

Offender Profiling and Investigative Psychology

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Abstract

The origins of 'Offender Profiling' in the advice given by police medical advisors and other experts to criminal investigations are briefly outlined. The spread of such advice to police enquiries across the United States in the early 1970s, culminating in its uptake by Special Agents of the FBI in the mid-1970s and the widespread promotion of their services through the fictional writings of Thomas Harris and others is noted.

The development beyond the early application to serial killer investigations, and the focus on psychopathological explanations, to cover the full gamut of crime from, for instance, arson and burglary to terrorism, is briefly reviewed. The consideration of the social psychological processes inherent in criminality as well as the characteristics of individual offenders also broadens out the concerns of the field. The linking of crimes to a common offender as well as predicting their future actions further widens the range of issues to be dealt with.

The many psychological and practical questions raised by these 'profiling' activities are summarised. These include questions of inference and prediction, about criminals and their crimes, both about their characteristics and about the spatial patterns of their activities. Related topics concerning the sources of information for both investigators and research are also summarised. These cover the full range from interviewing witnesses to the management of informants. The complexity of information management and inference derivation points to the need to understand investigative decision-making and how it can be supported.

These other issues, beyond those inherent in 'profiling', such as data integrity and investigative decision support, taken with the central 'profiling' questions leads to the identification of a new domain of applied psychology, 'Investigative Psychology'. It is argued that the core topic of this domain, as in any emerging science, is how to appropriately describe and classify the central matters under consideration, i.e. criminals and their activities. The difficulties in setting up reliable, robust and valid classification schemes are discussed and approaches to overcoming these difficulties considered. It is emphasised that although many researchers have found Multi-Dimensional Scaling procedures to be productive they are only one of many fruitful sets of approaches that are possible.

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The increasing variety of areas, for which Investigative Psychology is relevant, from tax evasion to peace keeping, and from evidence in court to organisational threat management, is briefly reviewed. In conclusion it is noted that Investigative Psychology can be considered as a general approach to problem solving relevant far beyond criminal investigations. This new Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling therefore has rich and wide-ranging potential. Copyright © 2004 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

THE ORIGINS OF OFFENDER PROFILING

In November 1888 Dr Thomas Bond, a doctor who advised the police, offered the following opinion about the man who had violently attacked and killed at least five women in the Whitechapel area of London, for whom the police were searching—and who has still not been identified—who became known as Jack the Ripper:

The murderer must have been a man of physical strength and great coolness and daring. There is no evidence he had an accomplice. He must in my opinion be a man subject to periodic attacks of homicidal and erotic mania. The character of the mutilations indicate that the man may be in a condition sexually, that may be called Satyriasis. It is of course possible that the Homicidal impulse may have developed from a revengeful or brooding condition of mind, or that religious mania may have been the original disease but I do not think either hypothesis is likely. The murderer in external appearance is quite likely to be a quiet inoffensive looking man probably middle-aged and neatly and respectably dressed. I think he might be in the habit of wearing a cloak or overcoat or he could hardly have escaped notice in the streets if the blood on his hands or clothes were visible.

Assuming the murderer be such a person as I have just described, he would be solitary and eccentric in his habits, also he is likely to be a man without regular occupation, but with some small income or pension. He is possibly living among respectable persons who have some knowledge of his character and habits and who may have grounds for suspicion that he is not quite right in his mind at times. Such persons would probably be unwilling to communicate suspicions to the police for fear of trouble or notoriety, whereas if there were prospect of reward it might overcome their scruples.

(Cited in Rumbelow, 1987 pp. 140–141)

This is probably the first recorded ‘offender profile’, an account of the features of an offender that are derived from the nature of his crimes. Yet although it was penned over a century ago it still recognisably contains all the constituents of a ‘profile’ that might be produced today. Indeed with the exception of the diagnostic categories, such as Satyriasis and erotic mania, which today may be absorbed within a diagnosis of some form of ‘personality disorder’ (cf. for example Blackburn, 1993), the description provided by Dr Bond is remarkably similar to that which may be found in many profiles of sexual murderers over the last few years (e.g. Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988).

