NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

AUTHOR'S SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

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Psychological examination of post–offence phase in the profiling of homicide

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Formulating the scientific problem

How does someone become a murderer? Humanity's curiosity for the answer is unquenchable. However, at this point, interest seems to stop. Are we interested in who will become a murderer? Why does a person become a murderer? How does a person become a murderer? But our curiosity does not extend to what it is like to be a murderer? It is indeed a less cathartic and a psychologically very demanding subject. But it is important, because it is part of the human experience and therefore worth exploring. It is important because although the fear from society and the stigma entailed by committing a murder makes an outcast of the person who is carrying alone the secret of violating the most serious ban - still the person who commits homicide is a human being and often needs help to process what has happened and to live with it. It is also important because if this does not happen, it threatens to perpetuate the psychological mechanisms that led to homicide and thus to further homicides. It is important because knowing what happens to the perpetrator after the crime can help investigators catch the murderer most at large.

Homicide (Chapter 1) is the most serious form of aggression and causes exceptionally high levels of harm. This is reflected in the range of penalties that can be imposed and the fact that serious cases are never statute-barred. They are also cases where society expects the highest standards of detection. The volume at which such investigations are launched commensurate with this (Kovács, 2013).

Fortunately, the number of homicides is not high, with an average of 100 cases per year. Moreover, it is assumed that the latency is also lower than for other types of crime (Lauritsen et al., 2016). The detection rate is around 90%, which is impressive, but it also means that on average about 10 cases go undetected each year (Tremmel et al., 2005, 223; Kovács, 2013). Most of the detected homicides can be solved quickly, even as a result of hot pursuit, but afterwards the solution is more difficult. There is no defined time limit for hot pursuit activity, but Kovács (2018) who has an almost representative experience and insight in the Hungarian homicide investigation says that the dividing line is 1 week: if no detection is made by then, a protracted investigation should be prepared. For these investigations, and especially for follow-up investigations, in addition to newer and more advanced forensic tools, changed human relationships, motivations, bargaining, psychological battles may be the solution, which makes psychological tools particularly important (Tremmel et al., 2005, 223; Alföldi, 2012; Youngs and Zeyrek-Rios, 2014; Kovács et al., 2019, 262-271), among which profiling is the most important.

Criminal profiling (Chapter 2) is a field of applied criminal psychology, a multidisciplinary, non-legal, criminal ancillary science, a criminological method (Alföldi, 2012). It is defined as the reconstruction of the main personality and behavioural characteristics of the offender based on a psychological analysis of the traces of the offence (Ressler et al., 1995, 10; Csernyikné Póth and Fogarasi, 2006, 213). Profiling analyses the clues at the scene in the same way as any other part of the investigation, but from a different perspective, it draws conclusions that provide background information for the investigation, thus supporting decision-making both in the pre-detection and post-detection phases. Its use is wide-ranging, both in terms of crimes and the investigative process, in narrowing down the suspect pool before detection, in setting up the investigative strategy, and in designing the interrogation strategy and analysing possible seriality after detection (Turvey, 2012, 126).

There are several trends in profiling, which differ in their method of inference and in their professional starting point, typologies of homicide (Douglas et al., 2006; Ressler et al., 1995; Canter, 2000; Salfati, 2000, 2001; Santtila et al., 2003; Coupe, 2003; Turvey, 2012). However, the basic principles are the same for all methods.

The first principle is the homology premise, which states that those who commit crimes against similar victims in a similar way, presumably come from the same background, and have similar background characteristics. Also, different styles of offending are associated with different background characteristics. This assumption also allows for statistical profiling and the development of typologies (Doan, 2008, 10; Elekesné Lenhardt, 2015).

