

Psychological profile and prerequisites for the formation of the killer's personality

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Abstract. The relevance of the study is conditioned upon the elevated level of crime and scientific interest in determining the prerequisites for murders that are individual in nature, develop into a series of hidden intentions and have complex consequences for the life of society. Clarifying the psychological causes of serious crimes is important for preventive work in the defined area. The purpose of this study was to determine the personality traits of murderers, to identify the prerequisites for the formation of criminal behaviour, to investigate the classification and rating of serial crimes by cruelty and methods, to analyse statistical data on the commission of murders. In the study of the nature of serial murders, the following methods were used: the method of analysis and synthesis, the biographical method, the statistical method, and the generalization method. Using theoretical analysis, the psychological root causes of homicide drives, their main features and methods of implementation, and gender characteristics regarding the strength of committing a crime were identified; the data obtained were confirmed by real statistical indicators. The study highlighted the problem of increasing criminal cases caused by the mental state of the individual. The features of the psychology of the killer were covered, and the influence of childhood and life circumstances on the formation of the internal urge to commit murder was substantiated. The factors that encourage violence were identified. The types of serial killers were identified, and the “handwriting” of crime execution was analysed. The essence of impulsive and serial murder was delineated, and the concept of moral statistics as a provocative factor in committing a crime was covered. A psychological portrait of a serial killer was formed. Features of early research at the level of physiology and genetics were established. The presented theoretical material not only serves as an informational resource but can also be used in carrying out preventive measures related to early education, the methods of which have a preventive and correctional impact

Keywords: crime; serial killer; mask of normality; McDonald's triad; Herostratus syndrome

Introduction

Serial murders are crimes that are difficult to explain from the standpoint of science and investigative authorities, since their nature and motive are not always fully revealed and have a complex and hidden nature. The causes and propensity for murder are investigated on an ongoing basis, but well-established empirical studies do not provide a particular answer as to the motives and factors that provoke violence. Destructive behaviour is the shadow side of the realization of desires, which have complex consequences for the objects of interaction. Genetic inheritance, difficult living conditions at an early age, affecting emotionality and changes in the activity of the psyche, create internal drives for “pathological pleasures”, fulfilled through particular methods of violence.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to investigate the specific features of the nature of serial killers, to identify the prerequisites for the formation of cruelty in behaviour and the factors that determine its manifestations, to study the early history of individuals who have committed serious

crimes to form modern key approaches to the investigation of a serial killer's personality, which will additionally be guided by specialists in criminal, legal psychology, forensic medicine, law enforcement agencies when solving complex cases.

Psychiatrist and psychoanalyst S. Subbota (2021) claimed that almost every day, 8% of people meet a serial killer on the streets, but not everyone can become the object of bullying. Usually, the victims of killers are individuals who evoke memories and are similar to the object that, in the early stages of life, “spawned” the current actions. Many individuals' crime patterns are similar to each other, especially regarding sexual crimes.

Early studies by FBI agents R.K. Ressler *et al.* (1988) were aimed at thirtysix sexually oriented murderers incarcerated in the United States who committed single or serial murders. As a result, a model of the motivational model of sexual murderers was created, as well as a typology and distinction of committed murders according to the level of

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behavioural complexity. M. Gullotta *et al.* (2021), investigating groups of male sex offenders, based on the results of psychodiagnosics of Australian prisoners, distinguished two types of murder: the opportunistic-impulsive, or spontaneous type of criminal's behaviour, which acts with a low level of reflection, and the sadistic type, which prematurely plans actions with a manifestation of sadism.

The founder of the WAAF World Anti-Criminal and Anti-Terrorist Forum O. Chystiakov (2010) comprehensively investigated and analysed criminogenic factors in Ukraine based on serial murders in 1960-2010 and concluded that mass murders according to the classic scheme are committed by mentally unbalanced individuals against the background of personal issues, as a result of which hostility and blame are transferred to certain groups of people. This type of crime, unlike a chain or serial crime, does not have emotional cooling and is impulsive, sometimes unplanned.

