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CRIMINAL PROFILING

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Abstract

In this article will be presented the practice of criminal profiling, an investigative approach which aims to predict the behavior of serial offenders based on behavioral evidence which can be deducted by physical evidence.

After giving the definition of criminal profiling, the focus is set on the field of application of this investigative technique, which can be identified in the variety of crimes defined as «serial», that is the succession of similar crimes perpetrated by the same individual. After that are presented the first attempts of actual criminal profiling before its effective theorization. The focus is then put on about the «first modern profiler» -John Douglas- and his pioneering studies on criminal behavior, which led, in the 80s, to the publication of the Crime Classification Manual and to the Crime Scene Analysis approach in profiling criminals.

To conclude, are presented the modern approaches to criminal profile who followed the FBI's one and the criticalities of the practice individuated by scholars of the different fields which influences this fascinating investigation practice.

Key words: criminal profiling, an investigative approach, serial offenders, crime, criminal behavior, Crime Classification Manual, Crime Scene Analysis, investigation.

УГОЛОВНОЕ ПРОФИЛИРОВАНИЕ

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Аннотация

В данной статье будет представлен метод уголовного профилирования, следственный метод, который направлен на прогнозирование поведения серийных преступников на основе поведенческих доказательств, которые вычитаются с помощью вещественных доказательств.

После введения определения уголовного профилирования, основное внимание уделяется области применения данной следственной методики, которая может быть выделена в многообразии преступлений, определяемых как «серийные», то есть последовательность аналогичных преступлений, совершенных одним и тем же лицом. После представлены первые попытки реального уголовного профилирования до его эффективной теоретизации. Затем основное внимание уделяется «первому современному аналитику» - Джону Дугласу - и его первым исследованиям преступного поведения, которые привели в 80-х годах к публикации пособия о классификации преступлений и исследованию места преступления в уголовном профилировании. В заключении, представлены современные подходы к уголовному профилированию, которые последовали за ФБР, и критичность практики, индивидуализированной учеными разных областей, которая оказывает влияние на такие удивительные методы расследования.

Ключевые слова: уголовное профилирование, следственный метод, серийный преступник, преступление, преступное поведение, анализ классификации преступлений, анализ места преступления, расследование.

ҚЫЛМЫСТЫҚ БЕЙІНДЕУ

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Аңдатпа

Бұл мақалада қылмыстық бейіндеу әдісі, тергеу әдісі ұсынылады, ол заттай дәлелдемелердің көмегімен шегерілетін мінез- құлық дәлелдемелерінің негізінде сериялық қылмыскерлердің мінез- құлқын болжауға бағытталған.

Қылмыстық бейіндеудің анықтамасы енгізгеннен кейін, негізгі назар осы тергеу әдістемесін қолдану саласына бөлінді, ол «сериялық» деп аталатын қылмыстардың әр алуандығында бөлінуі мүмкін, яғни, бір адам жасаған ұқсас қылмыстардың тізбегі. Кейін оның тиімді теориялануына дейін нақты қылмыстық бейіндеудің алғашқы әрекеттері ұсынылған. Содан Кейін «бірінші қазіргі заманғы аналитика» - Джон Дугласқа және оның қылмыстық мінез - құлықты алғашқы зерттеулеріне баса назар аударылды, олар 80-ші жылдары қылмысты жіктеу және қылмыстық бейіндеуде қылмыс орнын зерттеу туралы оқу құралын жариялауға негіз болды.

Қорытындыда, ФБР-мен қоса осындай таңғажайып тергеу әдістеріне әсер ететін әр түрлі салалардың ғалымдарымен дараландырылған практиканың сындылығына әсер ететін қылмыстық бейіндеудің қазіргі заманғы тәсілдері ұсынылған.

Түйінді сөздер: қылмыстық бейіндеу, тергеу әдісі, сериялық қылмыскер, қылмыс, қылмыстық мінез-құлық, қылмыстың жіктелуін талдау, қылмыс орнын талдау, тергеу.

Introduction

In 1986 Douglas, Ressler, Burgess e Hartmann [1], described for the first time the criminal profiling practice, which consists in identifying the main behavioral traits of an unsub (unknown subject) basing on the analysis of a crime's peculiarities. In 1995 Copson [2] defined criminal profiling as an approach which aims to provide the description of an unknown crime perpetrator, on the basis of the evaluation of any small detail regarding the crime scene and the victim.

In 1996 Geberth published the *Practical Homicide Investigation* [3], in which he refers to the criminal profiling as the attempt to provide investigative agencies with detailed information about the individual who committed a specific crime. In 1996, Holmes & Holmes [4] defined criminal profiling's three fundamental goals:

- providing a socio-psychological evaluation of the offender;
- evaluating the evidence and the suspect's possessions through a psychological perspective;
- advising the detectives about the most effective interrogatory strategies.