The second principle is the consistency premise, which states that how a person behaves in one situation is consistent with how he or she manifests in other situations (Ellerby, 1986, iv). This is a concept rooted in trait theory in psychology, according to which there are basic traits that are deeply rooted in the person, and from this comes stability. Profiling relies on this consistency in the person to define the offender, differentiate him from other offenders, allow cases to be linked, and provide the basis for inferences about personality traits (Doan, 2008, 9). The profiling models already mention that the homicidal process does not end with the death of the victim, but the focus then shifts to the occurrence of the offence and its practical and psychological consequences. In fact, everything that happens after and in connection with the homicide is considered a post-offensive phase (Bakóczi, 1984, 198; Walter et al., 2015), from what the perpetrator does with the body to whether he increases his alcohol consumption or starts going to church more in the months after the offence. Knowledge of the post-offence phase is useful in all areas of profiling because it helps us to understand the crime, and it can

lead to deeper understanding and more effective and creative solutions in investigative work (Ressler et al., 1995, 57). However, research in this area is virtually non-existent.

In my thesis, I have reviewed and analysed in detail those post-offensive behaviours (Chapter 3) and emotions that have been substantively addressed in the literature at least at a minimal level. Although it should be borne in mind that these behaviours are almost always multi-layered and may occur against a variety of motivational backgrounds, which can only be interpreted in conjunction with other behavioural elements and in the context of a pattern, it has emerged that these behaviours always have either an emotion-regulating function or a practical purpose of managing and resolving the situation. Emotions, on the other hand, are usually expressed as a reaction to the stress of the situation and are often manifested in post-offensive behaviours.

However, this pattern is not only observed in the post-offence phase. The underlying idea behind the broad types and concepts seen in profiling - organised and disorganised, modus operandi and signature, instrumental and expressive - and the factor underlying the differentiation is in fact the same in all these concepts: the function of the behaviours are either practical or emotional, or the focus of the offence and the offender is on functional or emotional factors; the offender is reacting to the outside world, to the situation, or to the inner world and his emotional needs. This is very reminiscent of the problem-focused and emotion-focused coping dichotomy (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). In this framework, problem-focused coping is defined as any offending behaviour that seeks to conceal the offender. Emotion-oriented coping is any behaviour that is primarily or exclusively intended to manage the offender's level of distress.

Although the interpretation of the act of homicide as a way of coping (see for example Agnew, 2001) is not a new idea, the analysis of the post-offence phase is generally neglected in the existing conceptualisations. Only Cassar et al. (2003), in their model of the post-offensive phase, which is an integral part of the homicide process, point out that the path to homicide and the subsequent phase are centrally determined by the stress experienced by the perpetrator, the associated emotions and the way they are dealt with and coped with (Chapter 4). Of course, a number of factors influence the intensity, valence and course of this stress. However, we also know that stress sensitivity is a fairly fundamental part of personality structure and determines the degree of stress and anxiety a person is prone to experience in relation to life events. We also know that this sensitivity, as a fundamental personality trait, is largely inherited and

determined at the neural level, and therefore can hardly be influenced volitionally (Vollrath and Torgensen, 2000; Barlow et al., 2014).

Connecting the threads so far and looking for a concept that is at the intersection of these, i.e., that meets the needs of both empirical research and profiling, is useful in investigation, is easy to grasp, is well measurable, and is hardly influenced by the offender. We find that stress and coping are constructs that perfectly meet all these criteria, which moreover implicitly permeate profiling concepts.

Research objectives

The aim of my thesis was to explore post-offensive behaviours as widely as possible and to empirically examine the following questions. Does the style of the offence, the pattern of behaviour, reveal the stress experienced during and after the offence? How does this stress and its course become visible in the phenomena of the post-offensive phase? How do offenders cope with the stress associated with the homicide? How does this relate to their general coping patterns? What happens in the post-offensive phase? Is it possible to infer these post-offensive events from the way and style of offending through the experience of stress? The aim of the research was therefore to find patterns and correlations between variables in the following areas:

the characteristics of the offence; the level of stress and emotional state experienced by the offender; the offender's general coping characteristics; the post-offensive behaviour and experiences of the offender. Furthermore, since my research has attempted to incorporate the events of the post-offensive phase into the homicide and profiling process with the aim of making it useful for investigative work, I will focus on offenders who have spent a significant amount of time at large after committing homicide - I will refer to them as late apprehended perpetrators.

