New Concepts in Modern Policing – Criminal Personality Profiling

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Abstract. The importance of criminal profiling is widely accepted. As an investigative tool, this method of crime scene approach may provide useful information in serious crimes management, including homicide, rape, arson or burglary. Based on crime scene data and personality theories, profiling may be seen as a deductive inferring process which can help police officers to apprehend a serial offender. Although in most modern police agencies the use of criminal profiling is mandatory, Romanian police has his first step in it. This article will provide the general principles of the method.

Keywords: offender profiling; behavioural profiling; crime scene characteristics

1 General Considerations

There have been a lot of serious advances in recent years in the area of criminal investigation and its related fields. New tactics, tools and forensic techniques have allowed investigators to rethink the method of approach the crimes that previously experienced significant dormancy, or in the worst case, have gone unsolved. Many of these new tools at the crime investigator's disposal have come out as a result of new advances in forensic science and medicine, though earlier attempts focused more on the criminals themselves. As a part of these new methods of investigation, criminal profiling has been developed through serious and systematically research.

Criminal profiling involves any attempt to infer the personality or behavioural characteristics of an offender through an interpretation of the evidence they leave behind at a crime scene, the offender's own behaviour, and their interaction with the victim. Only one of the main types of criminal profiling will be defined, outlined and explained in this article – the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Criminal Investigative Analysis – perhaps the first of the modern profiling approaches.

2   What is Criminal Profiling?

The term offender profiling was first regularly used by members of FBI to describe the process of making inferences about an offender's characteristics from their actions at a crime scene (Canter, 1995). In its most basic form, criminal profiling is an investigative tool that discerns offender characteristics from the crime scene and the behaviour of the offender. It is an inferential process that involves the analysis of offender behaviour, their interactions with the crime scene, the offender and their choice of weapon among other things (Petherick, 2003). Geberth (1996) suggests that criminal profiling is an educated attempt to give investigative agencies specific information about the type of person who committed a certain crime. Holmes&Holmes (2002) simply cite Geberth (1996) in their definition. According to Hazelwood profiling is aimed at „providing the client agency with the characteristics and traits of an unidentified offender that differentiate him from the general population. These characteristics are set forth in such a manner as to allow those who know and/or associate with the offender to readily recognise him". (Hazelwood et al., 1995, p. 116)

In their work on criminal investigation, Bennett & Hess (2001) do not offer a specific definition, but instead he classifies profiling according to its goal, which is to identify an individual's mental, emotional and psychological characteristics (Petherick, 2006).

Despite appearing in some of the early works on profiling, the FBI no longer uses the term criminal profiling. This term and others like it, such as *criminal personality profiling* and *psychological profiling*, have been replaced by the general term *criminal investigative analysis* (CIA), which covers profiling and a number of other services. These include indirect personality assessments, equivocal death analysis (otherwise known as psychological autopsy and trial strategy.

3. Goals of criminal profiling

Profiling was originally designed to help law enforcement discover a viable suspect pool, either by narrowing an extensive list of suspects to a small and more manageable group, or by providing new areas of inquiry (Homant & Kennedy, 1998). As noted by Napier in their chapter on the FBI's method, „the purpose of offender profiling is to supply offender characteristics to help investigators narrow the field of suspects based on the characteristics of the crime scene and initial

investigative information". It is not the goal of profiling to identify a particular person or to give their identity (Douglas et al., 1986) (Napier & Baker, 2005, p. 615). Muller (2000) notes that the profile would rarely be so accurate that it could suggest a certain individual as being responsible, this type of assumption would be completely inappropriate. Holmes argues that [psychological] profiling has four main goals. (Holmes & Holmes, 2002, p. 7 – 9) These are:

- To provide the criminal justice system with a social and psychological assessment of the offender. The purpose of this goal is very simple. It should contain basic and sound information concerning the social and psychological core variables of the offender's personality. This assessment should include race, age range, employment, religion, marital status, education, and so on;