For Canter [5], the term profiling can be attributed to any activity useful in deducing the offender's characteristics based on any available clue and information. A different definition considers criminal profiling the «strategic use of information collected through an accurate activity of intelligence by detective, who should take into account characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, beliefs, sexual orientation and age in order to be able to take decision as accurately as possible throughout the whole investigative process» (Bumgarner [6], 2004). Amongst all the different definitions of this practice, one that could be regarded as modern and inclusive of all the previous ones were given by Roberta Bruzzone. She describes criminal profiling as a support practice to the traditional investigative process, through which specialized personnel cooperates in order to develop a biographical, psychological and behavioral profile of the unknown perpetrator of a crime, basing on the evidence found on the crime scene and on its dynamics [7].

Therefore, the aim of the practice is not only to hypothesize the personality traits of an offender, but also to understand additional sociological-demographical details such as the offender's gender, age, education level, marital status, and occupation.

In order to define a systematic methodology of the criminal profiling practice, Police Superintendent Cristina Rapetti pinpointed criminal profiling's fundamental assumptions:

- the crime scene reflects the offender's personality;
- the analysis of the crime scene is aimed to give an idea of the offender's personality and his level of organization;
- in the case of a serial offender, the depiction of his compulsive needs is manifested in every crime scene, because it becomes part of the offender's personality;
- the offender tends to replicate his modus operandi in the series of crimes since it satisfies his emotional needs;
- the offender's «signature» does not modify: an individual's personality tends to remain the same throughout his life. Therefore, different criminals with a «similar» personality will commit similar crimes.

Given these premises, the nature of a psychological profile must be defined as probabilistic; in fact, it doesn't identify a specific criminal but indicates the criminal's most probable characteristics [8] criminal profiling's fields of application Published by FBI in 1992, the *Crime Classification Manual* [9] defined the fields in which criminal profiling results more effective:

- single murder, in the event in which the crime seems to be lacking motive and particularly heinous;
- serial murder, which consists of three or more homicides which take place in three different locations, separated by a period of “emotional cooling” of the serial killer;
- mass murder, when the killing of four or more victims takes place in a single place in a short period of time;
- spree killing, which consists of a single event taking place in two or more locations, causing the death of several people, with the absence of the “emotional cooling” period;
- rape;
- arson, namely the act of intentionally setting fires with the aim of damaging people/things.

CP (criminal profiling) is thus a useful instrument when dealing with cases of violent murders, characterized by sexual and serial connotations; in fact, the higher the number of episodes, the higher will be the number and the quality of the evidence left on the crime scene by the unsub.

In the manual *L'indagine investigativa. Manuale teorico-pratico* [10] (Investigative analysis. Theoretical and practical manual) are presented the elements that characterize the analysis of serial murders, with a focus on the ones characterized by a sexual component. These elements are:

- victim's evaluation: the study of the victim's typology and the modality through which he/she encountered the murderer;
- individuation of the places and the path of the crime: it's important to establish if the disposal site is also the place where the victim was also murdered;
- weapon analysis: identification of the type of weapon that was used in the murder and study of the reasons that lead the offender to make such choice;

– aggression evaluation: analysis of the aggression's dynamics and of the typology and nature of the inflicted wounds.

History of profiling

Cesare Lombroso (1835-1919) is considered the father of criminal anthropology and a precursor of criminal profiling. With his theories and his books, he influenced the development of criminology more than any other criminologist ever: the publication of the first edition of his book *L'uomo delinquente* [11], in 1876, conventionally indicates the birth of criminal anthropology. In this essay, following his analysis of numerous human skulls that belonged to southern Italian bandits, Lombroso postulated that criminals were carrying antisocial traits from their birth since these were, according to his theories, hereditary traits. Anthropologically speaking, criminals would be physically resembling primitive men and would behave in ways that would have been considered honest in primitive societies but criminal in the modern ones. In fact, besides the particular skull conformation, the «born criminal [12]» would present other «physical *stigmata* [13]» - as he defined them - such as a sloping forehead, ears of unusual size, asymmetry of the face, excessive length of arms and other more.

Only in the last part of his life, he started to consider environmental, educational and social factors as concurrent to physical ones in determining criminal behavior. Nowadays almost all of Lombroso's theories have been discredited and proven to be non-scientific, even though he is given credit for using the methods of biological research for the study of the criminal individual; he was also the first to start a systematic approach in studying violence and crime.

The first attempt to draw an actual criminal profile was performed in 1888 by the Surgeon Thomas Bond, who was asked by Scotland Yard to participate to the investigation of a series of homicides that were taking place in the White Chapel district in London. After examining the evidence sent and assisting to the autopsy of the last victim, he ascribed sexual connotation to the homicides – despite the lack of sexual assault – combined with wrath and misogynistic elements. His profiling emphasized how all five homicides in question had been committed by the same person who was, in his opinion, a strong male, probably middle-aged, well dressed in a cloak in order to hide the blood traces left by the assaults. He also assumed that the killer suffered from satyriasis, sexual deviance now identified as hypersexuality. By the analysis of the inflicted wounds, it was also revealed that the killer had no anatomical knowledge, so he was neither a doctor nor a butcher (as it was believed at the time by most of the people following the case). The murderer – later named Jack the Ripper – was never caught so, unfortunately, there was never the chance of matching the accuracy of the first attempt to profile a serial criminal.