A supporter of the psychoanalytic trend, T.L. Barber (2016), focused her research on the search for the fundamentals of innate abilities and actions from childhood, which served as the reason for the development of a psychopathic personality. The scientist compared murderers with neurotics, who were driven by fear, despair, anxiety, and a sense of loneliness. According to the researcher, the shortest path to the research of the unconscious should be the interpretation and examination of dreams based on the theories of S. Freud, the identification of the specific features of their presence or, on the contrary, the use of associations during interrogation regarding the details of the crime.

V. Zepinic (2018), investigating the psychology of psychopathic personalities, discovered the special significance of the phenomenon of the "mask of normality", the essence of which is the ability of a person to hide their true "self", appearing to be an absolutely adequate and mentally healthy individual. There is an artificial behaviour that can adapt to social norms and moral canons, and conscientious volitional control occurs.

An interdisciplinary approach to the investigation of serial crimes was applied by the authors of the Ukrainian monograph (2019), who considered the problem in three aspects: criminal law, forensic, and psychological. The goal that guided the work of this team of scientists was to create the basis for legislative consolidation of the term "serial murder", since it remains uncertain in the Ukrainian legal field. Criminologist L.V. Husar (2020) was engaged in the study of the specific features of the formation of a search portrait of a serial criminal. H.M. Getman (2018), investigating the modelling method during adversarial criminological investigation, noted that it is necessary to involve psychologists and psychiatrists, and sometimes specialists from other branches of scientific knowledge. H.V. Katolyk & A.O. Shatalova (2022) investigated how the image of a serial killer is perceived not by specialists, but by ordinary citizens, which is also critical for a comprehensive investigation of the portrait of a serial killer.

The purpose of this study was to highlight the prerequisites for the formation of the killer's personality, namely: the state of mental health, conditions of early childhood, features of interaction with social institutions, the presence and manifestations of parental care, experienced psychoemotional injuries, the level of development of feelings and their suppression. The scientific originality of this study lies in the search and coverage of modern approaches to investigate

the causes of complex factors of mental activity deviations and improve the basics of forming a psychological portrait, which will further allow for a broader search for criminals through scientific approaches.

Materials and methods

The methodological framework of this study included the following methods: the method of analysis and synthesis, which helped analyse early scientific approaches to the investigation of the psychology of murderers, to form a general vision of the problem based on the accumulated facts. The method of analysis revealed information on the basics of the formation of manic tendencies, determined the criteria of the motivational component, the root causes of deviations. The comparative analysis helped establish the gender features of committing a crime against the life of society, to find such stimuli that cause a pathological violation. Using synthesis, the author of the study combined the study results into a single structure for a scientific explanation of the phenomenon of the emergence of murderers.

Based on the analysis of early scientific approaches, the author formed a general psychological portrait of murderers, which is based on "classical" concepts and provides a general idea of the hidden possibilities of an antisocial personality. This portrait is not universal and cannot create an idea of each serial killer individually, but it serves as a reference point, which, based on general concepts, creates an abstract understanding of the probable person, from which law enforcement agencies will be able to start to find the killer's trail. A particular situational psychological portrait is formed individually for each criminal, depending on the degree of difficulty of solving the case and inflicted bodily injuries, the tools used for murder, the consequences that form the "handwriting". Portrait data can be based on psychoanalytic, cognitive-behavioural approaches, reveal its meaning from the basics of deep psychology, forensic medicine, profiling, medical history, be based on the results of the Achnich photo test, the Sondi test, psychiatric mechanisms according to A. Wundt, which can reveal approximate physiological and psychological data (age, height, weight, external features, assumptions about mental state).

Portrait formula: age, probable height, physical features, gender definition; archetype (object, figure, reason for attack); mental reaction (determination of features depending on the degree of severity of the murders); probable type of serial killer; leading factor (motor – physical effort); dominant factor (sadism, depressive syndrome, false morality); search for psychiatric abnormalities, their presence; identification of key tools of crime, characteristics of "handwriting" (Maltsev *et al.*, 2019).

The biographical method helped study in detail the history of serial killers, using the individual life path at various stages of their lives for analysis. This method helped identify possible early factors (endogenous, psychogenic, sociogenic), that could provoke adverse changes in the psyche and behaviour of the killer's personality. The biographical method served as "the history of an individual case", with life components that do not have a place in an adequate society and leave a complex imprint on the future of murderers and their victims have been researched and analysed.

