

Why Do Criminals Commit Crimes in the First Place? Anonymity

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ABSTRACT

Crimes are illegal but some crimes are legal. We think of crimes such as stalking, physical abuse by parents or teachers, body shaming as not a crime. But a crime is a deliberate act that causes physical or psychological harm, damage to or loss of property, and is against the law. This study tried to come in front by noticing a psychological phenomenon known as “anonymity” as a cause of criminals to commit a crime. It is a meta-analysis research.

Keywords: *Crime, Anonymity, Deindividuation, Justice, Postpartum, Deliberate Self-Harm, Infanticide, DSM, ICD, Personality, Antisocial, Conduct Disorder, FRS, PCL-R, Neurotransmitters, Hormones*

BIRTH OF A CRIMINAL

“That's the existence. We're all a little mad”. -Agatha Christie

Crimes are happening all around the world. Each second passes numerous crimes are done anonymously. They become famous through the newspaper after doing the little mad things. Their anonymity gets fired to the world. The victim gets justice by the law.

But how do they become criminals? This has many factors because no one is born as a criminal but they gradually become one.

In many big cases where a serial killing mode may occur due to psychological problems. Research shows that 80% of antisocial personality disorder patients become psychopaths and 20% of them become sociopaths.

Within the category of abnormal personalities, Schneider distinguished ten distinct types of psychopaths: hyperthymic, depressive, insecure, fanatic, attention-seeking, labile, explosive, affection-less, weak-willed, and asthenic. Psychopaths are individuals who, due to their abnormality, either suffer personally or cause others in their community to suffer. Schneider therefore believes that the DSM's "antisocial personality disorder" or the Cleckley psychopath's "psychopathic personality" are more comparable to North America's "personality disorder."

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Furthermore, it should be mentioned that Wolman's definition of the "sociopathic personality" is akin to "thy." This concept is intermediate and roughly corresponds to the DSM concept of "conduct disorder." Schneider identified ten different types of psychopaths, and the affectionless psychopath is the one that most closely resembles the Cleckley psychopath and the DSM-III "antisocial personality." A person who is "lacking or almost lacking in compassion, shame, honor, remorse, and conscience" is referred to as an affectionless psychopath. As a result, the personality is frequently sinister, aloof and sour, and the behavior is vicious and uncontrolled. This kind can be found in society at large as well as in the criminal group that exists in our society. They are cold, heartless individuals who occasionally exhibit extreme brutality and in whom intellect, far from being lacking, is often remarkably high".

The DSM-IV-TR criteria for antisocial personality disorder, in particular, are largely behaviourally based. The ICD criteria for dissocial personality disorder, while paying more attention to affective deficits, also do not represent the broad personality and behavioral components of psychopathy. Since 1980, a great deal of research on these disorders has been conducted, using the Hare Psychopathy Checklist, Revised (PCL-R). The PCL-R assesses both personality (interpersonal and affective) and behavioral (lifestyle and antisocial) deficits. As such, the research and clinical implications of psychopathy, as operationalised by the PCL-R, cannot be readily extrapolated to the diagnoses of antisocial personality disorder and dissocial personality disorder.

For example, research shows that between 50% and 80% of prisoners meet the criteria for a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder, yet only approximately 15% of prisoners would be expected to be psychopathic, as assessed by the PCL-R.

Schneider's diagnostic concept attempts the optimum in diagnostic clarity, using frequently occurring symptoms which can be reliably identified by various observers, and which he believes always indicate schizophrenia in the absence of an organic psychosyndrome.

However, taken together, these symptoms which he considers pathognomonic of schizophrenia occur in one fourth of the cohort of manic-depressive patients. Therefore, Schneider's system for identifying schizophrenia, while highly discriminating, leads to significant diagnostic errors if FRSs are regarded as pathognomonic. Furthermore, FRSs did not have a postdictive or predictive function, as no relationship could be established between (first rank symptoms) FRSs and duration or outcome of illness.

Kahn distinguished between the types of psychopaths that are "impulsive," "weak," and "sexual," while Schneider distinguished between the types that are "labile," "explosive," and "wicked."

The more we read through the existing literature, the more variations we find. Eventually, in the middle of the 20th century, the term "psychopathy" was reduced to a more general definition of personality disorders, which were described as disturbances of the integration of mental processes leading to disruptive behavior in social contexts.