The first criminal profile that turned out to be successful was made in 1956 by dr. James A. Brussel [14], a private psychiatrist in charge of a psychiatric hospital in New York. He was asked to take part in the investigating on the case an unknown man (named Mad Bomber by the press) had been planting bombs in public places and writing letters to the NYPD and local newspapers mocking them for sixteen years without being caught.

Being around violent inmates for many years, dr. Brussel realized that they followed their own logic, so, if he had been able to «enter their minds [15]» he would have been also able to decode their behavior. He theorized what he called «reverse psychology» which consisted of being able to describe and define a serial offender based on their behavior. By carefully analyzing all the letters received by the police and resorting to deductive reasoning, Freudian theories, and his many predictions, he theorized that the suspect was a Catholic,

eastern European or of Slavic descent, unmarried living with his mother or a sister. He would also be a textbook paranoid schizophrenic, antisocial, with a need to convey his superiority but also an exemplary employee who probably had shown up precisely on time for work each morning. The psychiatrist also theorized that, since the first bomb was planted in the Edison Con. Headquarters, the subject would probably be a resentful former employee, so he suggested to look for someone who matched his profile in their archives.

Soon they came up with the name of George Metesky, a Polish fifty-three-years old former employee who got injured while working and that made him – according to his opinion – permanently disabled.

When the police agents went to the man's house, where he was living with his sister, the suspect himself opened the door and they immediately noticed how the man was very similar to the description given by Brussel. In the interrogations following his arrest, the agents could also notice how the profile also matched very accurately the psychological and behavioral attitude of the bomber.

After his success, Brussel went on to consult in other high-profile cases, most notably that of the «Boston Strangler». Even though there is no information on his accuracy rate, and he acknowledged that he sometimes made errors, because of anecdotal success police departments and attorneys frequently asked him for help by providing them profiles related to their cases. Ultimately, Brussel was asked by FBI's special agent Howard Teten in his profiling methods.

Teten, who was teaching applied criminology at the FBI academy, was offering suggestions and conclusions on unsolved cases that police officers brought to class. His class evolved into a series of courses and eventually into the training program that has become the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit later renamed Investigative Support Unit.

John Douglas, the first modern profiler

John Douglas is a former FBI special agent known for having inspired the character of agent Clarice Sterling in the famous movie «Silence of the Lambs» by Thomas Harris in 1991 and Netflix's successful tv series Mindhunter in 2018.

He was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1945. In 1966 he became a member of the United States Air Force where he served until 1970. In the same year, he joined the FBI where his first assignment was in Detroit, Michigan. In the field, he served as a sniper on the local FBI SWAT team and later became a hostage negotiator.

He was successful at his job but, as he wrote in Mindhunter [16], he soon realized that he was particularly interested in the mental processes at the bottom of the crime: with time he understood that successful criminals were also excellent psychologists who carefully studied the chosen target. In 1977 he got transferred to the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit where he taught hostage negotiation and applied criminology at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia to the new FBI special agents, field agents and police officers from all over the United States. He contributed to creating the FBI's Criminal Profiling Program and, partnered with special agent Robert Ressler, he was entrusted to teach applied criminal psychology to police departments all over the US.

The course was based on one of the most useful elements to solve a crime: the motive; its purpose was to provide instruments to understand how and why criminals act and think following a pattern. It was during that period that Douglas realized that the best way to get an insight on the criminal way of thinking was to interview the criminal himself and since many of the criminals they were talking about in their lessons were still alive and had been

sentenced to life in prison, he and Ressler could take advantage of the situation and visit them during their trips.

After a year and a few more interviews, in 1979 Douglas was put in charge of the criminal behavior analysis program.

That same year they started to cooperate with dr. Ann Burgess, professor of psychiatric mental health nursing at the University of Pennsylvania and one of the main authorities of the country in the field of sexual violence and the related psychologic consequences. Their project was to interview accurately forty criminals in detention with a fifty-seven pages standardized questionnaire developed by Dr. Burgess with the aim to describe the methodology of each murder, analyze and document the behavior before and after the crime. More specifically the goal of their research was – as it is written in an article published in the «FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin» of September 1980 [17] – to answer four fundamental questions:

- What leads a person to become a sexual offender and what are the early warning signals?
- What serves to encourage or to inhibit the commission of this offense?
- What types of response or coping strategies by an intended victim are successful with that type of sexual offender in avoiding victimization?
- What are the implications for this dangerousness, prognosis, disposition, and mode of treatment?

At the end of the study, after having interviewed thirty-six murderers – 25 classified as serial murderers and 11 as sexual murderers – the results of the study were published in the FBI «Law Enforcement Bulletin» in 1985 [18]. In the article «Crime scene and profile characteristic of organized and disorganized murderers» Douglas, Ressler, and Burgess present the differences between disorganized and organized murderers observed both in profile characteristics and in crime scenes.