Hypotheses for research

Hypothesis 1: Marked differences will be observed between early and late apprehended perpetrators along descriptive data, offending characteristics, anxiety propensity, coping strategies, so there are dimensions that determine or reveal early in the investigation process which offenders are apprehended early and which are not. The analysis from this point onwards will focus on offenders who have spent at least one week undetected (late apprehended), as further investigation in this area makes sense.

Hypothesis 2: Based on offence characteristics, offences can be classified into previously described (organised/disorganised or instrumental/expressive) or newly formed groups; among late apprehended offenders, there is a statistically detectable relationship between offence style or offence characteristics and the level of stress experienced during and after the offence, i.e. the degree of stress experienced during and/or after the offence, as well as its progression can be predicted based on the offence style.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the stress experienced during and after the offence and post-offensive behaviour among late apprehended offenders, i.e. the degree and course of the stress experienced can be used to draw conclusions about post-offensive behaviour.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between stress experienced during and after the offence and post-offensive coping and subjective reactions among late apprehended offenders, i.e. the degree and course of stress experienced can be used to infer post-offensive coping strategies and subjective reactions.

Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between the general and the post-offending coping strategies of late apprehended offenders and their deviations from the general (consistency principle).

Research methods

During the research, I collected data from several sources as follows.

Tests:

- I applied the Spielberger's State and Trait Anxiety Inventory Trait Part; STAI-T (Sipos és mtsai, 1988) to measure the offenders' chronic proneness to anxiety.
- I applied the Spielberger's State and Trait Anxiety Inventory State Part; STAI-S (Sipos és mtsai, 1988) by changing the time-element of the instruction to measure the level of anxiety or stress of the perpetrators experienced in the hours or days after the homicide (PO STAI S).
- I applied the Perceived Stress Scale; PSS (Stauder & Konkoly-Thege, 2006) also by changing the time–element of the instruction to measure the frequency of subjective experiences resulting from the stress experienced in the period between the homicide and the capture, such as excitement due to unexpected events, feelings of hardship or the experience of effective problem–management (PO Észlelt Stressz).

- I used Preferences of Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Megküzdési Mód Preferencia Kérdőív (MMPK) (Oláh, 1986, 1993) to examine the strategies, ways of responding and action applied and preferred by the offenders when in a threatening or emberrassing situation and by what means they try to resolve the conflicts or avoid them.
- I used Preferences of Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Megküzdési Mód Preferencia Kérdőív (MMPK) (Oláh, 1986, 1993) with instructions modified according with the post–offensive stage, by which I measured strategies, modes of response and action used between the homicide and the capture (PO MMPK).
- I applied Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire CERQ (Miklósi és mtsai., 2011) only with instructions modifies according to the post–offensice phase and specifically used for even finer and more detailed mapping of cognitive processes for regulating negative emotions caused by the difficult life situations experienced between the homicide and the capture (PO KÉRK).

Self-designed tools

- I asked simple questions about the intensity and curve (diminishing, increasing) of stress and their subjective extent.
- I applied a set of questions on post-offensive behaviours between the homicide and the capture (PO REACT) in which there were listed behaviours, physiological and subjective experiences which, based on literature and experience, can be characteristic of this period.

Content analysis of judgement publications, document analysis

- I marked the offence characteristics of the index homicide by predefined variables for which I used several previous lists: the Crime Clasification Manual and the fact sheet used by the FBI for profiling purposes to be completed by investigative agencies (Douglas és mtsai., 2006), variable list used in research of investigative psychology studies, (for example Gabrielle Salfati, 2000, 2001), variables of the Modus Operandi register used in Hungarian practice ((22/2000. (XII. 29.) ORFK utasítás a Modus Operandi Nyilvántartás ideiglenes Szabályzata kiadásáról, 2000).
- I collected variables on the offender's post-offensive behaviours using a bottom up method, during which the set of variables develops from and is rooted in empirical data.

The data collection took place in the first half of 2015. In all cases, the questionnaires were completed in the penitentiary institutions, in a quiet and calm place designated for this purpose. In all cases, I asked the inmates for permission to collect their data and to get access to their judgement publications. The filling of the questionnaires took place in groups, during which no staff member was present except for the head of the research.

