually (which was subject to change), these costs are due to the resources used to prevent and support victims, including salaries and organizational

support. This was reported as an underestimate due to already implied limitations of gender studies. 3.6 trillion dollars in American currency was roughly 4.2 trillion in Canadian currency in 2014 (X rates, 2022). Today that same 3.6 trillion would have inflated to roughly 4.5 trillion USD and 6.1 trillion Canadian, this increase does not factor in the increase in online exploitation and other areas of child exploitation since 2014 and the pandemic (Scientific Reports, 2022).

Arguably, a financial barrier seems like a deniable reason for limiting future research. No matter the severity of an offence, victims of exploitation are faced with dangerous and harmful situations that can divulge into further physical harm. For instance the study by Eke et al. involved 13 cases that featured real victims involved in online offences, and of the 13, two led to physical harm through contact sexual assaults (Eke et al., 2022). Offenders are able to seek out and access child exploitation content across multiple sites and platforms, with the possibility of offending physically, this makes it appear that they face little to no restrictions. In contrast, those fighting to end the exploitation of children are continuously faced with limitations in funding, and restrictions in preventative measures. Ultimately, the focus and most important component is protecting children, and discovering and implementing new preventative practices and measures.

A case which stood out for this reason was *R. v. Razon*. It considered the nature of the abuse as a compounding implication for the victim, it was not a coded area of interest for the majority of the cases examined but is an area that invokes a need for future research. Studying the long term effects of considering the nature of the abuse instead of what laws are currently in place, has the potential to be something of significance in protecting and supporting children and youth. There are prevention measures in place for Canada to protect and support children, a considerable area of prevention would be the Voluntary Principles.

Canada has 11 Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, they fall under 7 sub-categories: 1. Prevent Child Sexual Abuse Material, 2. Target Online Grooming and Preparatory Behaviour, 3. Target Livestreaming, 4. Search, 5. A Specialised Approach for Children, 6. Victim/Survivor Considerations, and 7. Collaborate and Respond to Evolving Threat. Collectively the principles share the goal to prevent child sexual exploitation and abuse, with the aim to provide a prevention outline for online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and in addition initiate action (Government of Canada, 2022). We collectively need to take action in the prevention and protection of children in Canada, and part of this is understanding the factors preventing security. As stated earlier the age of a child can impact their ability to report the act, or to seek aid (Statistics Canada, 2022), but age alone does not make a child vulnerable. Gender, ethnicity, and so many factors impact vulnerability, the Department of Justice discussed that at the levels of societal, community, or individual risks, there are many contributing variables at play. Furthering our understanding, and working on prevention and protection is the best option we currently have, and hopefully further research can eventually lead to a fully developed typology. “Children are the future of our country and our communities. They are also some of the most vulnerable members of our society. They deserve to enjoy a childhood free of sexual violence. Offenders who commit sexual violence against children deny thousands of Canadian children such a childhood every year.” (CanLII, R. v. X, 2022).

References

- Babchishin, K. M., Hanson, R. K., & VanZuylen, H. (2014). Online Child Pornography Offenders are Different: A Meta-analysis of the Characteristics of Online and Offline Sex Offenders Against Children. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*(1), 45–66.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-014-0270-x>
- Bergmann, C., Dimitrova, N., Alaslani, K., Almohammadi, A., Alroqi, H., Aussems, S., Barokova, M., Davies, C., Gonzalez-Gomez, N., Gibson, S. P., Havron, N., Horowitz-Kraus, T., Kanero, J., Kartushina, N., Keller, C., Mayor, J., Mundry, R., Shinsky, J., & Mani, N. (2022). Young children’s screen time during the first COVID-19 lockdown in 12 countries. *Scientific Reports, 12*(1), 2015.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-05840-5>
- Canada, P. S. (2020, March 12). *Voluntary Principles to Counter Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. www.publicsafety.gc.ca.
<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/chld-sxl-xplttn-ntnrt/vlntry-prncpls-en.aspx>
- CanLII. (2021a, October 7). *R. v. Pye, 2021 ONCJ 517 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.
<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/oncj/doc/2021/2021oncj517/2021oncj517.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAVY2hpbGQgcHJlZGF0b3Igb25saW5lAAAAAAE&resultIndex=43>
- CanLII. (2021b, October 15). *R. v. Collier, 2021 ONSC 6827 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.
<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2021/2021onsc6827/2021onsc6827.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAVY2hpbGQgcHJlZGF0b3Igb25saW5lAAAAAAE&resultIndex=29>