The main characters they observed are displayed and cataloged in tab 1 and tab 2. They noticed how, generally, organized offenders tend to have an average or better than average IQ, they work in occupations below their abilities, have an unsteady work history and are socially adept, usually living with a partner. They may report an angry state of mind at the time of the murderous fact.

Precipitating situational stress or depression are often present prior to the murder; however, while committing the crime, he admits being calm and relaxed. Evidence of continued fantasy is made clear by the act of taking remembrances of the victim; newspaper clipping about the crimes are often found during searches of the subject's residence, indicating that he had been following the investigation in the newspaper.

The observation at the organized murderer's crime scene suggests that a form of order existed prior, during and after the offense, which indicates a carefully planned and premeditated crime. A form of control over the victim is also present and can be noted by the use of restraints – such as ropes, tape, belts, blindfold – which also suggest a sadistic element in the offender's plan: the killing is eroticized, most of the times the victim is tortured in a slow manner in order to get as much pleasure as possible by exerting power over the life and death of the victim. Fantasy and ritual dominate with the organized offender; obsessive, compulsive traits are reflected in the crime scene patterns: the organized murderer meticulously avoids leaving evidence behind and often moves the body from the death scene in order to hide it.

As opposed to the organized offender, the disorganized one is likely to be of below-average intelligence, coming from a family of unstable conditions. Typically, this type of offender is affected by recurring obsessive thoughts and finds himself in a confused state of mind at the time of the crime.

The disorganized offender is socially inadequate: often he has never married, lives alone or with a parental figure in close proximity to the crime scene. He acts impulsively under stress, finding a victim usually within his own geographic area. He is also sexually incompetent, often never having achieved any level of sexual intimacy with a peer.

The overall imprint of the disorganized crime scene is that the crime is committed suddenly and with no set plan of action for avoiding arrest.

The offender uses a blitz style of attack for confronting the victim, who is caught completely off guard: the attack is sudden and violent, occurring spontaneously and in a location where the victim is going for his or her usual activities.

During the killing, the murderer targets specific areas of the body with extreme brutality in order to depersonalize and dehumanize him or her. The verbal interaction between the offender and the victim is minimal, and is carried out only in the form of orders and threats; restraints are not necessary since the victim is killed quickly.

Sexually sadistic acts on the victim are generally performed *post mortem*: mutilation to the face, genitals, amputation, and vampirism may be found on the victim's body.

Most of the times the body is left in the position in which he or she was killed, with no attempt to hide it; in the same way, this kind of offender is likely to leave a lot of evidence that can be helpful to the investigating agents [19].

FBI's criminal profiling method

In 1986, the research team published the important result of their studies on criminal behavior for a seminary of the FBI's Training Division and Behavioral Science Unit with the title «Criminal profiling from crime scene analysis [20]».

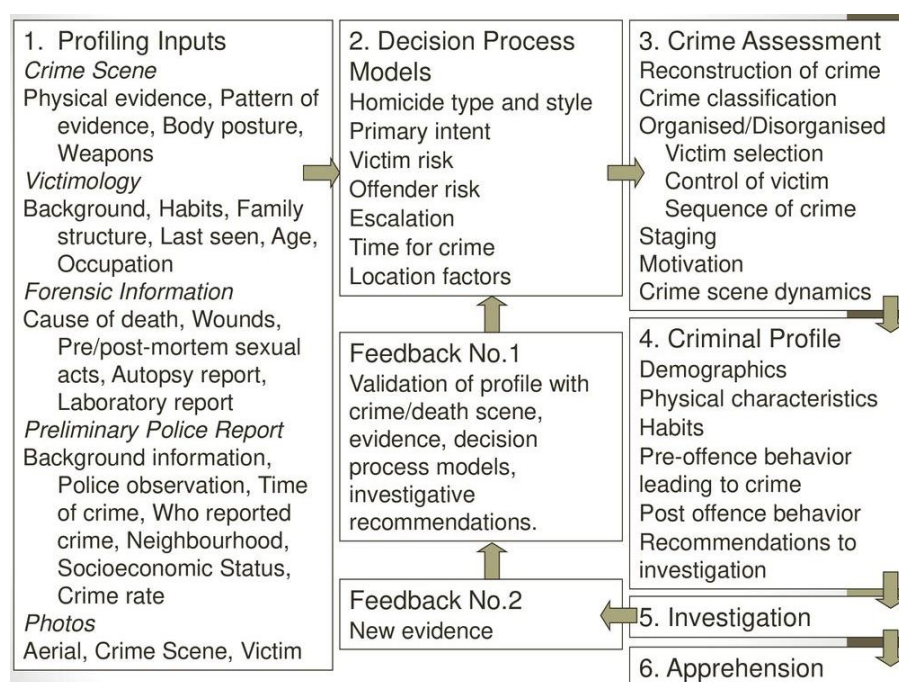


Figure 1 Criminal-profile-generating process

In the 20-pages article, the authors presented the model of criminal profiling later called CSA (crime scene analysis), displaying the five-stages criminal-profiling-generating process – with a sixth stage being the apprehension of a suspect (observable in Table 1).