The participating prisoners were given written beforehand and verbal information at the beginning of the recruitment, in which I explained the purpose of the research, the method, the meaning of anonymity and that there was no payment for participation. The participants were given precise information on how to complete the survey. These included that if someone had several different homicide offences, they should always think of the first one (the so-called index offence) of their present sentence when answering. I specifically stressed that the data collection could be interrupted at any time and that all data would be deleted on request. I indicated to the participants that the questions might bring up unpleasant memories and encouraged them to seek available psychological help if necessary.

Since in my research I am attempting to incorporate the events of the post-offensive stage into the process of homicide as well as profiling with the aim of making it usable for investigative purposes, I need to focus on the offenders who have spent appreciable time at large after the homicide. In the absence of other criteria I defined the circle of late apprehended cases which provide longer time and space for profiling based on the opinion of Kovács (2018) who draws the line in 1 week between homicides that can be solved quickly or those requiring longer investigation. The analysis of the data after examination the first hypothesis only involves late apprehended offenders.

The study included a total of 129 detainees convicted for homicide, most of whom served their sentences in the Szeged Strict and Medium Regime Prison (72.9%), few of them in the Budapest Strict and Medium Regime Prison (12.4%), and the female convicts in the Kalocsa Strict and Medium Regime Prison (14%). 1 person from the Forensic Psychiatric and Mental Institution was included in the study.

During the research 1,066 people served a final custodial sentence for the crime of murder in the Hungarian penitentiary, thus, the 129 people achieved in the research make up to 12.1% of the target population, which in my opinion can be considered a good rate. The gender distribution was 86-14% in favour of males. The average age at the time of the offense was 28.97 years. Most of the convicts had absolved 8 classes of primary school (48%) or had vocational qualifications (25%).

The vast majority of the index homicide was completed homicide (95.1%), but there were some cases where the victim or one of the victims survived (4.9%). In this sample, the majority of the offenders had a criminal record (61.9%). Within these, 10 people had committed at least one murder other than the index homicide, that is, they set out on the path of becoming or even becoming serial killers.

79 offenders (62.7%) were apprehended within a weeks of the index homicide (early apprehended offenders), and 47 (37.3%) offenders were arrested at least 1 week after the index homicide (late apprehended offenders).

Data were analysed using SPSS for Windows version 15.0.

A concise summary of the studies carried out

Hypothesis 1, assuming marked differences between early and late apprehended offenders along descriptive data, offence characteristics, anxiety disposition, coping strategies, was not confirmed.

Of the large number of variables examined, the two groups show differences in only one offense characteristic (robbery gone wrong) and two coping mechanisms: coping of late apprehended offenders is more problem–focused and aims to change the situation and they are more prone to withdraw from the outer world and the threatening stimuli to hold on to their stability but not giving up on the possibility of problemsolving.

Moreover, at an informational level only, there was a tendency for homicide perpetrators in general to have a higher than average tendency to quit, procrastinate, resign and give up, a self-punitive, self-blame tendency, and a tendency to uncontrolled emotional outbursts, but a lack of focus on dealing with the negative feelings of the situation.

However, these results fall short from what we could call pronounced or easily graspable differences.

Hypothesis 2, has not been supported. The assumption according to which offences can be classified on the basis of the offence characteristics into the previously described (organised/disorganised or instrumental/expressive) or newly formed groups has not been confirmed. The clustering did not yield any results thus no groups, types or styles suitable for practical use have been identified.

The assumption that the degree and course of the stress experienced during and/or after the homicide can be predicted on the basis of the modus operandi, has also not been supported. Of the large number of offence variables examined there were only a few fairly general

characteristics (absence of theft from the scene, death by asphyxiation of the victim, stabbing instrument, instrument found at the scene, multiple instruments used) for which the relationship sought could be detected.

Hypothesis 3, according to which the degree and course of the stress experienced will allow conclusions to be drawn about post-offensive behaviour was only partially confirmed. On one hand there are clear trends. No significant relationship was found between post-offensive behaviours and stress experienced during the offence. However, post-offence stress was lower for those who followed the events in the media, kept informed about the status of the investigation, hid the stolen items, did not hide after the offence, and planned or carried out another homicide and killed again within six months.

On the other hand the relationships found cannot be considered stable due to the low number of cases.