Blau (1994) proposes that there are even examples of profiling in the criminal anthropology literature a century before Dr Bond, making clear that attempting to form some idea of the characteristics of an unknown offender by drawing upon psychological conceptualisations is probably as old as formal detection procedures. Blau (1994) also points out the impetus given to the possibility of an ‘expert’, external to the police, being of some

assistance to an investigation, by Conan Doyle's fictional detective. He mentions that some of the features to be found in modern profiles were first noted by Sherlock Holmes, such as 'the criminal returns to the scene of the crime'. Certainly by the early 1970s the provision of psychological advice about offenders to investigators was not uncommon in both the US (Reiser, 1982) and the UK (Canter, 1994).

Promoting profiling as a special art

This practice, though, only became widely known when the Special Agents at the FBI Academy in Quantico started publishing reports of the procedures they were using (e.g. Ressler *et al.*, 1988). They emphasised an objective approach based on experience of criminal investigations. As Hazelwood, Ressler, Depue, and Douglas (1987) put it very clearly the view of these FBI agents was that:

Successful profilers are experienced in criminal investigations and research and possess common sense, intuition, and the ability to isolate their feelings about the crime, the criminal, and the victim. They have the ability to evaluate analytically the behavior exhibited in a crime and to think very much like the criminal responsible. (Hazelwood *et al.*, 1987, p. 148)

This quote makes clear that Hazelwood and his colleagues did not see a strong research basis to their activities. They saw the skills as residing in the ' profiler' rather being the product of systematic social science. It is not surprising therefore that many researchers found deficiencies in the accounts that these FBI agents produced of their work. For example, Coleman and Norris (2000), Alison and Canter (1999) and Muller (2000) all draw attention to the misrepresentation of established psychological theory within the ideas of these FBI agents, the weaknesses of their methodologies and the lack of any convincing empirical evidence for their claims. However, the uptake of the idea of profiling by brilliant crime fiction writers, most notably Thomas Harris in his 1988 book *The Silence of the Lambs*, with the subsequent blockbuster movies changed the common meanings of 'profile'.

The 1999 Collins Concise Dictionary gives two meanings for a 'profile' as either a 'short biographical sketch' or 'a graph, table, etc. representing the extent to which a person, field or object exhibits various tested characteristics.' However, Thomas Harris promulgated the much more exotic idea that Blau (1994, attributing to Reiser, 1982) describes as:

. . . an arcane art in which psychodiagnostic assessment and psychobiography are combined with case evidence and probabilities from similar cases to draw a picture of a likely offender . . . (p. 261).

Far from this being an objective biographical sketch or even the extent to which the offender exhibits various tested characteristics Blau makes clear that, when he was writing in the early 1990s:

contrary to hopes and expectations for a scientifically derived investigative tool, psychological profiling is merely an inferential process analogous to a psychological evaluation done with an ordinary client. (p. 261)

The development of the range of 'profiling activities'

Many researchers writing about 'offender profiling' follow the claim put forward by the initial FBI agents that this type of advice is only relevant to offences with overt sexual

activity, or reflecting the offender's severe emotional disturbance (Teten, 1989), typically this is taken to mean sexual homicide and serial rape. As is clear from Reiser's definition above this also led to the assumption that profiles would inevitably draw upon approaches typical of the clinical psychology consulting room and psychiatric diagnostic categories.

However, although profiles are still offered for cases of serial homicide and rape there has been a rapid broadening of the types of crime for which psychological commentary is deemed as applicable, as varied as arson (Canter & Fritzon, 1998) and terrorism (Fritzon, Canter, & Wilton, 2000) or burglary (Bennell & Canter, 2002). This in turn has helped to loosen the grip of mental health professionals on the frameworks in use and has also encouraged a development of considerations beyond the individual criminal to the offenders' social networks and related social psychological processes (Canter & Alison, 1999).