- This psychological packet will focus the investigation. Instead of dealing with a wide range of possible perpetrators, the profile will reduce the scope of the investigation. This will have a direct affect on the number of days and weeks spent on the case by positioning the police toward a successful resolution. A profile contains information that alerts the law enforcement professional to the possible psychological traits present in a crime scene. It can predict future possible attacks as well as probable sites of attacks;

- To provide the criminal justice system with a psychological evaluation of belongings found in the possession of the offender: This particular goal is very important to investigators when they have a prime suspect. It may be that all of the physical evidence, witness reports, and all pertinent information point towards one suspect. The psychological profile may suggest items the offenders may have in their possession: souvenirs, photos, pornography and so on. These items will serve as a reminder of the violent episode. In the case of a serial paedophile, for instance, we are very familiar with paedophiles' child pornography collections. By analysing the collection, the profiler can offer the police interrogator a plan to interview the alleged offender about the choice of victim, seduction or capturing strategies, and other pertinent information gleaned from the collateral evidence found in the possession of the charged offender. This same statement can be said of other types of offenders undergoing interrogation, offenders such as arsonists, serial killers, rapists and so forth;

- To provide interviewing suggestions and strategies: Once a subject is apprehended, a profile packet should contain information regarding proper and effective methods of interviewing and interrogation. This can be crucial. The

profile packet should contain information regarding different personalities and effective strategies in soliciting information from a diverse group of offenders. Not all people react to questioning in the same fashion. For one type of offender, one strategy may be effective, but it is a mistake to assume all offenders will respond to the same interviewing strategy. For example, not all serial murderers kill for the same reason and not all respond to the same type of interviewing strategy. Violent personal offenders also vary with their motives as well as their responses to interrogation.

Turvey (1999; 2002) identifies two main phases of profiling, divided by their goals and priorities. The first is the investigative phase, which involves discerning features of the unknown offender for the known crime. It is this phase that will be most aligned to stereotypical notions of profiling. In the investigative phase there are five primary goals (Turvey, 2002, p. 46 – 47):

1. To reduce the viable suspect pool in a criminal investigation, and to help prioritise the investigation into those remaining suspects;

2. To assist in the linkage of potentially related crimes by identifying crime scene indicators and behaviour patterns (i.e., MO and signature);

3. To assist in assessing the potential for escalation of nuisance criminal behaviour to more serious or more violent crimes (i.e., harassment, stalking, voyeurism);

4. To provide investigators with investigative relevant leads and strategies;

5. To help keep the overall investigation on track and undistracted.

The second is the trial phase, which involves providing information about a crime or series of crimes for which there is a known offender. This can be useful at the closing stage of an investigation where interview strategies can be developed through to other uses in court as expert evidence (Turvey, 2002a, p. 47):

1. To assist in the process of evaluating the nature and value of forensic evidence in a particular case

2. To assist in the process of developing interview or interrogative strategy

3. To help develop insight into offender fantasy and motivations

4. To help develop insight into offender state of mind before, during, and after the commission of a crime (i.e. levels of planning, evidence of remorse, precautionary acts, etc.).

5. To help elucidate crime scene linkage issues by examining MO and signature behaviour.

The goals of profiling may also be dictated in part by the type of crime being profiled and by the needs of the investigating team who request help. Some types of crime may be relatively easy to profile next to others, and certain individual crimes might be easier to profile than other certain crimes, even of the same general type. It may be then, that case dynamics and evidence dictates its suitability rather than any match to generic templates or criteria for suitability (Geberth, 1996).

Therefore, it is also necessary to consider the types of crimes that profiling might assist in, and whether a case requires the use of what may be a very expensive tool. Generally, it is noted that profiling is most suited to crimes involving psychopathology or where there is some evidence of psychological dysfunction (Pinizzotto, 1984) (McCann, 1992), or in crimes of a sexual nature because these involve more interaction between the offender and the victim (Nowikowski, 1995). These crimes typically involve murder, rape, arson and bombing, but may also include anonymous letter writing (Davis, 1999; Homant, 1999; Strano, 2004) and crimes that are unusual, bizarre, violent, sexual or repetitive in nature (Geberth, 1981) (Cook & Hinman, 1999) (Palermo, 2002) (Strano, 2004) (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2005). It has also been used in hostage negotiations and threats (Douglas & Hazelwood, 1986) (Davis, 1999) and assessing suicidality (Homant & Kennedy, 1998) (Canter, 1999) (La Fon, 1999). Teten provides this poignant commentary, summing up the issue nicely (Teten, 1989, p. 366 – 367):