The statistical method helped quantify and qualitatively assess the problem under study, confirming the level of its importance with the result of numerical totals. Statistical

indicators allowed to generally reveal the level of social life of murderers and their interaction with victims, to estimate the scale of the problem of crimes against life, periods of their activity and “calm”. Based on the reporting of the Ukrainian analytical portal, the data of the General Prosecutor’s Office of Ukraine and the UN Office of World Statistics, the results regarding the spread of crime against life in Ukraine and murders at the international level were compared, and practical confirmation of the consequences was obtained.

The generalization method helped evaluate the behaviour of serial killers, influence the process of forming a psychological portrait, combining psychological data on early life stages, possible critical situations, social interaction of murderers, and methods of murder. This method established a general relationship between the practical results obtained and the results of past studies.

Results

Investigating the psychological characteristics of murderers, the author focused on statistical indicators that periodically reveal the number of crimes against life and are recorded on a legislative basis. The crime rate is growing, murder is becoming an easier way to implement revenge or get pleasure, but each complex process hides the reaction that has arisen to a certain stimulus.

According to the data of the Ukrainian analytical portal, which tracked the dynamics of crimes from 1992 to 2020 in Ukraine, the growth and highest indicator was observed in 1993–2003. The first high-profile murders began to occur in 1992, when about 3,600 murders and attempts were recorded in the country, and a few years later the figure increased by 4.5 thousand a year. The period of calm occurred in 2007–2012, when the number of murders and attempts did not exceed 2.9 thousand per year (Baganets, 2021).

As of 2013, the situation in Ukraine has worsened, over seven thousand recorded murders occurred as a result of serious bodily injuries, beyond twelve thousand cases were recorded in 2014. As for sexual crimes, the peak of growth occurred in 1992–1993, then the situation declined. 2018 showed the lowest number of rapes – 203 victims (Baganets, 2021).

According to the data of departmental statistical reporting, pursuant to the Law of Ukraine “On Access to Public Information” (Law of Ukraine “On Access...”, 2011), in 2020, 1,375 minors were declared missing by the state, and in 2021, within nine months, 1,319 children disappeared, the rest of the data are being processed (Response of the Department of Information..., 2021).

The statistics of the General Prosecutor’s Office of Ukraine report that as of the beginning of 2019, no murders were recorded, but in the middle of the year, the rate gradually began to increase, and already at the end of the year, in December, 1,360 people were recorded who were suspected under Article 115 “Intentional murder” (Prosecutor General’s Office of Ukraine, 2019).

According to the statistics of the United Nations Office on Crime and Drugs, it was established that as of 2012, the highest level of murders was recorded in the USA – the rating of which was (16.3) out of 20 possible, the situation in Ukraine according to analytical indicators received a rating (3.0) (UNODC, 2014). Such contrasting numerical indicators aroused the scientific interest of comparing the data of homicide statistics in Ukraine with the number of American crimes for the analysis of changes in the present period. As

of 2020, the number of homicides in the United States increased by 30%. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in 2020, 21,570 people were killed, which is 29.5% more than in 2019, but in most cases the murder weapon was a firearm. The number of sexual crimes increased by 5.6% in 2020 (Gramlich, 2021).

The statistical study allowed assessing the overall picture of the problem of crimes against the life of society, the numerical values of which do not have a positive decline, which is explained by the characteristics of grave crimes over the years. The analysis of the data clearly emphasizes the importance of researching the phenomenon of serial killers to understand their essence, effective dialogue in case of arrest, creation of psychological countermeasures, early assumption and calculation of future steps, which will ensure a positive result in the search for criminals during the activities of law enforcement agencies.

Biographical study of serial killers

The analysis of biographical data of serial killers revealed life situations and complex stages of existence that have similarities with each other, creating a probable system of reasons for the formation of a future killer. Studies of the childhood period of murderers revealed the problem of growing up in singleparent families, participation in acts of physical struggle and domestic violence (witnesses of the father’s aggression towards the mother), education in orphanages, officer service and military training, victims of paedophilia, abuse from the hands of their mother or bullying, undergone surgical interventions.