THE IMPLICIT PSYCHOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

In the decade since Blau was writing it has become clear that developing a scientifically derived investigative tool may be more difficult than the early writings by FBI Special Agents had implied (Mokros & Alison, 2002). But, nonetheless, their promotion of the potential links between the actions associated with a crime and the characteristics of the person who committed that offence have drawn an increasing number of serious scientists to elaborate the central psychological questions that are implicit within the concept of 'profiling' and associated activities.

Saliency

Canter and Youngs (2003) have discussed these central psychological questions in some detail. They draw attention to the need to establish the salient features of the crimes being examined. So many different aspects of a crime can be considered when attempting to formulate views about that crime, that there is the challenge, before any scientific arguments can be developed, of determining which of those features are the behaviourally important ones. Important in the sense of carrying information on which reliable empirical findings can be built.

Consistency

One aspect of these salient features that also needs to be determined as part of scientific development is that they are consistent enough from one context, or crime, to another to form the basis for considering those crimes and comparing them with other offences. This issue of consistency turns out to be a complex one. Part of this complexity comes from weaknesses in the sources of data. As Canter and Alison (2003) have discussed there is an emerging range of methodologies that focus on working with the sort of data that is available from police sources.

A more conceptual challenge to determining consistency, as in all human activity, is that some variation and change is a natural aspect of human processes. There therefore will be criminals who are consistently variable or whose behavioural trajectories demonstrate some form of career development, as well as those whose criminal behaviour will remain relatively stable over time. These questions are very similar indeed to those discussed in the more general personality literature about what is constant about people and what variable, as Youngs (2004) explores. Research around all these possibilities of consistency is therefore central to any development of a scientific basis for offender profiling.

Differentiation

Although an offender's consistency is one of the starting points for empirically based models of investigative inference, in order to use these models operationally it is also necessary to have some indication of how offenders can be distinguished from each other. In part this reflects a debate within criminology about whether offenders are typically specialist or versatile in their patterns of offending (e.g. Britt, 1994). Research suggests that offenders may share many aspects of their criminal styles with most other criminals but there will be other aspects that are more characteristic of them. It is these more rare, discriminating features that may provide a productive basis for distinguishing between offences and offenders (Canter & Youngs, 2003).

Linking serial offences

The question of what is characteristic of an offender is one aspect of the operational problem of linking crimes to a common offender in circumstances where there is no forensic evidence, such as blood, fibres or fingerprints to link the cases. To date there has been remarkably little research on linking crimes, even though the personality literature has recently started to give serious consideration to the conditions under which a person may be expected to act similarly (Shoda *et al.*, 1994). The challenge to police investigations can be seen as the opposite of the personality question. Psychologists usually have a person and want to know what will be consistent about that person from one situation to another. Police investigators have a variety of situations and criminal events, and need to know what consistencies can be drawn out of those events to point to a common offender.

This question has been couched in police parlance as identifying the *modus operandi* (*m.o.*) of the offender. A quarter of a century ago Green *et al.* (1976) did demonstrate that the *m.o.* could be given a precise definition and behavioural science statistics could be applied to help identify distinguishing offence patterns. This has recently been followed up by Bennell and Canter (2002) who have shown the power of spatial information in helping to link burglaries.

Approaches to inference

If consistency and differentiation can be established, the central research questions of operational significance, at the heart of profiling can be tackled. Canter (1995) summarises these questions as the $A \rightarrow C$ equations, where **A** are all those actions that occur in and are related to a crime. In other words, are known to the police before there is any recognised culprit. The **C** refers to the characteristics of the offender. The things the police want to know about him (or her) that will lead to identification and conviction. The scientific modelling that would allow inferences to be made about the characteristics from the actions is indicated by the \rightarrow symbol. This simple symbol enshrines a complex and challenging set of issues.