Hypothesis 4, that the degree and course of stress experienced can be used to deduce postoffensive coping characteristics and subjective reactions, was confirmed, with the degree and course of stress being related to a well-defined pattern of post-offensive reactions and coping strategies.

Firstly, using factor analysis, I was able to group the 66 items of the self-designed questionnaire (PO REACT) describing post-offensive reactions into six factors. These are, in descending order of mean scores, as follows. First, oral and dissociative methods of defusing tension, centred around manoeuvres that aim to dissociate from the situation either chemically or through active denial. Reversed items that inhibit dissociation are dreaming of apprehension, following the case in the media and in the conversation of others, and the multiplication of conflicts. Second, indifference, characterized by the absence of emotional reactions related to both the occurrence of the offence and the apprehension. Thirdly, restlessness and fatigue of anxiety, consisting of items indicating mainly restlessness due to anxiety, sleep problems, panic attacks and increasing startle, changes in sexual urges, feelings of weakness and fatigue, and avoidance of the police. Quarterly, defensive manoeuvres and actions, which indicate post-offensive precautions taken to avoid being apprehended, and are aimed at mapping the points of possible failure, gathering information, making plans, covering or altering the forensic evidence. Fifth in line, acute somatic reactions including somatic manifestations of stress, such as crying, dizziness, feeling sick. These are more acute and less profound than, sixth in line, chronic somatic reactions i.e.

altered appetite, digestion, performance at work, headaches, which are typically bodily symptoms of prolonged high tension.

Secondly, based on the results of the questionnaires examining the post-offensive coping of late apprehended offenders, a distinctive pattern emerges, according to which the period between the crime and the apprehension is dominated by guilt and self-blame, and is marked by the exaggeration and catastrophising of the negative aspects and harmful consequences of the incident. The resulting emotions are not relieved, the search for social support, the putting of the events into perspective, the comparison with other experiences, and possibly the assignment of positive meanings to them are absent. Passive resignation to the situation, the postponement of solutions and the withdrawal from the situation are typical. Efforts to change the situation and the search for a solution is activated, there is a lot of preoccupation with what could be done in the situation, but the level of problem-focused coping is still far below average. Efforts to maintain personal stability by shifting attention from the threat to the self, while not giving up the possibility of changing the situation, are also below average, although we have seen earlier that this coping style is more prevalent in late apprehended offenders than in early apprehended offenders.

Two distinctive themes emerge from the correlations between coping styles and reactions. Firstly, the exaggeration of the negative aspects and harmful consequences of what happened correlates with a constant and unproductive preoccupation with feelings and thoughts about what happened. Catastrophising is also associated with a tendency to evaluate the threat, the negative experience, as a legitimate and legitimate response to previous inappropriate, undesirable behaviour, and with thoughts in which the person blames him or herself for the occurrence of the negative life event.

The second theme focuses on the coping strategy, where the person's efforts are directed only at eliminating the negative, unpleasant emotional state caused by the threat. This has a circular correlation with avoidance, whereby the person exits the situation and delays intervention, and positive focus shift, whereby the person redirects attention from negative events to pleasant cognitions. Emotion focus, an effort focused on relieving negative emotional states, is also associated with tension control, in which the primary goal is to maintain personality stability by shifting attention from the threat to the self and maintaining the possibility of changing the situation. It is also correlated with problem-focused coping strategies, in which the goal is to change the situation, to remove the threat, and this is correlated with considering the behavioural strategies that could be used to resolve the situation.

Considering the stress experienced during the offence we see it is accompanied by ruminations, i.e. a constant and unproductive preoccupation with feelings and thoughts about the experience. The stress experienced in the hours and days after the offence, and the stress experienced in the period between the offence and the apprehension, was even associated with only the restlessness and fatigue of anxiety of post-offensive coping and reactions, and this anxiety was also associated with somatic reactions such as altered appetite, digestion, work performance, headaches, and crying, dizziness, and feeling sick.