Analysing the life path of the famous American serialist Ted Bundy, the author noted that this person probably became a “victim of the past” because according to the biographical description, the boy suffered in childhood due to the incorrect construction of family values and did not grow up in a complete family, and later learned that his mother – a sister who concealed her motherhood, giving her son to be raised by her parents. The unpleasant truth made Bundy feel guilty and ashamed, disgusted and useless. Ted Bundy has repeatedly witnessed domestic violence and attempts to establish an emotional connection with his foster father have failed. The killer showed cruelty and sadism to animals as a child, which probably signalled a behavioural deviation according to the Macdonald triad. Bundy committed his brutal atrocities against women who resembled his mother. Despite showing coldblooded instincts, Bundy received a large group of fans and followers in society who were on his side and provided support. In interviews with psychiatrists, the killer revealed his inner grievances against women from his family, because of which he felt negligent and worthless, demonstrated awareness of his actions (Sullivan, 2019).

The Lipstick Killer William Heirens lived a similar childhood, he witnessed frequent arguments and scandals between his parents, which destabilized his emotional state, and for his own peace, the boy began to steal to change the focus of attention, it grew into a habit, poverty as an additional factor affected the desire to become a criminal and a murderer, notably, based on biographical analysis, this murderer was formed through destructive changes of a psychogenic and sociogenic nature (Rosewood & Walker, 2016).

Hydrocephalus, diagnosed in Andrii Chikatlylo, a Ukrainian serial killer, could be a probable cause of inhumane acts. An added traumatic factor for the criminal was the loss of

his brother and the lack of necessary parental care, during which the person lived through the stress of loneliness and loss, lack of support. Andrey Chikatylo, nicknamed the Red Ripper, committed murders for sexual reasons, the number of his victims is up to 65 people. Among them were male and female children aged 7 to 17 years, women and adolescent girls. In this case, aggressive actions could be caused by changes in the structure of the brain that affected mental activity, the fact that endogenous and psychogenic factors intervened, which were caused by early hydrocephalus and its treatment by surgery and medication (Pizzichi, 2022).

The study of the psychological characteristics of social psychopaths indicates that murder has no gender, which is why it can be committed by both men and women, the difference is only in the motive and method of committing the crime. The proportion of women responsible for murder does not exceed the proportion of murders committed by men, the number of their victims accounts for about a third of cases. Usually, the motive lies in a deep resentment towards the male sex, conflict of relations with the environment, competition, financial enrichment, rarely in the pathology that accompanies the scenario of serial murders. The most common weapons that women can use to kill are heart medications, toxic substances, sharp objects, and firearms (Benkart, 2019).

Researchers in the United States claim that men can kill any stranger, women are capable of planned murder of people they know without resorting to persecution, this mode of action is determined evolutionarily, i.e., such behaviours were laid down by our ancestors. It is about the ability to hunt, which belongs to men, and gather, which was the responsibility of women in the past (Wattis, 2016).

One of the most famous female killers was Bella Sorenson Guinness, nicknamed "Black Widow", who killed fortytwo people. Her first victims were her two daughters, whom she poisoned to pay for insurance. The examination showed symptoms of colitis in children, but later found that it was premeditated murder. By a strange coincidence, the killer's husband, who was undergoing medical treatment for the heart and for whose death Bella received insurance compensation, also died. In total, the woman buried 40 men and was able to save more than a quarter of a million dollars (Amesson, 2021).

Another example for the gender analysis of killers was Jane Toppan, nicknamed "Jolly Jane". Working as a nurse, she injected her victims with morphine, which caused cardiac arrest and sudden death, the torment of patients brought pleasure to the killer. Biographical analysis indicated that the girl at the age of 17 began to experience hostility in the family and suffered the death of her mother hard, being in a state of frustration for a long time. After 7 years, she began to commit deliberate, wellplanned crimes for her pleasure and entertainment, experimenting with doses of morphine administration. Psychiatrists of that time formed an expert opinion that the killer's actions were caused by a genetic nature. The biological father and sister were mentally ill and were in a hospital for treatment. The killer was not convicted, but was sent to a psychiatric hospital for treatment, and later her condition worsened, and delusional ideas arose based on her own early actions (Schechter, 2003).