Canter and Youngs (2003) advance five possible processes that may be drawn upon to develop these inferences: a) Personality theory; b) Psychodynamic theory; c) the career route perspective from criminological theory; d) social processes; and e) Interpersonal Narrative theory. The personality framework is usually assumed to be at the heart of the psychological profiling process (e.g. Douglas, Ressler, Burgess, & Hartman, 1986; Holmes & Holmes, 1998; McCann, 1992; Rossmo, 2000), with the explicit focus of 'offender pro-

filing' being the derivation of the likely personality of the offender from information about the crime (e.g. Homant & Kennedy, 1998; Knight, Warren, Reboussin & Soley, 1998). This assumes that different styles of offending have different personality correlates. However, as Alison *et al.* (2003) make clear there are many reasons for assuming, and growing evidence to demonstrate, that conventional measures of personality traits do not correlate readily with patterns of criminal behaviour. This sceptical view is modified to some extent by Youngs (2004). She does show that, if the appropriate indexes of interpersonal style and appropriately sensitive forms of statistical analysis are used, there may be relationships between psychological characteristics and styles of offending. Clearly this is an area where lively debate is developing.

The other approaches to inference have been less fully explored as overt ways of developing profiles, although psychodynamic interpretations are implicit in the use by Hazelwood *et al.* (1987) of such models as Groth's (1979) in which rape is seen as a displacement of anger and a need for power rather than an uncontrollable desire for sexual gratification. Different styles of rape are therefore interpreted as indicators of different offender characteristics. These models differ from other personality models in their perspective that crime compensates for, or is a displacement of, the psychological dynamics of the offender. In contrast, personality theory assumes that criminal actions are consistent with the characteristics of the offender, reflecting their personality directly. One especially interesting example of this being Lobato's (2000) demonstration that there is a tendency for extraverted criminals to use larger and more powerful weapons than those who are introverted.

Other approaches to inference are less based on assumptions about the enduring characteristics of the offender, his/her 'personality', and more on their interpersonal and social context. In terms of 'criminal career' this is the idea that because criminals develop and learn as they commit more and more crimes their most recent crimes may tell us more about the crimes they have committed in the past than about their enduring characteristics. There are difficulties in making use of this inference process because many criminals start their careers committing similar types of crime. The use of 'career' models therefore requires a stand to be taken on whether criminals are versatile or specialist. As Youngs (2004) shows there is a sense in which they are both, requiring complex models to be constructed if we are to make valid inferences from their current crimes about previous crimes. Indeed Youngs (2004) argues that the characteristic styles offenders have for dealing with each other, their interpersonal strategies, taken into account with where they are within their personal careers, may be the most productive basis for inferring offender characteristics from offence details.

The need to take on board consistencies in offenders' characteristics as well as the developments and changes of their lives has been articulated in personal narrative models (cf. Canter, 1994). This approach also gives more emphasis to the sense the offender makes of his/her life and their agency in acting out their life story as they see it unfolding. This perspective has had particular power in assisting the identification of themes within criminal activities, most clearly shown in the study of arson (Canter & Fritzon, 1998).

The environmental psychology of crime

One of the key inferential processes that has opened up a considerable area of research, and been found to be very helpful to police investigations, has been the analysis of crime locations in order to determine the possible residential location of the offender (Canter & Larkin,

1993; Canter & Gregory, 1994). These ideas were first explored as part of an active police investigation by Kind (1987), although quite independently Brantingham and Brantingham (1981) had earlier speculated on the geographical distributions of criminals and their crimes in ways that were later used by Rossmo (2000) as the basis for processes very similar to those that had been earlier applied by Kind (1987) and by Canter, Coffey, Huntley & Missen (2000). The fact that so many people had independently discovered the power of geographical analysis of crime is a good indication of its potential and a demonstration of its vibrancy as a research area, as recent publications have shown (cf. Canter, 2003).