"Therefore, while it is theoretically possible to prepare an accurate profile of the perpetrator in any type of crime, it is not feasible. Psychological profiling should be utilised only in those types of crimes where the crime-scene investigation is as complete and thorough as possible. As a practical matter, this procedure can be expected to provide usable data in only a few highly specific types of crimes. Even then, it is totally dependent upon the psychological value of the evidence collected. Most of the offences, to be appropriate for profiling, must feature some form of overt sexual activity or a loss of contact with reality. Generally speaking, the types of crimes in which profiling has been most successful include: homicides that involve sexual activity, or appear to be sex related, forcible rapes, sexual molestations, indecent exposures, some forms of arson, homicides involving the parents, children or a majority of the members of a family, deaths by hanging".

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These are not the limits of the application of profiling however, and it has also been applied to more esoteric areas, such as intrusion management in computer security (Schlarman, 1999), threat management in stalking (Petherick, 2002) and premises liability (Kennedy & Homant, 1997), which is a tort claim made against an owner or person in charge of a property for loss or damage suffered by a person on that property. Here, a profiler may examine factors surrounding the commission of the offence to assess deterability and motive, among several other features of the criminal event. Those crimes of greatest suitability for profiling typically involve murder, rape, arson and bombing, but may also include anonymous letter writing (Davis, 1999) (Homant, 1999) (Strano, 2004) with crimes involving unusual, bizarre, violent, sexual or repetitive behaviour also being grist for profiling support (Geberth, 1981) (Cook & Hinman, 1999) (Palermo, 2002) (Strano, 2004) (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2005).

In discussing profiling methods, Wilson, Lincoln & Kocsis (1997) identify three types of profiling, including Diagnostic Evaluations, Criminal Investigative Analysis and Investigative Psychology. More recent additions to the literature include Behavioural Evidence Analysis and Geographic Profiling. While there are other methods used that fall under the broad banner of profiling, such as racial profiling and jury profiling, these fall outside of the scope of this research and so will not be covered. Therefore, only the methods of Criminal Investigative Analysis (CIA) will be examined.

4   Criminal Investigative Analysis

Without doubt, the best known method would be that of the FBI, known variously as Criminal Investigative Analysis and Crime Scene Analysis. This approach arose primarily from a study conducted between 1979 and 1983, with the research focus on the development of taxonomies from an examination of various features of the crimes (Burgess & Ressler, 1985). The goal was to determine whether there are any consistent features across offences that may be useful in classifying future offenders (Petherick, 2005). A number of publications have arisen from this original research, including: Ressler & Burgess (1985); Burgess, Hartman, Ressler, Douglas & McCormack (1986); Ressler, Burgess, Douglas, Hartman & D'Agostino (1986); Ressler, Burgess, Hartman, Douglas & McCormack (1986); Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1988).

The FBI method revolves around the organised/disorganised dichotomy, which classifies offenders by virtue of the level of sophistication, planning and competence evident in the crime scene. An organised crime scene is one with evidence of planning, where the victim is a targeted stranger, the crime scene reflects overall control, there are restraints used and aggressive acts occur prior to death. This suggests that the offender is organised with the crime scene being a reflection of the personality of an offender, meaning they will be average to above average in intelligence, socially competent, prefer skilled work, have a high birth order, a controlled mood during the crime, and they may also use alcohol with the crime. A disorganised crime scene shows spontaneity, where the victim or location is known, the crime scene is random and sloppy, there is sudden violence, minimal restraints are used and there are sexual acts after death. This is again suggestive of the personality of the offender, with a disorganised offender being below average intelligence, socially inadequate, having a low birth order, anxious mood during the crime and the minimal use of alcohol. Despite having these discrete classifications, it is generally held that no offender will fit neatly into either category, with most offenders being somewhere between the two: these offenders are called "mixed".