The first phase (profiling input) consider collection and analysis of every piece of evidence regarding the crime scene such as videotapes and pictures of the place, coroner's report, witnesses' depositions, victim profiling (collection of pieces of information about the victim's background) and law enforcement's report. During this phase, the profiler can interview the investigators in order to obtain any necessary information for evaluating the case but he must not ask them about a possible suspect in view of the fact that such revelations could influence his analysis and invalidate the whole process.

During the second phase (decision process model) the profiler will organize the information collected in the previous step and evaluate the complexity of the criminal act.

The key points aimed to form a decision-making pattern for profiling are seven: homicide type and style, the primary intent of the murderer, victim risk, offender risk, escalation, time factors, and location factors.

In this phase, the profiler will face numerous questions such as: Which type of murder was committed (emotional, sexual, criminal enterprise)? What is the risk level taken by the offender in committing such a crime? Which is the sequence of actions followed by the murderer before, during and after the crime? Where was the crime carried out? Was the body found in the same location in which the murderous fact took place? In which conditions was the body found? Are there any elements which can indicate staging or undoing (the attempt to reduce the emotional impact for the perpetrated act)?

In the third phase (crime assessment) the profiler tries to reconstruct the offender's *modus operandi*, that is the operative modality of the subject's criminal conduct, with a particular focus on the relation between the victim and the offender.

The fourth phase (criminal profiling) is the one in which the profiler, based on the information collected during the previous stages, develops a debrief of the suspect which includes information concerning sex, ethnicity, marital status, beliefs, working history, psychological and sociological traits, the likely reaction towards the law enforcement, possible criminal records both generic and specific.

In the fifth stage (investigation), a report is filed and given to the investigators who can use it to narrow down the suspect pool. If new elements or evidence emerge, the whole report needs to be reviewed and re-elaborated on the basis of the new data.

The sixth and last phase (apprehension) is the one where the offender is identified and apprehended. After the apprehension, the profiling activity can be very useful in identifying the interrogatory strategy which best suits the criminal's personality.

The identification of subjects responsible for serial crimes, the identification of a possible signature (a particular personal act not influent and not necessary to the crime commission itself, left by the murderer in each of his crime scenes) takes place through the process of crimes linking which allows to evaluate similarity and differences between the crimes investigated.

In a first moment, FBI's CSA profiling method based on the organized/disorganized dichotomy was something innovative and seemed to be very useful, but soon many experts in the field of psychology, sociology, and criminology started to criticize it.

The critics moved to the FBI approach are based on three main points. In the first place the CSA method was judged as lacking theoretical basis: despite the wide and detailed range of crime scene indicators present in BSU crime analysis, the profile-generating process

depends too much on the profiler's personal intuitions and subjective interpretations. Some researchers remarked that relying on such a nonobjective method, profilers often operate confiding in nothing but personal speculation (Homant and Kennedy [21], 1998).

In the second place, data collection for the studies carried out by Douglas et al. derives exclusively from Northern American crime data; this limitation precludes the chance of identifying any possible culturally specific pattern in criminal behavior.

Salfati and Canter [22] (1999) also claimed that, since the serial murderers interviewed for the FBI research were volunteers, the information gathered may be biased and cannot be considered representative of all serial murderers.

In the third place, given the little presence of feedback about the success rate of the criminal profiling practice, it's difficult to determine its effective usefulness. This difficulty is then increased by the media's tendency in reporting only the successful cases, omitting the ones in which profiling may have been not only useless but even damaging for the investigations, leading them to the wrong line of inquiry.

Research conducted by the British Detective Chief Inspector David Copson [23] in 1995 found that CP played a decisive role in identifying the offender in less of the 5% of the cases in which it was implemented.

However, it's important to acknowledge the FBI's pioneer role in conducting systematic research in the field of criminal psychology and in creating a classification method with the aim of supporting the traditional investigating techniques.

Modern Criminal Profiling Approaches

Investigative Psychology

The first expert to propose an alternative approach to profiling a criminal was the British psychologist David Canter with his investigative psychology method. The origin of this new approach dates to 1985, when Canter was contacted by Scotland Yard with the request of taking into consideration the possibility of applying psychological competencies to investigative techniques like the FBI already was doing. In developing his new theory, Canter decided to apply a few models of environmental psychology to the fields of a criminal and civil investigation.

Canter's new method intends to propose a new type of approach based on objective data derived by empirical studies, in opposition to the FBI's CSA, which is mainly based on intuition. Secondly, psychology is used with the aim of providing a framework for understanding the process that should be followed by law enforcement agents throughout the investigating process.