Investigative decision support

The use of geographical analysis provided one of the first examples of research based decision support systems developed specifically to assist police investigations. Attempts are in progress to build on these and broaden their base as Merry (2000) has shown. These developments do point to the need for a further understanding of police decision-making processes so that the support systems can be effectively integrated into police practice.

There has been very little study of police decision making, in part because of its sensitive nature and because of its complexity, homicide investigations being the main form to be examined. Keppel and Weiss (1993) have shown that simple factors have a big impact on how readily a crime can be solved. Innes (2002) has also recently shown that there can be important differences between homicide investigation strategies depending on the circumstances of the case, especially how readily a culprit can be identified. In his recent work Canter (2003) has argued that these strategic issues need to be understood in terms of the accounts that investigators themselves give of offences, their detection narratives. He indicates that decision support systems will only be effective if they map onto the narrative form that any particular investigator is following. For instance if the investigator thinks s/he is, in effect, 'following a scent' then a decision support system based on a strategy more akin to 'panning for gold' will not be seen to be of any value.

THE EMERGENCE OF INVESTIGATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The broadening and deepening of the contributions that psychology can make to police investigations, beyond serial killers and personality profiles, to include the effective utilisation of police information, through interviews and from police records, as well the study of police investigations and decision support systems has led to the identification of a previously unnamed domain of applied psychology. Canter (1994) called this *Investigative Psychology*. He pointed out that the field is rich in challenging questions for psychology, making it more than the mere application of established principles to the work of detectives. It is rapidly evolving as a fertile area of study in its own right.

The central questions of this field are therefore about the salient aspects of criminal activities, the basis for linking a series of crimes to a common offender, and procedures for guiding the prioritisation of suspects (Canter & Alison, 1999).

Although the research questions central to Investigative Psychology share concepts and methodologies with other areas of psychology, most notably the study of individual differences (Canter, 2000), they form a distinct subset of issues that differ from those focal to the more general area of Forensic Psychology (cf. Wrightsman, 2001). Forensic Psychology tends to focus on the treatment and management of offenders once they are

caught. Investigative Psychology focuses on how behavioural science can help in the detection of offenders or the investigative issues that could aid the defence or prosecution of suspects.

THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF CLASSIFICATION

The questions of how to link crimes to a common offender in the absence of forensic evidence, or what inferences can be drawn about an offender from how the crime is committed, or even what approach to interviewing may be most appropriate for a given criminal, as well as other questions about offender's actions and how they can be explored, all require both the researcher and the detective to recognise the distinguishing characteristics of the criminal under attention. In some situations there will be distinct, unique features of the offender that can be the basis for answering the questions. An example might be a rare understanding of a particular form of security system, or access to a very unusual weapon. But, usually, the features available and the inferences that can be drawn from them relate to classes of action and sub-sets of criminals. In other words the crimes and criminals are assigned to one of a limited number of types and inferences are drawn from this.

This assignment of events or individuals to a distinct class is a fundamental stage in the development of any scientific discipline. Until entities can be reliably classified it is not possible to build theories or models that elucidate their interrelationships. A recurring consideration in the emerging investigative psychology literature is therefore the development of classification schemes, often in the form of typologies, into which offences and offenders can be assigned.

The most widely cited typology, illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of such an approach is the dichotomy of 'organised' and 'disorganised' serial killers (Ressler, Burgess, & Douglas, 1988). In essence the argument is that if a crime scene can be assigned to the 'organised' type then the offender will have the characteristics of the 'organised' type of person. Many other attempts to develop models on which profiling can be based use similar strategies, for example Holmes and Holmes (1998). This is an interesting approach to developing a theory from which profiles can be developed, but unfortunately empirical tests of the basic assignment of cases to categories does not support their existence in any clear way. Canter, Alison, Alison & Wentink (2004) reveal the weaknesses the organised/disorganised dichotomy and Canter & Wentink (2004) show that Holmes and Holmes' five-fold classification scheme is only marginally more successful.