Aside from being "independent, to a considerable degree of the other manifestations which we regard as fundamental" of psychopathy, Cleckley also saw tendencies toward violence and major crime.

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A predatory quality can also be seen in many of the psychopaths' attitudes and actions, and their use of violence and intimidation is typically cold-blooded, instrumental, and straightforward rather than a symptom of underlying distress or understandable triggers. Psychiatrists assert that the items on the list are arbitrary, making diagnosis a difficult, if not impossible, process. Researchers also add to the controversy by pointing out that neurotransmitters, hormones, the subcortex, the cortex, a decreased physiological stress response, and impaired anterior cingulate and amygdala function, physiological stress reactions and other integrations have all been linked to psychopathy in recent neurobiological research.

The above suggest that as science advances, the checklist itself may become an outdated and erroneous method. Numerous studies have been carried out to evaluate the concept of psychopathy. Among them is the somatic marker hypothesis of Damasio, which linked psychopathy to prefrontal cortex deficits in the ventromedial region. Lösel and Schmucker²⁷ evaluated 49 male prisoners using the PCL-R (Psychopathy Checklist - revised) to examine the moderating effect of attention in the gambling task. The results showed that there was no overall correlation between psychopathy and the performance of gambling tasks, but that inmates who were psychopathic and had low attention scores gambled more than the other inmates.

This literally means, criminals also should go through a consultation with a registered psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist. They may need treatment. We have heard cases such as mothers killing newborn babies. Immediately police arrested them because the mothers committed a crime. But you know, there is a psychological illness named postpartum depression. It occurs after the delivery of child. Mothers feel psychological stress and they will undergo hormonal changes in that days. This makes changes in their cognition and they will try to harm the child.

Post partum have three phases. First one is postpartum blues. It is considered as normative. The second one is postpartum depression. At this point mother will feel distress and other mood changes. They will often feel to self harm deliberately (DSH : DELIBERATE SELF HARM (the term replaced suicidal ideation)). The third form is postpartum psychosis. In this fase mothe will try for infanticide (killing infants).

In India under various circumstances with the introduction of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Regulations, 2003 were issued under the Act to enable women to access safe and legal abortion services. But later in 2023 Supreme Court's plea to abort the child and said many adoptive parents can adopt the child and abortion is an emotional manner.

By analyzing such things we can say the law enforcement is a reason to raise more criminals. Because if it is legal to kill a baby until 24 weeks the young generation will think about the life of a baby in that manner only. They are never going to recognize the value of a living organism.