Psychological profile of a serial killer (general meanings)

During the study on the specific features of serial killers, a set of characteristics that form the psychological profile of

the killer, an overall assessment and a criminological property were determined. The main feature of the psychological portrait is the compilation of a profile assessment based on the materials of operational and criminal cases (García-Baamonde *et al.*, 2022). Based on the biographical method and a theoretical study of the nature of antisocial individuals, the author formed a psychological portrait of a "classic" serial killer, the description of which is general in its meaning.

A serial killer is a person of any race, over the age of thirty, of medium build and height, has a wellformed physiological structure, is distinguished by charismatic manifestations, and sometimes attractiveness. With a prominent level of intelligence, emotionally restrained, but sometimes harsh in arguments, proof of views, clearly focused on the purpose, capable of analysing the course of events, taking risks into account.

They always act unassisted, maintain social connections, but avoid large audiences, and try not to make unnecessary acquaintances. Socially adapted, single or divorced, may eventually find a partner and marry to create the role of a good family person, thereby ensuring an alibi. They focus on a single victim model or their social role, which triggers an exciting effect and enhances memories of trauma experienced.

As a child, they underwent difficult periods or were "born in blood", i.e., they witnessed the brutal murder and violence of a loved one or a stranger. They can wait out and maintain selfcontrol, are capable of emotional recovery, but a new craving for the victim is a new life taken away, murder becomes not just a "brutal act", but a counter-transfer, a struggle with the past. Periodically, there is a partial manifestation of delusions or hallucinations, there is a dialogue with the "dark companion", i.e., a reflection of one's own "self", they probably could have been treated in psychiatric departments. The killer is unable to sympathize, but they can express false emotions, especially important people can cause real experiences. Feelings of guilt and conscience are absent, there is complete confidence in the correctness of the act, they try to control impulsive actions to maintain their safety. They use separate locations for murder, but the "handwriting" of the execution is its essence (depending on the strength and severity of the injuries caused, a specialist in forensic medicine and expertise can establish assumptions about the height, weight, and age of the criminal). In case of detention and charges brought, they will not pretend to be a victim with mental disorders, will deliberately reveal all the crime scenes, describe the stages of committing the murder, and clarify the reason for the crime. However, having received a life sentence, they can calmly accept the sentence, or they will not give up attempts to escape or suicide.

Discussion

Murder is a crime that does not have a reverse process and includes in its nature a thirst that encourages action to satisfy internal "dark" desires. Having analysed the statistics of murders in Ukraine and abroad (Baganets, 2021), the peak activity of murderers has its own period, since behind any difficult act is emotional exhaustion that needs recovery. According to recent years, sexual homicides have become the most popular. In Ukraine, the fight against crime is actively conducted because the problem concerns the life of an innocent society, but at the legislative level there are weak rules of punishment, which in no way affect the desire to commit a deadly act again.

The term "serial murder" originates from past historical times. This type of crime is localized in time, space, and the

actions of one person who has four or more victims on their account. Most serial killers use a similar pattern of crime, but there are individual cases that emphasize seriality with a special “handwriting” (Egger, 1984).

In serial murders, there is a break, the so-called period of emotional cooling, which can last a week, a month, or years. During this period, ordinary social life continues, which does not cause much suspicion. When studying the specific features of crimes against life, it is worth distinguishing the terms “serial” and “impulsive” murder because the activity of serial killers is defined by a break of one week with a minimum number of victims, it is planned and has a clear purpose; impulsive murder occurs in a state of affect and the influence of a sudden stimulus, which the psyche of the killer took for a hostile gesture, then there is confusion in the investigation because the tools with which the blows were inflicted may differ (Daniszewska, 2017).

Characterization of the features of a serial killer showed that the direction of damage caused has the same features, but the behaviour of the individual and its psychopathology have individual manifestations and methods of bloodshed. The mental component of serial killers has distinctive features compared to mentally balanced people, there are the most common features that distinguish killers from ordinary society: lack of empathy, emotional empathy; lack of remorse; impulsiveness, sudden rush, lack of volitional control; inherent ambition, often attractiveness, manipulateness; there is a thirst to control events, to gain power, etc. (Zuniga, 2021).