Inherent assumptions of a typology

The central hypothesis of any typology is that each type can be defined by the occurrence of characteristics that are typical of it. This hypothesis makes two crucial assumptions. Firstly it is assumed that within each type the characteristics that define that specific type are likely to co-occur with one another with regularity. Secondly, specific characteristics of one type are assumed not to co-occur with any frequency with the specified characteristics of another type. For such typologies to have any utility each type needs to have characteristics that are found to be distinct from those of other types. Or, if there is a mix of characteristics belonging to different types, a clear set of criteria would need to be in place to determine how an individual is to be categorized.

In essence, then, the empirical test of this typology is that: a) the characteristics *within* each type consistently co-occur with one another; and b) that these characteristics do not co-occur with characteristics of other types. If the patterns of co-occurrences and lack of co-occurrences do not reflect the proposed characteristics of each type then there is no empirical support for the typology.

One way to test the classification assumptions in any model is to examine directly the co-occurrence of characteristics across a large number of cases. A thorough test requires that the frequency of co-occurrence between every pair of characteristics needs to be examined. This is a daunting task if handled in a purely numerical way. But a visual representation of these patterns of co-occurrence can be used to test the primary assumptions directly. Multi-Dimensional Scaling (MDS) procedures are one way of doing this because they represent the co-occurrence of variables (e.g. offense characteristics) as distances in a geometrical space as illustrated for example in Youngs (2004) or Canter & Fritzon (1998).

Each characteristic is a point in the space and the further apart any two points the less frequently do they co-occur. The hypotheses underlying any classification scheme are tested as 'regional hypotheses' (Borg & Shye, 1995). The characteristics defining each type are hypothesized to form a distinct region of the MDS space.

A number of studies of criminal actions in relation to different crimes have found such MDS models to be productive (e.g. Canter & Heritage, 1990 for rape; Canter & Fritzon 1998 for arson; Salfati, 2000, for homicide). They have made particular use of the non-metric MDS procedure known as Smallest Space Analysis (SSA-I, Lingoes, 1973). The particular power of SSA-I comes from its representation of the rank order of the co-occurrence as rank orders of the distances in the geometric space (hence it being called 'non-metric' MDS). This emphasis on the relative locations of the points rather than their absolute values makes regional structures easier to determine and makes the analysis less sensitive to biases in any particular sample that might have generated particularly high or low absolute frequencies.

However, it is important to emphasise that although the power of SSA has been revealed in a number of publications, it is only one of a family of procedures that can be appropriately used. Indeed, it is often thought that other procedures, such as factor analysis, principal component analysis, cluster analysis, discriminant function analysis and all those related procedures known collectively as multi-variate statistics, with acronyms such as ALSCAL, LISREL, POLYCON, etc. are radically different from SSA and from each other. However, the difference is not in the mathematics. Most of these procedures start with an approximate solution that derives from finding the latent roots (eigenvalues) of the matrix of associations between all the variables. This principal component analysis is then modified by one of a number of algorithms. The consequence of this is that all these procedures have similar starting points and the differences in the results they produce are somewhat superficial developments of the starting point.