Canter's work is based on the five-factor model, which focuses on the interaction between the offender and the victim:

- interpersonal coherence: basing on the assumption that the offender relates to the victim in the same way he relates to another subject in his every-day life, any variation in the criminal activity can indicate an alteration in the offender's interpersonal relationship;
- the significance of time and place: the time and the place in which the aggression takes place are largely owed to the criminal's aware choice (e.g., the time chosen to commit a crime can suggest the offender's working schedules);
- criminal characteristics: these characteristics are used by researchers in order to develop classification systems for groups of offenders, as the affinity with one group or another allows the investigators to infer different criminal's characteristics based on the crime's modality and the crime scene. The previously cited organized/disorganized dichotomy represents a clear example of a criminal characteristic's category. However, Canter

himself acknowledges the limits of this classification, given by a frequent overlapping of the two categories;

- criminal career: it's fundamental to determine if the offender had previously been involved in criminal activities and, if so, which specific crimes he committed;
- forensic awareness: this factor consists of the analysis of any element suggesting if the offender is or not aware of investigative practices such as evidence collection.

Another cornerstone in IP is what is known as the «profiling equation» (Canter, 1995 [24]), which provides scientific bases through which it's possible to establish associations between the actions occurred during the offense and the offender's characteristics such as his/her criminal history, background, domicile, and relationship with others. This equation is also called the « $A \rightarrow C$ equation», where A represents the crime-related actions, C are the characteristics of the typical offender for such crime and \rightarrow are the argument and evidence for deducing one from the other [25].

Geographic Profiling

The term geographic profiling refers to a criminal investigative approach which aims to locate the most probable area in which an offender lives by analyzing the location and timing of linked crimes. The method was firstly theorized by the Canadian criminologist Kim Rossmo in 1999 [26], but it was David Canter in 2003 [27] who developed the methodology in a more articulate way.

Canter introduced a model of interpretation for criminal behavior based on environmental psychology theories and in one of his essays [28] he developed the «offense circle concept» and he also divided offenders into two categories: marauders and commuters. With the term marauder, Canter defines the typology of the offender that uses his area of residence as a «base» around which his predatory acts take place. According to the offense circle concept theory, a subject moves from his base to commit crimes and then returns, changing direction for every episode of the crime series. In 85% of the cases analyzed by Canter, the area of the offender's residence is located inside the perimeter delimited by the places in which the crimes take place.

The term commuter, instead, indicates the typology of offenders that commit crimes outside their area of residence, therefore there is no geographic correlation between his area of residence and the area where he commits his crimes.

There are some considerations that can be deduced through the criminal sphere theory. In the first place, the fact that – in many cases of serial crimes – the future activity of an unknown offender could occur inside the area outlined by the places of his previous offenses. Secondly, in 85% of the cases, the offender's residence is situated within the perimeter drawn by all the places where previous crimes were perpetrated. Lastly, the probable residence of the offender can be defined as «central» in relation to the offender's crime and can also be located with the help of the territory analysis, the offender's mental map, and the distance-decay law.

Territory analysis is based on what in psychology is called «least effort principle»: if many different destinations are available, to commit a crime the subject will choose the nearest to his base. Among the choice, factors occur the physical characteristics of the place, the necessary costs and time to move, and behavioral factors orienting the subject towards easier to reach objectives. The psychological perception of distances is influenced by factors such as the relative attractivity of the destination, quantity, and type of obstacle which could impede the subject during his itinerary, the familiarity with the transport routes, and the actual

distance of the objective. The subjective awareness of these factors generates in the subject a mental map which may alter his/her perception of the actual distances.

Mental maps determine a strong influence on the process of choosing a place in which the offender intends to commit a crime. These are the result of the subjective perspective and experience of the individual, who unconsciously elaborates spatial and non-spatial information regarding the place where the crime should take place. The most important individual factor in the creation of a mental map consists of the so-called «anchor points [29]», which constitute the most important physical places for a subject. These points are very crucial in the offender's choice: if he/she frequently visits the same places these can become the anchor points around which his activity will concentrate.

Distance-decay law states that criminal activity decreases as the distance between the place where the offense occurs and the offender's area of residence increases.

Canter's geographical profiling, which works in parallel with the investigative psychology approach, has two main components: a subjective and an objective one, both incorporating information deriving from behavioral profiling. The objective element is composed of statistical and quantitative procedures aiming to establish the most probable areas in which the offender can be located. The subjective factor consists of recreating and interpreting the offender's mental map. To summarize, some fundamental features must be taken into account, such as:

- the nature of the places where the offense takes place;
- the typology of victim chosen;
- the focus on main streets;
- the presence of public transportation means;
- the presence of physical obstacles (e.g. work in progress) or psychological impediments (e.g. highly surveilled areas);
- socio-demographic features of the territory being investigated;
- victim's habits.

Nonetheless, geographic profiling can be developed only under determined circumstances: firstly, the investigated crimes must be related and attributable to a single offender. Then, the series of crimes must at least consist of five episodes; as the number of crimes to be analyzed decreases, the probability rate of locating the offender also decreases. Lastly, any information regarding the geographic analysis, law enforcement's inspections, and victim's characteristics must be taken into consideration.

Behavioral Evidence Analysis

In 1999 Brent E. Turvey, forensic scientist and criminal profiler published the book *Criminal Profiling: An Introduction to Behavioral Evidence Analysis* [30] where he presented his own criminal profiling approach.

