



Journal Club

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Psychological Profiling of Offender Characteristics From Crime Behaviors in Serial Rape Offences

Kocsis RN, Cooksey RW, Irwin HJ. (2002). International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 46(2) 144-169

What is criminal psychological profiling

- A technique of analyzing crime behaviors for the identification of probable offender characteristics.
- Three main bodies of research
 - Groth, Burgess, and Holmstrom - 1977
 - Ressler, Bugess, and Douglas (FBI) – 1988
 - Canter and Heritage – 1989

Groth et al.

- Premise – rape is a pseudo-sexual act in which sex serves merely as a vehicle for the primary motivations of power and aggression
- Three broad patterns of rape
 - Anger – uses more force than necessary for compliance in the assault and engages in a variety of sexual acts that are degrading to the victim.
 - Violence and brutality are key identifiers

Groth et al. (cont.)

- Power – seeks to establish power and control over victim through asserting potency, mastery, and identity.
 - Force is dependent upon submission of victim
- Sadistic – combination of both sexual and aggressive components.
 - Aggression is eroticized
 - Offender is aroused by maltreatment, torment and suffering
 - Bondage, torture, and considerable abuse and injury are key identifiers

Ressler et al.

- Premise - Identification of an organized-disorganized behavior dichotomy
- Organized
 - Methodical, premeditated crime
 - Offender characteristics:
 - Maturity, resourcefulness, and sexual perversion
- Disorganized
 - Haphazard, almost random crime
 - Offender characteristics:
 - Immaturity, opportunism and likelihood of some mental disorder

Ressler et al. (cont.)

- Concept of interpreting crimes by their level of behavioral sophistication holds some merit.
- It makes no distinction between behaviors that commonly occur in all offences.
 - Ex. Knife in a sexual murder

Canter and Heritage

- Premise – study of offender behaviors as distinct from their inferred motives
- Offenders differ in their behaviors when perpetrating a crime and that these differences in behavior relate to characteristics of the offender
- Challenged Groth et al. who combine inferred motivations with behaviors

Importance of Canter and Heritage

- Concluded that the central theme underlying serial rape was the treatment of the victim as an impersonal object.
 - Contrary with Groth's assertion that rape represented the sexual expression of anger and power
- Proposed five distinct behavior patterns

Patterns

- Intimacy Pattern
 - Behaviors indicative of offender attempting to establish intimacy with the victim
 - Rape represented a means for an offender to compensate for an inability to establish normal relations with a partner.
- Sexuality Pattern
 - Intercourse as a crucial element

Patterns

- Violence Pattern
 - Explains the inherent theme of violence against the victim
- Impersonal Pattern
 - Behaviors indicative of a purely impersonal treatment of the victim
- Criminality Pattern
 - Behaviors associated with criminal actions that were not overtly sexual in purpose

Canter and Heritage

- Produces a model that is based on offence behaviors
- Fails to address the issue of associating these crime behaviors with offender characteristics

Objectives of this study

- To statistically analyze directly a sample of serial rape offences.
- To use method of analysis that would allow for the identification of common behavior from those which are representative of discriminatory patterns

Central Behaviors

- Do not indicate sexual intercourse
- Premeditation
- Theft
- Expression of violence

Premeditation aspect

- Associated with the offender's planning and taking of precautions to avoid apprehension
- Calls into question organized/disorganized patterns
 - All rape patterns share some level of sophistication then diverge toward the poles of a conceptual continuum

Theft aspect

- Robbery is another central behavior to serial rapists
- This is not a motivating factor, necessarily
- A rapist may thiefe for a variety of reasons
 - Because of anger
 - Because it represents a further expression of control
 - Because it is an opportunistic act irrelevant to rape

Expression of violence theme

- Consistent with rape and sexual assault
- Examples:
 - Offender's anger
 - Victim's injury
 - Damage to victim's clothing

Serial Rape Patterns

- Undifferentiated
- Brutality
- Intercourse
- Ritual
- Chaotic

Brutality Pattern

- Behaviors demonstrate explosive release of anger in a sexual assault
- Offender uses confidence tricks to lure the victim and then suddenly assaults her or him in an escalating and excessive fury of blunt force blows or force or both
- Violence occurs before any sexual interference, so it is evident that violence is used not to induce suffering or simple compliance for intercourse but rather to achieve degradation and total dominance over the victim

Brutality Pattern Offenders Tend To

- Be older
- Have scars
- Have a criminal record
- Be in some form of conjugal relationship
- Not collect souvenirs from the crime
- Not confess their crime
- Have a defiant or resentful mindset

Ritual Pattern

- Ritualized and paraphilic behavior closely linked with sexual sadism
- Planning is apparent by behaviors (binding, gagging, blindfolding, and torture)
- Torture, fetishism, and force are noteworthy features

Ritual Pattern Offenders Tend To

- Be well groomed
- Be highly rational
- Collect souvenirs
- Have male victims
- Commit offences with other offenders
- Have strong similarities with sexual murderers

Intercourse Pattern

- Less aggressive, almost passive form of assault
- Main objective is to have sexual intercourse with the victim
- Violence (ritualistic or punitive) is not part of the assault
- Force is barely used to secure compliance from the victim

Intercourse Pattern Offenders Tend To

- Threaten victim to achieve control
- Experience sexual dysfunction
- Diminutive or meek individuals
 - compensate for sexual inadequacies in normal circumstances
- Conceal their identity (masks, conceal victim's face)
- Attack in the victim's home

Chaotic Pattern

- Impulsive and violent offence style
- Behaviors do not convey any sense of coordinated purpose
- Assault tends to be external manipulation (fondling, or digital penetration)
- Tend to be more opportunistic
- Embodies the concept of impersonal criminal actions

Chaotic Pattern Offenders Tend To

- Be young
- Not have any identifiable features (tattoos, scars)
- Steal property from the victim frequently
- Be inexperienced

Questions?