CanLII. (2021c, October 20). *R. v. Ditoro, 2021 ONCJ 540 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/oncj/doc/2021/2021oncj540/2021oncj540.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAVb25saW5lIGNoaWxkIHByZWRhdG9yAAAAAAE&resultIndex=5>

CanLII. (2021d, December 9). *R. v. R.S.F., 2021 MBQB 261 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/mb/mbqb/doc/2021/2021mbqb261/2021mbqb261.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAVb25saW5lIGNoaWxkIHByZWRhdG9yAAAAAAE&resultIndex=8>

CanLII. (2022a, January 18). *R. v. Mootoo, 2022 ONSC 384 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onsc/doc/2022/2022onsc384/2022onsc384.html>

CanLII. (2022b, January 27). *R. v. A.B., 2022 ONCA 83 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/onca/doc/2022/2022onca83/2022onca83.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAQAVY2hpbGQgcHJlZGF0b3Igb25saW5lAAAAAAE&resultIndex=13>

CanLII. (2022c, May 16). *R v Dew, 2022 MBPC 26 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/mb/mbpc/doc/2022/2022mbpc26/2022mbpc26.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAQAVY2hpbGQgcHJlZGF0b3Igb25saW5lAAAAAAE&resultIndex=17>

CanLII. (2022d, June 20). *R. v Rodrigues, 2022 CanLII 52925 (NL PC)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/nl/nlpc/doc/2022/2022canlii52925/2022canlii52925.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAQATY2hpbGQgbHVyaW5nIG9ubGluZQAAAAAB&resultIndex=28>

CanLII. (2022e, July 26). *R. v. K.R., 2022 ONCJ 344 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/oncj/doc/2022/2022oncj344/2022oncj344.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAVb25saW5lIGNoaWxkIHByZWRhdG9yAAAAAAE&resultIndex=3>

CanLII. (2022f, August 12). *R v Sinclair, 2022 MBCA 65 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/mb/mbca/doc/2022/2022mbca65/2022mbca65.html?searchUrl>

Hash=AAAAAQAZY2hpbGQgZXhwbG9pdGF0aW9uIG9ubGluZQAAAAAB&resultIndex=1

CanLII. (2022g, September 7). *R. v. R.R., 2022 ONCJ 407 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/on/oncjd/doc/2022/2022oncj407/2022oncj407.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAQAVY2hpbGQgcHJlZGF0b3Igb25saW5lAAAAAAE&resultIndex=40>

CanLII. (2022h, September 9). *R. v X, 2022 BCSC 1594 (CanLII)*. Canlii.org; CanLII.

<https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2022/2022bcsc1594/2022bcsc1594.html?searchUrlHash=AAAAAQAZY2hpbGQgZXhwbG9pdGF0aW9uIG9ubGluZQAAAAAB&resultIndex=11>

Child abuse victimization, by minority status Canada 2014. (n.d.). Statista.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/677093/child-abuse-victimization-by-minority-status-canada/>

DiBennardo, R. A. (2018). Ideal Victims and Monstrous Offenders: How the News Media Represent Sexual Predators. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 4, 237802311880251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023118802512>

Direct Messaging (DM) for Business | Instagram Direct. (n.d.). Instagram for Business.

<https://business.instagram.com/direct-messaging>

Elgersma, C. (2018, June 18). *Everything you need to know about Snapchat*. Phys.org; Phys.org.