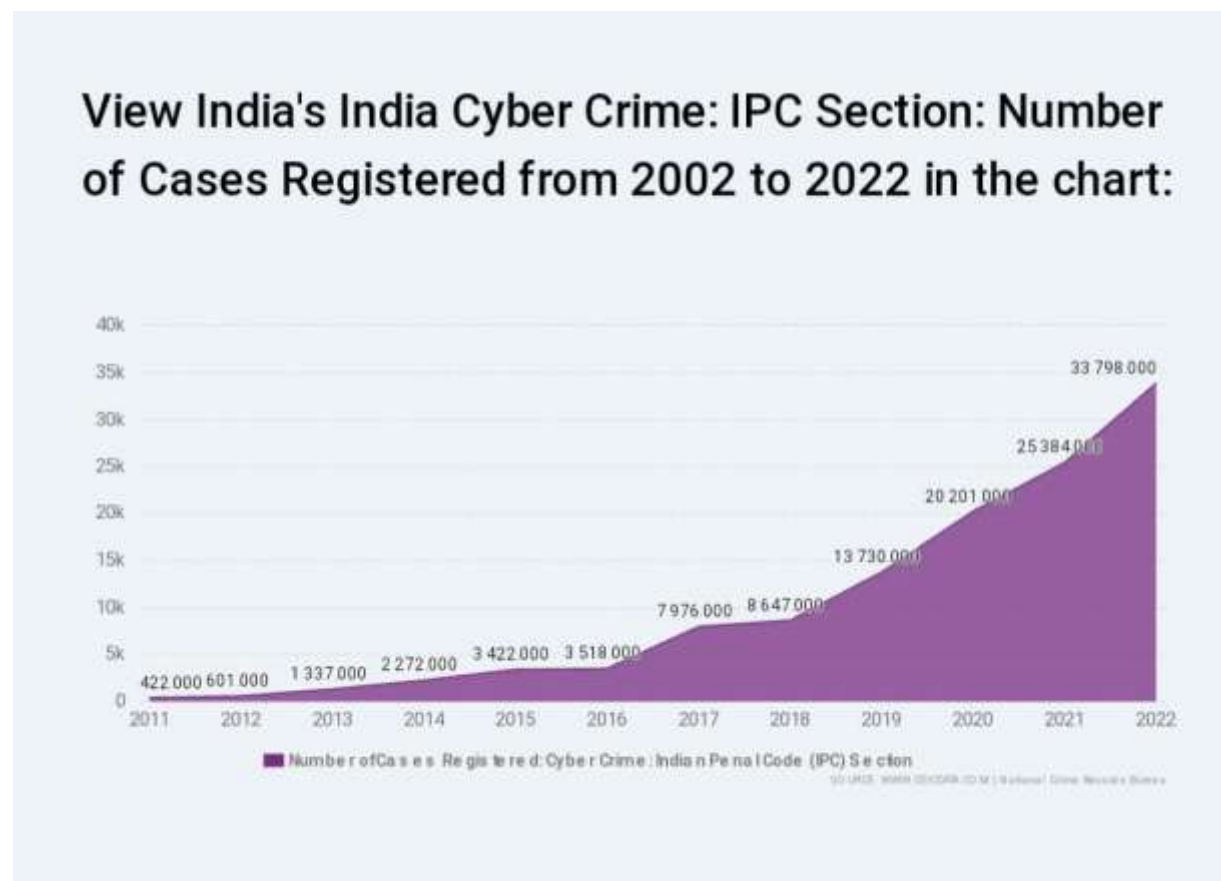
Childhood experiences are also one of the factors for the rise of criminals. So in summary, Societal, biological and psychological development are the main reasons for becoming a criminal.

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Anonymity

Anonymity is a psychological phenomenon where our hidden antisocial behavior will jump outside.

At this time we would be in a deindividuation process which means loss of self awareness. Anonymity is the main point on cybercrime. This is why we say cyberspace is a back space. We can hide the real us. No one will find us except the cyber experts. There are many forms of cybercrime where the criminal's identity would be hidden.



Internet fraud, cyberterrorism, cyber extortion, ransomware etc. could be done anonymously. Thus, lack of cyber security could be a threat to the country's internal and external security.

Like this, famous people will commit crimes such as rape, molestation or sexual assaults. It is like transactional analysis. We have three faces, inner me, middle me and the outer me. We all have masks. It is like a shadow. It is the persona.

Their actual side is anonymous. They will change when they get an opportunity. Thus makes them deindividuated. That leads them to make the corruption. Because their true faces are anonymous now. They felt anonymous within the social group.

Limitations

- It is a quantitative research, still it lacks direct exposure of the researcher to the offenders.
- This research shows anonymity factor only related to crimes.
- Sample size

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- Access to criminal profiles and data.

Advantages

- Recognition of a factor “anonymity”, the reason behind criminal actions
- This study gives general awareness of the birth of a criminal.
- Promotes human understanding
- Credibility
- Allows focus upon hidden factors such as deindividuation.
- Flexibility
- Qualitative analysis
- Focus on current scenarios.

DISCUSSION

As the researcher said earlier, human beings have different faces. Here is the importance of persona. We wear masks in order to hide our reality from others to account with social norms and acceptance. They will remove their mask when they feel they are anonymous. Their actions will go to extremes when they get deindividuated. At that point of time they will lose their self awareness.

Many cases in which the offender makes the police officers are because of their innocent face. Where the administrative part forgets to notice the offenders micro and macro expressions. They will say deception to us. But at last they will be caught by the police by following the evidence. Also there are many ways to catch the criminals who are suspicious. There is a procedure to do with a polygraph machine. But the thing is that we can control our actions by controlling the thoughts. But before that we should clearly understand why he or she thinks in that way. Many criminals are patients, they needed psychiatric treatment. Let's hope the coming generation will understand the value of mental health and they will recognize each criminals mentality and will work on the basis of it.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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