The underlying similarity in the mathematics means that the end results of the different procedures will have a lot in common with each other. The differences between them are therefore in the way these results are represented, for example as vectors, path diagrams, dimensions, clusters or regional structures. These different forms of representation carry different assumptions about what is the appropriate way to model people and their activities. The debate about how best to characterize the important differences between criminals and their crimes is therefore not so much about the appropriate statistics but about the appropriateness of the different psychological models that the methodologies assume.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In order to develop their research methods Investigative Psychologists have found it fruitful to draw on a wide variety of sources of information. This is most often the information available to law enforcement agencies collected for the purpose of police investigations. To make effective use of the information it has to be *captured*, *found*, or *retrieved* in ways that are directly analogous to the broader development of 'unobtrusive' and 'non-reactive' measures that Lee (2000) describes, as discussed at length by Canter and Alison (2003). This material is typically 'unobtrusive' in the sense proposed by Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) to refer to 'data gathered by means that do not involve direct elicitation of information from research subjects' Lee (2000, p. 1). They are also in many cases non-reactive because the absence of the person carrying out the study at the time the information is generated removes the possibility of any direct influence from that researcher. The consideration of the measures utilised by Investigative Psychologists therefore offers an interesting set of exemplars of unusual research instruments that respond to Webb *et al.*'s (1966) call for more innovation in the social science and Lee's more recent (2000) advocacy of that approach. They may therefore be of value in indicating the possibilities for similar studies in many other areas of social and behavioural science.

The potential wealth of police material

Across police investigations a great deal of information from a wide range of sources is collected. This data acquisition reflects all three modes reviewed by Lee (2000). This includes the *retrieval* of victim, suspect and witness statements and criminal histories of offenders and a variety of other clandestine and official records. Information is *captured* from crime scenes through photographic and other records, including pathologists reports and how the scene was disturbed by the offender and what was taken from there. Details of offenders' patterns of association with others are also *captured* from surveillance and covert telephone auditing. A considerable amount of material is also *found* by police officers and others involved in investigations, such as offensive and other relevant letters, for example suicide notes, files from suspects' computers, information on victims, their life styles and patterns of activity.

This use of information by investigative psychologists is distinct from the official statistics on crime and criminals that has been the mainstay of criminology from its earliest days. Such criminological studies have tended to be at the aggregate level, facilitating the understanding of the societal processes that underlie criminality, the impact of different government policies on the management of crime or the significance of judicial decisions for patterns of offending. By contrast forensic psychology and psychiatry has tended to focus on offenders once they have been through the judicial process and find themselves as 'patients' or 'clients'. They are concerned with psychological explanations of criminality, often seeking to relate these to abnormal mental processes. The practical tasks these forensic practitioners face are often concerned with decisions about individual 'patients', such as their fitness to plead in court, or their ability to control their actions during the crime. The data for such research therefore relies heavily on interviews with offenders and their assessment using psychometric procedures (cf. Blackburn, 1993; Wrightman, 2001). This of course complements the official statistics, not least because there will be crimes that are revealed in the consulting room that never appear in official crime reports. Yet the

clinical data tends to be collected to understand the cognitive and affective aspects of the lives of people dealt with as clients or patients, not as a way of obtaining details of the actions that actually occurred in a crime.

From their different perspectives, the aggregate data drawn from official statistics and the cognitive and emotional details of individual offenders, are somewhat removed from the actions that occur in crimes and the experiences of the offenders and their victims. Yet agents of law enforcement often record these aspects of crime most immediately. Furthermore, both the official statistics and the presence of a person within a clinical or penal setting are a product of the material collected during criminal investigations. Therefore studies that draw directly on the material available to law enforcement agencies have the potential for contributing an important and distinct perspective that complements those of other areas.

By providing a different perspective on crime and criminals, the use of police material also has the potential of increasing the practical applicability of any results that emerge. As Canter (2000) has argued, findings that are derived directly from the sort of information with which a practitioner has daily commerce are far more likely to make sense to that practitioner and are far more likely to be relevant to her/his concerns than are findings based upon some special, arcane form of data collection. For instance, police officers are more likely to take note of psychological studies of what goes on in police interviews than results derived from trained observers' assessments of micro-movements revealed on video recordings of student subjects.

However, the utilisation of the material drawn from police investigations is not without many difficulties. The challenge, then, is to work with police data and establish a framework that will aid the development of robust scientific measures derived from these data.