The innovation in Turvey's method lays in its approach, which is defined as criminological and not clinical: the BEA profiling process is not a rigid and static one, it is instead an analytic, critic and dynamic one, with the aim of examining and describing the offender's behavior as it changes over time (Turvey, 1999 [31]).

Another important aspect of BEA profiling process is that it's not meant to provide a generic profile for a generic type of offender; in fact, since every offender's behavioral pattern and characteristics are different, its purpose is to provide general characteristics of a specific offender. Therefore the profile can be helpful not only to the investigators but also to attorneys, judges, and juries in a forensic context.

Behavioral evidence analysis develops in four stages:

– equivocal forensic analysis: the term “equivocal” indicates the fact that any interpretation of evidence and traces on the crime scene can lead to different explanations and hypotheses. The aim of this first fundamental step is to evaluate and take into consideration the most likely interpretation based on elements such as pictures and videos of the crime scene, law enforcement’s report, pictures, videos and report of the autopsy, interviews with witnesses and victim’s neighbors and victim’s movement reconstruction before the aggression;

– victimology: the second step in Turvey’s analysis consists of an in-depth analysis of the victim’s characteristics, with the objective of providing his/her psychological profile;

– crime scene characteristics: by analyzing the distinctive characteristics of a crime scene the profiler tries to understand the offender’s decisional processes through clues and evidence indicating behavioral peculiarities;

– offender characteristics: it is the BEA’s final stage, in which a description of the offender’s behavioral and physical characteristics is drawn. These elements are deduced throughout the previous three stages. Among the offender’s features that can be described through the BEA profile-generating process, there are a physical constitution, sex, ethnicity, marital status, education level, living habits, social skills, criminal records, and clinical history. However, this last stage doesn’t represent a definitive conclusion: the whole process is, in fact, open to new investigative suggestions and prone to reject hypotheses which may result insufficiently coherent with other information emerged throughout the investigation.

Behavioral Evidence Analysis has two different fields of application: the investigative phase and the trial phase. According to Turvey’s fourth edition of the manual [32], the goals in the investigative phase are:

– «evaluating the nature and value of forensic and behavioral evidence in a particular crime or series of related crimes»;

– reducing the number of suspects;

– linking «potentially related crimes» through the recognition of «behavioral patterns and crime scene indicators»;

– evaluating the «potential for escalation» from nuisance crimes to «more serious or more violent crimes» (i.e., from voyeurism to aggression to murder);

– «providing investigators with relevant leads and strategies»;

– developing strategies of communication when dealing with suspects.

The trial phase of criminal profiling takes place after the recognition of a possible suspect and throughout the whole trial. BEA profile’s goal in this phase are:

– helping to elaborate «insight into the offender’s fantasy and motivations»;

– helping to develop «insight into the offender motive and intent before, during and after the commission of a crime».

What emerges by analyzing Turvey’s approach is that it can be defined as deductive, differently from CSA and Canter’s IP.

Summarized, the representation of the line of reasoning would be: if... then (certainly)...

In Turvey’s deductive method conclusions on the offender’s profile derive by all the data collected and analyzed for a determined case. That’s why the profile does not indicate behavioral patterns for a certain category of criminal but instead indicates a determined offender’s characteristics.

Criticism of the practice of criminal profiling

In the years that followed the birth of criminal profiling, in various countries was documented an increase in the employment of this practice by law enforcement. In the United States, for example, the number of cases in which FBI's profilers provided support grew from 192 in the decade 1971-1981 (Pinizzotto [33], 1984) to 600 in 1986 (Douglas & Burgess [34]) to 1000 in 1996 [35]. An important growth in this field can also be seen in the United Kingdom where in 1995 Copson [36] identified 242 cases in which profilers were involved between 1981 and 1994. The use of this practice has also been documented in countries such as Canada, Finland, Germany, Sweden, and Holland, even if correct estimations are still missing (Asgard [37], 1998; Clarke [38], 2004; Jackson, Herbrink & Van Koppen [39], 1997).

In the same way, the number of publications on the topic has also increased, and in these books/articles, profiling is always presented as a flawless practice. These tendencies were also followed by movie directors who, in these movies, always display this activity's success rate as infallible

Starting from the assumptions that the use of CP is spreading widely and people, in general, is convinced about its effectiveness, academics from different fields brought forward well-articulated critics to it.

The first criticism is about criminal profiling's lack of scientific bases. In addition to the FBI's CSA method, most of the theories which are considered as fundamental for the other profiling methods are also accused to lack empirical support.

In particular, is highlighted how the cornerstone on which these theories lays are theories which date back to the 60s (Mischel [40], 1968), according to which criminal behavior is determined by specific inclinations that make an individual behave in a determined and therefore predictable way (Douglas *et al.* [41]; Canter [42]).