The application of this method is relatively simple at its core, and an assessment is first made of the level of organisation/disorganisation of the crime scene itself with these characteristics shown below:

Psychopathic (Organised) Crime Scene Characteristics	Psychotic (Disorganised) Crime Scene Characteristics
Offence planned	Offense spontaneous
Victim is a targeted strange	Victim or location known
Personalises victim	Depersonalises victim
Controlled conversation	Minimal conversation
Crime scene reflects overall control	Crime scene random and sloppy
Demands submissive victim	Sudden violence to victim
Restraints used	Minimal restraints used
Aggressive acts prior to death	Sexual acts after death
Body hidden	Body left in plain view
Weapon/evidence absent	Evidence/weapon often present
Transports victim	Body left at death scene

Figure 1. Crime Scene Characteristics of the Organised and Disorganised Offender
Source: (Ressler & Burgess, 1985).

This is seen to be reflective of the general personality and behaviour of the offender, from which a matching set of offender characteristics are provided in table below:

Psychopathic (Organised) Offender Characteristics	Psychotic (Disorganised) Offender Characteristics
Average to above average intelligence	Below average intelligence
Socially competent	Socially inadequate
Skilled work preferred	Unskilled work
Sexually competent	Sexually incompetent
High birth order	Low birth order
Father's work stable	Father's work unstable
Inconsistent childhood discipline	Harsh discipline as a child
Controlled mood during the crime	Anxious mood during crime
Use of alcohol with crime	Minimal use of alcohol
Precipitating situational stress	Minimal situational stress
Living with partner	Living alone
Mobility with car in good condition	Lives/works near the crime scene
Follows crime in news media	Minimal interest in the news media
May change jobs or leave town	Significant behaviour change

Figure 2. Offender Characteristics of the Organised and Disorganised Offender
Source: (Ressler & Burgess, 1985).

Despite suggestions that the organised and disorganised terminology was an outgrowth of the study conducted in the late 1970's and early 1980's and published in 1985, it had actually been in use for some time. The terminology first appeared in its original form of organised non-social and disorganised asocial in *The Lust Murderer* in 1980 (Hazelwood & Douglas, 1980). As such, the study is best thought of as further developing an existing concept rather than generating a new one.

Like virtually all of the profiling methods, CIA is comprised of a number of steps or stages in which information about the offence is gathered, and determinations are made about its relevance and meaning. Despite the fact that an articulated methodology is available, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that protagonists of the FBI method do not adhere strictly to all steps or stages, and that

they may not be qualified to perform certain analyses proposed as part of the method (for example, crime scene reconstruction; see Superior Court of California, 1999 (Chisum, 2000).