THE BROADENING HORIZONS

Investigative Psychologists are now exploring crimes far beyond serial killing, including such day to day, non-sexual crimes as burglary (e.g. Bennell & Canter, 2002) and arson (Canter & Fritzon, 1998). They are also broadening the aspects of criminality they deal with to include such matters as questioned documents (Aked, Canter, Sanford, & Smith, 1999) and psychological aspects of the use of weapons (Lobato, 2000).

All aspects of the investigative process are being considered from confessions (Gudjonsson & MacKeith, 1988) to how police systems can be effectively set up (Merry, 2000). Matters such as hostage negotiation have also become part of the domain (Yokota *et al.*, 2003).

These explorations are drawing in findings from cognitive and social psychology, especially in the area of interviewing, that has a history much older than offender profiling (cf. Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). They raise many questions about what is actually going on in an interview. As Davis, McMahon and Greenwood (2004) have recently argued there are many questions emerging about what interview approaches are best for which interviewees, whether they be suspects, witnesses or victims. These questions map out a major area of Investigative Psychology.

In addition a widening range of law enforcement professionals beyond police officers are finding value in Investigative Psychology studies. To date few of these non-police considerations have seen the light of publication, but organisations as varied as insurance companies and government departments trying to reduce fraud, the Inland Revenue and

Customs and Excise are interested in reducing crimes in their jurisdictions. Even the armed forces who have to deal with quasi-criminal groups acting as terrorists, are all looking to Investigative Psychology for assistance.

INVESTIGATIVE PSYCHOLOGY AS AN APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The tasks that Investigative Psychologists face are not uniquely tied into crime and police investigations. Many of the theories and methodologies, as has been noted, inevitably relate to those evolving in other areas of psychology and related social sciences. The most obvious example is the study of criminals' geography. The models in use here can trace their descent to the emergence of epidemiology in the 1850s (cf. Canter, 2003). The classification of offenders and their offences draw on methodologies developed in social psychology and connect with debates in personality theory on personal consistency (e.g. Shoda *et al.*, 1994). The work on interviewing draws directly on theories of memory and clinical psychology discussions of cognitive vulnerabilities (cf. Gudjonsson & MacKeith, 1988). It is therefore inevitable that the study of these issues in the context of investigations will feed back into the areas they connect with. The traffic of theories, methodologies and applications will certainly not be one way.

What distinguishes Investigative Psychology is its focus on problem solving. This makes the approach that is emerging in relation to criminal detection relevant to many other areas of psychology. Canter (2000) has elaborated a number of practices that underlie Investigative Psychology; how research problems are defined, consideration of the implications for application of the methodologies chosen, and the use of actual case material to elaborate on quantitative findings. He shows that these map out a way of doing psychology that can be extended with value far beyond the criminal domain.

CONCLUSIONS

In writing this first editorial for this new *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, which I like to abbreviate as JIP-OP because of its lively verbal association with Hip-Hop, I have kept to the distant, third person form that is the convention for Journal articles. At times this does feel a little disingenuous, especially as the number of my own publications piles up in the citations. I therefore feel it essential to make clear that JIP-OP is dedicated to the broadest possible range of contributions from as wide a variety of contributors as possible. No methodology or theoretical stance or area of application will be dismissed without careful consideration. Quite the opposite, every submission no matter whom it is from, or how it deals with its subject, will be read with great interest and objective evaluation. All that is required is that its relevance to Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling is clear and that it makes its case reasonably within the wide framework of empirical science.

I have been very fortunate to oversee the emergence of a new area of psychology, whose significance and identity have been so readily recognised around the world. It would be the death knell for such an offspring to limit itself to one area of activity, or one set of questions, or one approach to providing answers. The excitement of this emerging field is that its horizons are expanding as we watch. This first issue of the journal has papers

from all over the world. Contributions from other countries beyond those represented in the first issue are already going through the review process. Each new paper submitted seems to touch on yet another area that had not been covered by earlier submissions. What first caught public attention in a typology of serial killers has moved rapidly beyond that exotic and limited domain to forge a new realm that clearly has rich and wide-ranging potential.

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