Usually, the killer does not stop at one episode of death, they seek repetition, thus declaring themselves to society, as a result of which pleasure arises not only from physical harm, but also from the power of fear over the masses. The degree of brutality of serial murders is considerably higher than that of ordinary spontaneous ones. The serial murder is planned to the smallest detail and has no potential witnesses.

There is a classic typology of serial killers, which was formed based on early research and operational investigations: *visionaries* – individuals suffering from psychosis, characterized by delusions of grandeur and hallucinations, “orders” to kill “received from above” (e.g., Herbert Mullin, who claimed that the murders were aimed at stopping an earthquake, about which the killer allegedly received a warning from heavenly forces); goal-oriented *missionaries*, a great “mission” that should be carried out for the good of humanity, e.g., to protect against certain social groups of the population (Jack the Ripper, whose “mission” was to cleanse society of prostitutes; “Tarot Card Killer”); *hedonists*, whose actions are aimed at their satisfaction, namely: rape, maiming, torture for money (Andrii Chikatilo is a vivid representative of this type); *controllers* – the type of killers who have fantasies about power and dominance and who take pleasure in knowing that the victim’s life is in their hands (David Berkowitz, known as the “44 calibre killer”); *cannibals* who commit murder for the victim’s flesh (a well-known representative is Nikolai Dzhumagaliev, who killed and consumed no less than ten women) (Sharma, 2018).

In the study of the psychology of a serial killer, it is worth noting that not all murders were committed by people with low intelligence or an average level of education. Forensic practice indicates that most serial killers have a prominent level of intelligence, which allows them to more successfully implement their planned atrocities. Thanks to their high intelligence, murderers manipulate professionally,

find an approach to victims, control scenarios, and show false empathy because in fact it is absent. Expression of narcissism and a sense of grandiosity are the main catalysts for killers (Sharma, 2018).

The prerequisites for the formation of the killer’s personality may contain many factors and criteria of influence, but the causal relationship lies in the period of childhood, the pathological program of interaction with parents and social institutions. To clarify the fundamentals of early destructive manifestations, psychiatrist J. -MacDonald in his scientific work “The Threat of Murder” published the triad of the murderous sociopath, namely a set of three elements that describe the general behaviour of a person: zoosadism, pyromania, and enuresis; these three main components characterized the possibility of the future killer occurring. However, later this theory stayed a concept that is not considered by current psychiatrists and criminologists because further studies have shown that abuse of animals, frequent attacks are demonstrative behaviours that arise as a result of parental mistreatment and neglect (Parfitt & Alleyne, 2020).

Changes and pathologies in the structure of the brain are an added stage in the development of an antisocial vision of the world. Comparing the encephalogram images of the killer’s brain and the brain of an ordinary, peaceful person, one can notice differences in the structure and size of the hemispheres. It is these changes that affect the central nervous system, its functioning, and behavioural disorders. American researcher Kent Kiel from the University of Madison conducted a CT scan of people who were accused of murder. Surveys of about 800 prisoners indicated that the brain structure of the perpetrators differs from that of those who did not commit such a crime. Areas of the orbitofrontal cortex and anterior frontal lobes had individual shapes and showed a low amount of grey brain matter. This study did not provide irrefutable evidence that exactly the identified feature of the areas serves as a marker of killers, however, it definitely confirms the non-standard level of aggression (Sajous-Turner *et al.*, 2020).

The scientific journal “Molecular Psychiatry” (Tiihonen *et al.*, 2014) published an experiment investigating the blood structure of serial killers. The respondents were more than 1,000 prisoners, as a result of which two genes were identified that were highly likely to be involved in the manifestation of excessive aggression. All the samples contained two genes: CDH13, known in scientific circles as the “warrior gene”, and MAOA, which is passed down from the mother and is responsible for the level of serotonin in the body, which affects social behaviour. About 20% of the world’s population are carriers of one of the genes, which is quite normal, but the presence of a double combination causes complex disorders and fatal cases. According to researchers, the “warrior gene” is successfully combined with drugs and alcohol that cause hormonal instability. However, forensic psychiatry refutes the studied elements and notes that only the existing mental abilities and psychological phenotype of the individual determine its relation to the urge to kill, and the created experiment has no legal force and does not affect the court decision (Subramanian, 2020).

