INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose:
Most serial killers experience child abuse. For example, Ressler and Shachterman found that “100 percent of serial killers [in their study] reported abuse as children, either violence, neglect, or humiliation”.

Why Research is Sociological:
This research is sociological because child abuse affects society through its effects on children and through the creation of serial killers. Childhood abuse may increase one’s susceptibility to engage in negative lifestyle activities.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Hypothesis: The childhood experience of sexual abuse is a major reason for how power/control serial killers kill.

This study explores four types of child abuse in relation to the power/control serial killer to understand whether a serial killer’s experience of abuse is correlated to how they kill.

It is important to state that every person that suffers from child abuse will not become a serial killer as serial murderers are extreme cases.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Physical: Causing or allowing any non-accidental physical injury.

Sexual: Any sexual activity, practice, or instruction unhealthy for a child considering his/her age and level of development.

Psychological: Any act that could be psychologically damaging to the child such as humiliation or causing emotional conflict.

Neglect: Failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care.

(typeset in a table with columns for Power/Control, Thrill Seeker, Mission Oriented, and Lust)

CORRELATION BETWEEN A & B

Serial Killer Motives

| Power/Control | Main objective is to gain and exert power over their victim. |
| Thrill Seeker | Enjoys media attention and outsmarting law enforcement. |
| Mission Oriented | Believes they are doing justice to society by eliminating certain people (i.e. prostitutes). |
| Lust | Main objective is sexual gratification from his/her victims. |

(typeset in a table with columns for (A) Childhood Abuse and (B) Killing & Torture Methods)

CASE STUDIES OF TWO SERIAL KILLERS

(A) Childhood Abuse (Newton 2000)

- A boy teased by peers for his female name
- Frequent beatings by mother
- Was forced to wear female attire and serve tea at orgies
- Was forced to perform sexual favors for women

(B) Killing & Torture Methods

- Rape
- Strangulation

His childhood abuse made Cole view women as the enemy. He used torture tactics that allowed him to exert power.

(C) Early Childhood Abuse (Newton 2000)

- Suffered from multiple head injuries
- Was forced to sleep in bed with his mother until his early teens
- Sexually abused by his mother

(B) Killing & Torture Methods

- Rape
- Sodomy
- Strangulation

Due to childhood abuse from mother, Long developed a strong hatred for women. Methods are control tactics and ways to humiliate/exert power over victims.

CONCLUSION

Child abuse is significant in the serial killer population.

This study depicts that psychological and sexual abuse appear to be the leading types of child abuse among serial killers studied thus far.

More research needs to be conducted to test my hypothesis that power/control serial killers are likely to have experienced childhood sexual abuse.

In Mitchell & Aamodt’s study The Incidence of Child Abuse the prevalence of physical abuse was 36%; sexual abuse was 26%; psychological abuse was 50%; and neglect was 10%.

A comprehensive list of serial killers will be developed to outline power/control motives and child abuse.

IMPLICATIONS

Relevance of Study:

- More child advocacy and prevention programs readily available to victims of childhood abuse.
- Preventing a continuous cycle of child abuse.
- Serial Killing is an extreme result of child abuse however it is important to look at other affects that stem from child abuse such as alcoholism, drug use, relationship issues, and sexual identity.
- The emasculation of men and the definition of masculinity need to be further examined.

METHODS

This research is modeled after Mitchell & Aamodt’s study The Incidence of Child Abuse (2005).

Fifty serial killers who murdered for a primary goal of attaining sexual gratification were studied to determine the prevalence of childhood abuse. Results were compared to child abuse experienced by the general population.

Scholarly Journals:
- Journal of Police & Criminal Psychology
- Journal of Investigate and Offender Profiling
- Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention
- International Journal of Police Science and Management

Key Cites
- Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology
- Rhodes, R. 1999. Why they Kill