<https://phys.org/news/2018-06-snapchat.html>

Ellis, A. S., Brown, A. M., Martini, A. I., Page, E., Lin, L., & Vaughn, L. M. (2022). Application of a Child Sex Trafficking Screening Tool in Patients with Abuse: A Retrospective Chart Review in the Pediatric Emergency Department. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pedhc.2022.01.002>

Exchange Rate Average (US Dollar, Canadian Dollar) - X-Rates. (n.d.). Wwww.x-Rates.com.

Retrieved December 14, 2022, from

<https://www.x-rates.com/average/?from=USD&to=CAD&amount=3600000000000&year=2014>

Frontiersin. (2021). <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.700401/full>

Government of Canada, P. S. and P. C. (n.d.-a). *Information archivée dans le Web.*

Publications.gc.ca.

https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2007/jus/J2-306-2005E.pdf

Government of Canada, P. S. and P. C. (n.d.-b). *Information archivée dans le Web.*

Publications.gc.ca. <https://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/H72-22-2-1997E.pdf>

Government of Canada, S. C. (2022a, May 12). *Online child sexual exploitation and abuse in*

Canada: A statistical profile of police-reported incidents and court charges, 2014 to

2020. Wwww150.Statcan.gc.ca.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00008-eng.htm>

Government of Canada, S. C. (2022b, May 12). *The Daily — Online child sexual exploitation*

and abuse in Canada, 2014 to 2020. Wwww150.Statcan.gc.ca.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220512/dq220512a-eng.htm>

Hylton, Dr. J. (2002). *Restoring Dignity: Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions.*

Ottawa, Ministry of Public Works and Government Services, 51–70.

http://www.ahf.ca/newsite/english/pdf/ab_sex_offend.pdf

Jones, K., Mallon, S., & Schnitzler, K. (2021). A Scoping Review of the Psychological and

Emotional Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Children and Young People. *Illness,*

Crisis & Loss, 105413732110471. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10541373211047191>

Online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Canada: A statistical profile of police-reported incidents and court charges, 2014 to 2020. (n.d.). Www150.Statcan.gc.ca. Retrieved December 14, 2022, from

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/85-002-X202200100008>

RAINN. (2022). *Child Sexual Abuse* | RAINN. Rainn.org.

<https://www.rainn.org/articles/child-sexual-abuse>

Science Table. (2021). *Increased Screen Time for Children and Youth During the COVID-19 Pandemic.* Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table.

<https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/increased-screen-time-for-children-and-youth-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

The Grooming Process - How Sexual Predators Con You and Your Child. (2014, May 6). Sexual Assault Victims Lawyers.

<https://www.sexualassaultvictimlawyers.com/the-grooming-process-how-sexual-predators-con-you-and-your-child/>

Towards a Global Indicator On Unidentified Victims in Child Sexual Exploitation Material - Summary Report. (2021).

<https://ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/TOWARDS-A-GLOBAL-INDICATOR-ON-UNIDENTIFIED-VICTIMS-IN-CHILD-SEXUAL-EXPLOITATION-MATERIAL-Summary-Report.pdf>

UN. (2020, April 14). *Online predators put millions of children at risk during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.* UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061742>

UNICEF. (n.d.). *Children at increased risk of harm online during global COVID-19 pandemic.* Wwww.unicef.org.

<https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/press-releases/children-increased-risk-harm-online-during-global-covid-19-pandemic>

Walsh, C. (2003). The relationship between parental substance abuse and child maltreatment: findings from the Ontario Health Supplement. *Ontario Health Supplement*, 1409–1425.

What is Discord | A Guide for Parents and Educators. (n.d.). Discord.com. Retrieved December 14, 2022, from

<https://discord.com/safety/360044149331-What-is-Discord#:~:text=Discord%20is%20a%20voice%2C%20video>

Wolfe, D. A., & et al. (n.d.). *Child Abuse in Community Institutions and Organizations: Improving Public and Professional Understanding*. Law Commission of Canada.

<http://www.lfcc.on.ca/institutional.html>.