Shifting Perspective: Investigating Gender and Race Among Freed and Exonerated Canadians and Their Supposed Victims

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Introduction

In U.S. Wrongful Convcition data:

1. Black males are overrepresented.[1]
2. Female exonerees are often wrongfully convicted of crimes against their children.[2]

The Canadian Registry of Wrongful Convictions (CRWC; 2023) is a recently published public database.[3]

Do Canadian exoneree gender and race data reveal new patterns? What can victim demographics uncover?

Method

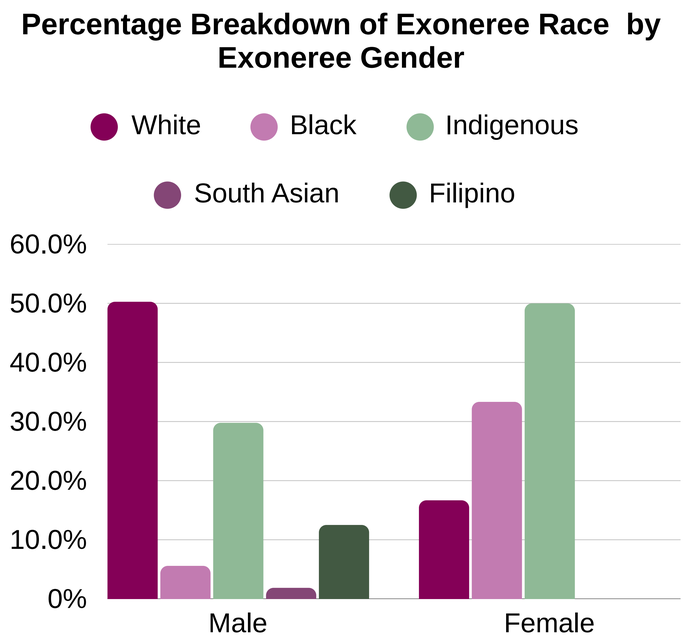
Data from all 89 exoneree cases in the CRWC were downloaded on May 31, 2025

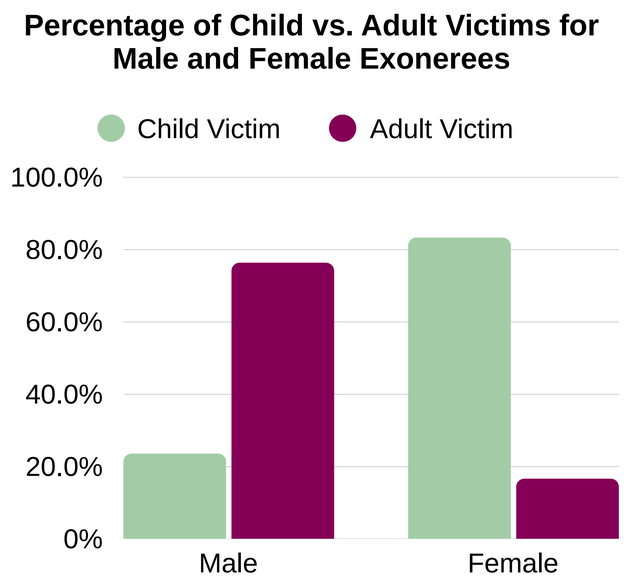
Data was coded for:

- **Exoneree: race* & gender**
- **Victim: race*, & age**
- **Exoneree-Victim relationship**

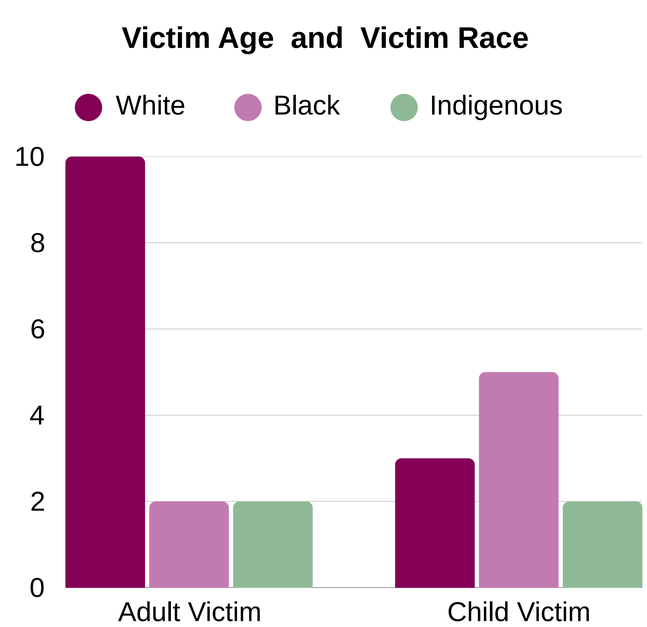
*65% of race data was missing

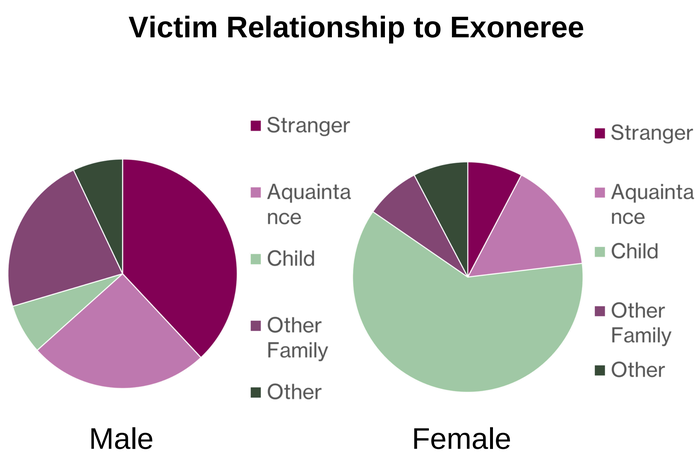
Exoneree Results





Victim Results





Discussion

For Canadian Exonerees:

- **Like U.S. data:** Male exonerees were most often convicted for crimes against adult strangers; for females, it was their own children
- **Unlike U.S. data:** Male exonerees are mostly White; female exonerees are mostly Indigenous
- Adult victims are mostly white, while child victims are racially varied

Links

PLANT Lab Linktree

References

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Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada
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