The urge to kill and the desire to show off one’s “soul-killing talents” can cause the “Herostratus syndrome”, in which the individual develops a desire to become historically famous, thereby generating fans who will euphorically imitate the sociopath. Lust for fame and informational power lay the foundation of the driving force behind crime (Leyton, 2017).

In the study of the distribution of murders, the researcher M. Rapley relied on the concept of “moral statistics”, which is an essential element of empirical demography. According to the scientist, society has all the prerequisites for crimes that can be carried out because there are conditions that contribute to them, create the basis for the crime, and the killer is a tool. Social inequality, a low financial level, poverty, a sense of superiority from the outside – cause a desire for violence in mentally unstable individuals (Rapley *et al.*, 2003).

Killers can adapt to society, keep pace, build their families, attend sports classes, follow certain preferences, acquire professional titles because it is precisely these qualities that provide the needs that are accepted in the state and society. Serial murders are not work and occupation, they serve as a way to satisfy a sudden need, to stop a pathological situational drive. Many of the killers worked regular jobs that not only provided financial security, but also provided alibis.

Ukrainian researchers have developed a unique scientific monograph “Psychological portrait of a serial killer” (Maltsev *et al.*, 2019), work on which lasted for decades. The researchers considered the phenomenon of serial killers based on an international sample of cases from countries of the Romano-German legal Family (Great Britain, USA, Spain, Germany, and others). 30 murderers were described in detail, a significant part of them were of Ukrainian origin. The main tool used by scientists to diagnose individuals who may be prone to murder is M. Achnich’s photo test. The monograph mentions three types of serial killers: a person who kills only men; a person who kills only women; mixed type – murders of men and women. Researchers note that most often a serial killer is a man aged 23-28 years or 35-45 years old, women are incapable of becoming serial maniacs, but there are certain exceptions regarding individuals who acquire a masculine nature and are reinforced by psychiatric disorders (excessive aggression, deviation in sexual preferences) (Maltsev *et al.*, 2019).

A comparison of the psychological portrait generated by the author of this article with the research results of the authors of the monograph revealed common features regarding the definition of possible age, gender, physique, the ability to stay invisible, put on a “mask of normality”, having mental abilities and sometimes creative imagination. However, the psychological portrait proposed by the author of the study has received general values that serve as a classic model of potential murderers, the exact use of which will depend on the degree of severity of the murder and the situation under investigation. The approach of the authors of the monograph has a clear structure and sections, which are divided into many added criteria that can diagnose the propensity to kill and determine with 100% accuracy the killer present among the suspects.

Antisocial behaviour is the result of the influence of a destructive factor, the phenomenon of which has no single meaning. Any adverse changes in the social environment (and even in the environment of the mother’s womb) can contribute to the future formation of serial killers: childhood, relationships with parents, inferiority of family ties, being under the pressure of constant abuse and bullying, etc. A vital role is played by the genetic characteristics and structure of the brain hemispheres, blood composition, physique, and shape of the cranial areas. The involvement of the DNA structure in aggressive outbreaks requires more research, since it is too early to say one hundred percent that genetics is responsible for the tendency to kill.

Analysis of statistical data on the course of serial murders showed that the peak of activity of serial killers falls on a certain period: they are more “productive” in the spring and autumn. A decline in crime can occur when the killer’s identity needs emotional recovery and tries to avoid suspicion or confuse the investigation. The intensity of aggressive outbreaks can be different and individually formed.

It is important to note that one scientific approach is not enough to investigate the composition of the killer’s psyche in detail. Only a comprehensive approach to the problem can provide a general picture, assess the real result, but the study of individual areas leaves the results of the study only at the stage of theory, which forensic experts will later deny. The main problem of modern criminogenic approaches is to delve into a onesided process, but the search for reasons lies in the deep psychology of investigating children’s injuries, genetic features, pathological functionality of the cerebral cortex, and social variability.