In theory, CIA is a six step method, though in reality it is five steps with the sixth step involving the arrest of an offender if one is identified. These first five steps are profiling inputs, decision process models, crime assessment, criminal profile and investigation. The final phase (ostensibly the sixth) is apprehension.
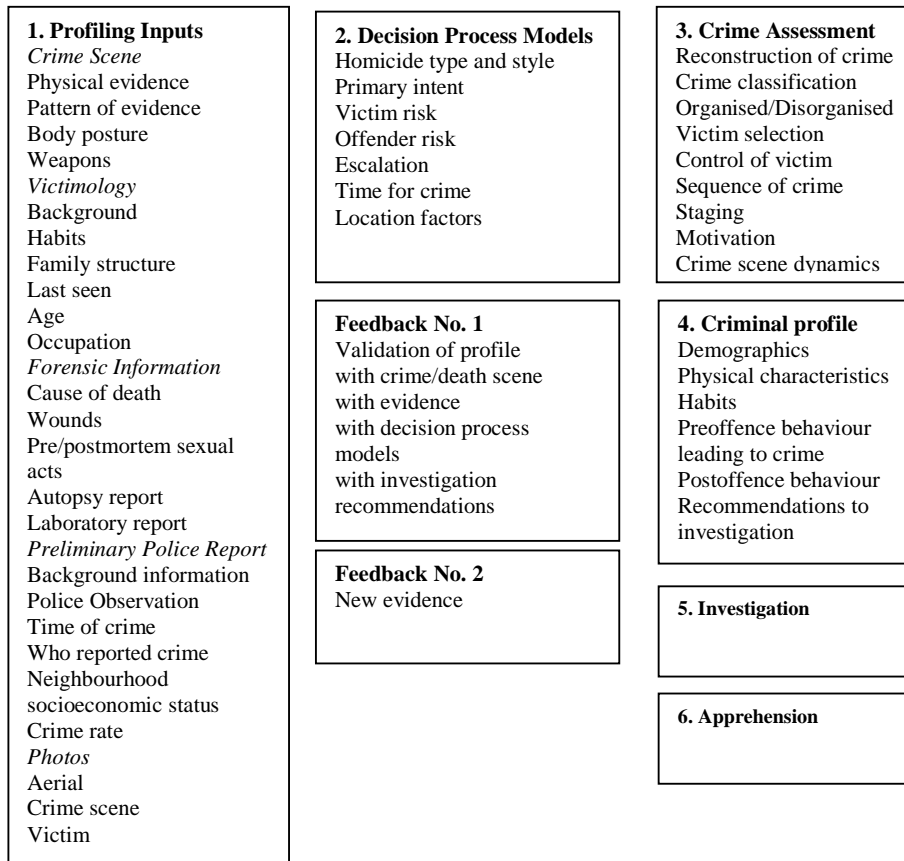
1. Profiling Inputs	2. Decision Process Models	3. Crime Assessment
Crime Scene Physical evidence Pattern of evidence Body posture Weapons *Victimology* Background Habits Family structure Last seen Age Occupation *Forensic Information* Cause of death Wounds Pre/postmortem sexual acts Autopsy report Laboratory report *Preliminary Police Report* Background information Police Observation Time of crime Who reported crime Neighbourhood socioeconomic status Crime rate *Photos* Aerial Crime scene Victim	Homicide type and style Primary intent Victim risk Offender risk Escalation Time for crime Location factors **Feedback No. 1** Validation of profile with crime/death scene with evidence with decision process models with investigation recommendations **Feedback No. 2** New evidence	Reconstruction of crime Crime classification Organised/Disorganised Victim selection Control of victim Sequence of crime Staging Motivation Crime scene dynamics **4. Criminal profile** Demographics Physical characteristics Habits Preoffence behaviour leading to crime Postoffence behaviour Recommendations to investigation **5. Investigation** **6. Apprehension**

Figure 3. Stages of Criminal Investigative Analysis

Profiling Inputs begins the profile generating process (Douglas et al., 1986) and involves the collection and integration of all known material relating to the offence. This includes, but is not limited to the physical evidence, police reports, crime scene photographs and sketches, complete background information on the victim and any other pertinent information (Ressler et al., 1988) such as the medical examiners findings and impressions. Information that should not be included in the material given to the profiler would include information on possible suspects as this may bias the profiler in their decisions regarding characteristics.

5. Conclusions

As the first attempt in criminal profiling, the FBI method is one of the most important advances in the field of investigative psychology. This new approach of serial crimes must become mandatory in police investigations, as it is in Holland, Great Britain, Germany and so on. In Romania, the role of forensic psychologist sets him outside the investigation team and this attitude must change. With extraordinary results along at least 40 years, criminal profiling has to become a powerful weapon at the disposal of law enforcement agencies. At the crime site, all the strange behaviour must be interpreted, all the clues need to be arranged in a logical puzzle and the entire scene must be seen in the light of evidence dynamics. The right position to do all this is the criminal profiler, the man who may help investigators to construct a viable suspect pool and to provide available tactics and forensic techniques in order to have the right decisions. This procedure can save lives, time and money.

Starting from the FBI method, new constructs in criminal profiling have been developed along past years. This includes *Investigative Psychology*, developed in Great Britain by Professor David Canter, Brent Turvey's *Behavioural Evidence Analysis*, *Diagnostic Evaluation* and, the most recent, *Geographic Profiling*. All these methods will be explained in future articles. The Romanian approach of the matter must involve all these constructs so that a maximum advantage can be gained from.

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