The assumptions deduced by these theories became the fundamentals of criminal profiling – mentioned in the first part of the article. What is contested to profilers is not having taken into account the fact that, in the last decades, scholars in the field of psychology have come to the conclusion that considering personal traits and dispositions as primarily responsible for human behavior are a mistake? It was in fact shown how environmental and situational factors are equally important to the formation of human behavior, and therefore they turn to be equally valid in the attempt to predict criminal conduct (Gendreau, Smith & French, 2006 [43]).

In fact, although it is possible to make rather accurate predictions about criminal behavior in a given range of areas, according to some these predictions cannot be made in the context of criminal profiling. Scholars Craig Bennell, Paul J. Taylor and Paul Gendreau stated in this regard that well-known indicators of criminal behavior (e.g. antisocial attitudes) have no connection with the type of variables on which profilers usually focus (e.g. behavioral clues present at the crime scene), but nevertheless they would continue to make predictions that lack empirical bases.

Another criticism leveled at the CP is based on the figure of the profiler himself and his training. Some profilers claim to have investigative experience, knowledge of behavioral sciences and deviant behaviors that make them able to predict the characteristics of a criminal based on the crime scene, only because of the amount and type of crimes they have worked on during their career (eg Douglas & Burgess, 1986 [44], Ault & Reese, 1980 [45]). Other professors claim instead that their knowledge and skills derived from a long scientific training that would have instructed them on how to identify the statistical relationships between the details of a crime and the personality and background of the criminal. Critics, however, find that to date professors have not yet succeeded in demonstrating that their training actually

improves their ability to draw up accurate profiles (Snook, Eastwood, Geandreau and Goggin, 2007 [46]).

The last of the main points on which the criticism of the CP is based refers to the type of messages related to profiling and the way in which they are conveyed, which would be leading people to blindly and uncritically believe in the usefulness and the accuracy of the practice of profiling. Personality researches have shown that people are inclined to accept ambiguous, vague and general phrases as accurate descriptions of their personality, the so-called «Barnum effect». A study carried out in 1976 by Snyder, Larsen, and Bloom [47] also showed how people are more inclined to accept «even fake personality descriptions» when they think that these are supported by a procedure that can be defined as psychological, instead of alternative techniques (such as astrology, for example). In the context of the CP, a similar effect can be found when an individual is in the situation of having to assess whether a profile written in an ambiguous way describes a suspect accurately or not, given that many profiles have been branded as so ambiguous that they can describe any suspect. A research done by Alison, Smith, Eastman & Rainbow in 2003 in this regard [48] analyzed 21 criminal profiles used in important investigations, for a total of 3090 sentences: 880 of these contained predictions regarding the characteristics of an unknown criminal, 82% were unfounded, 55% were unverifiable, 28% were falsifiable and 24% were ambiguous.

Another aspect of the criticism leveled in this direction concerns the way in which criminal profiling is presented by the media which, according to various scholars, would lead people to unconsciously consider the practice in a positive way, without having actually deepened their knowledge on the topic and relying instead on media reports only. The main problem highlighted by this dynamic and criticized by some of the experts is the way in which almost every article deals with CP: way too often cases are reported in which the profiler was able to provide an accurate profile of the suspect, succeeding in solving a case that seemed unsolvable. Therefore, the accusation made by scholars Bennell, Taylor and Gendreau lays on the lack of balanced elements in the presentation of cases: empirical studies have shown how the tendency of an individual to accept a message increases with its continuous repetition (Cacioppo & Petty [49], 1979). Consequently, the continuous re-affirmation of the message that the CP technique is infallible would only increase in uncritical readers what is called «the illusion of criminal profiling [50]», while it would be very useful to study even those cases in which profiling has not proved to be effective.

Conclusion

This in-depth analysis leads us to the conclusion that criminal profiling can be considered as the expression of the human desire to predict the behavior of individuals but applied to criminal behavior. No wonder, then, that this investigative technique has met with enormous success in recent years through books, films, television series, and newspaper articles that for decades continue to fascinate the public by presenting a detective with almost magical skills that thanks to the CP manages to capture the infamous serial killer on duty, guilty of heinous crimes. However, this way of conveying used by the media has proven detrimental to the practice itself, as it contributes in conveying the false conception that we are dealing with an infallible practice with a solid scientific basis. The reality is that criminal profiling, as previously defined, is a supportive practice, therefore it needs to be combined with traditional investigative techniques when dealing with particularly difficult cases but, even when it's used, the success rate is still considerably low. This erroneous view of CP can also be considered at the basis of another substantial problem such as the lack of a solid scientific basis; from this point of view, therefore, the criticisms made by scholars and the

numerous attempts to formulate profiling methodologies are indispensable, as they stimulate a constant search for new methodologies and new fields of application for this practice. Clear examples of this ongoing research are the profiling methods that followed the FBI's one which aims to radically reform this practice through the contribution of scientific theories from different fields of study (see geographical profiling and investigative psychology), in ways that would have been unthinkable when profiling was first theorized. It is, therefore, to be hoped a quantitative and qualitative increase in the studies carried out on criminal profiling, in order to make it an increasingly powerful tool in the hands of law enforcement and to bring an ever-growing number of criminals to justice.

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