H. Katolyk (2022) conducted research among students, lawyers, and psychologists to find out how young people imagine a portrait of a serial killer. Using an associative test and a questionnaire, the scientist found that representatives of different professions perceive the image of the killer differently: if future lawyers operate with particular realities (the means and consequences of murder, details that will help find and punish the criminal), then psychologists focus on the causes of the crime and the character traits of the serial killer. Thus, proceeding from the empirical research of H. Katolyk and, in general, on the results obtained by the author of this study, we can discuss the relevance of interdisciplinary approaches to the formation of a portrait of a serial killer because only in this way, by combining the visions of various sciences, can we get a complete and detailed picture.

Conclusions

The present study led to the following conclusions. Serial killers are individuals whose formation and existence have no single explanation because mental pathologies can develop under several factors. The conducted biographical method showed that received emotional injuries, physical abuse of parents, unhealthy relationships in the family probably created the initial foundation for the emergence of pathological traits. An analysis of the biographies of individual serial killers showed that, in general, they experienced similar early issues: a difficult childhood, personal grudges, physical trauma, being abandoned by one of their parents, and their motive was often sexual gratification. It was also revealed that there are types of individuals who commit crimes against life for financial enrichment, using the conditions of professional activity to achieve the purpose, which emphasizes the presence of awareness, clear planning, logic.

Analysis of medical studies has shown that antisocial behaviour occurs and worsens due to hormonal changes, low grey matter content, Individual differences in brain structure, and the presence of a “killer gene” in the blood. During the study, the author formed a psychological portrait based on “classical values” and served as a reference point for understanding the nature of potential killers, their characteristics, and level of development. However, for the development of a particular individual portrait, the author recommends that specialists engaged in its development and implementation, thoroughly investigate crime scenes, murder instruments, signs of physical injuries, find a logical

connection between the victims, which may indicate mental trauma, etc. Such actions can help in creating a portrait of a particular individual, get an idea of their physical characteristics, possible mental illnesses, and motive, which will speed up and simplify the work of investigative bodies.

Through the conducted research, the author managed to achieve the set scientific purpose and reveal the importance of studying the phenomenon of the existence of potentially dangerous individuals, but the nature of killers does not have a final explanation because for a comprehensive approach and study of the psychological features of serial killers, it

is necessary to involve social, psychological, and medical resources more deeply, pay attention to neurophysiology, sexology, clinical psychopathology, and the investigation of the internal structural elements of the central nervous system, its modifications, the reasons causing its changes.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Психологічний портрет та передумови формування особистості вбивці

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена високим рівнем злочинності та науковим інтересом до визначення передумов вбивств, що мають індивідуальний характер, переростають в серії прихованих намірів та несуть складні наслідки для життя суспільства. З'ясування психологічних причин тяжких злочинів має важливе значення для проведення превентивної роботи в окресленій сфері. Мета наукового дослідження – визначити особливості характеру вбивць, виявити передумови формування злочинної поведінки, дослідити класифікації та рейтинг серійних злочинів за жорстокістю та методами, проаналізувати статистичні дані щодо скоєння вбивств. У дослідженні природи серійних вбивств використано такі методи: метод аналізу та синтезу, біографічний метод, статистичний метод, метод узагальнення. За допомогою теоретичного аналізу виявлено психологічні першопричини потягів до вбивств, їхні головні особливості та методи реалізації, порівняно гендерні особливості щодо сили вчинення злочину; отримані дані підтверджено реальними статистичними показниками. У статті висвітлено проблему збільшення кримінальних випадків, спричинених психічним станом особистості. Розкрито особливості психології вбивці та обґрунтовано вплив періоду дитинства та життєвих обставин на формування внутрішнього потягу до вбивств. Окреслено фактори, що підштовхують до насильства. Визначено типи серійних вбивць та проаналізовано «почерк» виконання злочинів. Розмежовано сутність імпульсивного та серійного вбивства, розкрито поняття «моральної статистики» як провокативного фактору скоєння злочину. Сформовано психологічний портрет серійного вбивці. Виявлено особливості ранніх досліджень на рівні фізіології та генетики. Представлений теоретичний матеріал не лише слугує інформаційно-ознайомчим ресурсом, але й може бути використаним у проведенні запобіжних заходів, що стосуються раннього виховання, методи якого мають профілактичний та корекційний вплив

Ключові слова: кримінал; серійний вбивця; маска нормальності; триада Макдональда; синдром Герострата