In terms of the course of the stress response we again see two types. Firstly, late apprehended offenders who were initially calmer after the offence, but whose stress increased until the apprehension, were more prone to interpreting threats and negative emotional experiences as a legitimate response to their previous inappropriate, undesirable behaviour. More frequent were subjective reactions indicating restlessness due to anxiety, sleep problems, panic attacks and increasing startle, changes in sexual urges, weakness and fatigue, depression and withdrawal from people, avoidance of the police and also somatic reactions such as altered appetite, digestion, performance at work, headaches. Secondly, those who felt very upset after the offence, but who calmed down over time and eventually calmed down, more often reported indifference, lack of emotional reactions to the offence and the apprehension.

Hypothesis 5, according to which conclusions can be drawn about post-offence coping patterns and their deviations from general coping patterns of the offenders, was confirmed. The post-offence coping pattern parallels the general pattern of homicide offenders, but there is a marked trend in the direction of the shifts observed in the post-offence phase. Compared to the coping generally typical for homicide offenders, the post-offensive phase is characterised by a decrease in the already low level of problem-focused strategy and tension control, and a search and need for peer support to find a solution. In contrast, self-punitive tendencies and passive acquiescence increase in the post-offense phase.

Summarised conclusions

A comparison of early apprehended offenders and late apprehended offenders shows that it is the basic attitude of the offender that most distinguishes those caught within a week or more, as evidenced by the higher incidence of robbery-murder among late apprehended perpetrators, and the ruthless and extremely instrumental exploitative characteristic attitude by treating the victim totally as an object. Nor do the characteristics of the offence, or the immediate reactions that follow, differentiate.

Furthermore, offence characteristics did not prove to be a suitable way of classifying offences into distinct and analysable groups in the present study. Nor was there an arrangement reminiscent of, or corresponding to, the organised/disorganised or the expressive/instrumental dichotomy. This is probably due to the relatively low number of elements but also to the heterogeneity of the cases in the sample.

The direct link between individual offending behaviours and offender characteristics did not yield any valuable results either.

Much more revealing results were obtained by examining the internal, subjective experiences of offenders.

Although only indicative and at a trend level, the coping pattern of the total offender population is different from the average Hungarian population, which parallels previous results (Daffern et al., 2010; Elisha et al., 2010). The present results show a pattern where the person tends to get stuck in situations that are difficult for him or her to tolerate, because the capacity and repertoire that could be mobilized to change and to create the emotional state that allows change, is insufficient and is mostly limited to avoidance and acceptance as deserved and resigning to its immutability. Thus, the situation and the accompanying tension may be perpetuated, possibly escalating further through self-blame tendencies, which may then explode in uncontrolled acting-out and anger-out episodes when the tension becomes unsustainable. This also makes the conceptualisation of the homicide as an attempt of coping (Agnew, 2001) even more clearly comprehensible.

A comparison of the coping of offender groups, early and late apprehended offenders, also showed that the coping of late apprehended offenders is more problem-oriented and solution-focused. On the other hand, late apprehended offenders are more prone to withdraw from the outside world and threatening stimuli, in order to maintain emotional stability while still seeking opportunities to change the situation. This balance is thought to play a major role in better tolerance of stress, paving the way for problem-focused solutions that can help avoid the apprehension in the longer term. This parallels the results of Cassar et al. (2003), who found that offender self-regulation, and thus coping, plays an essential role in the processes before and after homicide.

Comparing the general coping patterns of late apprehended offenders with those after the offence, we see that the coping in the two periods is similar, with the characteristics of the general pattern becoming more pronounced or exaggerated in the post-offence phase. This parallelism supports one of the theoretical principles of profiling, the premise of consistency, according to which the way a person behaves in one situation is consistent with the way he or she manifests in other situations (Ellerby, 1986). By further examining the post-offensive coping of late apprehended offenders, a distinctive and detailed picture emerged. There is evidence from several sources that the period between the offence and the arrest is dominated by guilt and self-blame. In addition, there is a marked tendency to magnify and catastrophise the negative aspects and harmful consequences of what happened.

At the same time, the resulting emotions are not soothed, the search for peer support, the putting into perspective of what happened, the comparison with the experiences of other situations or persons, and

the possible assignment of positive meaning is lacking. This is, of course, also due to the specificity of the situation, given that seeking peer support is a less viable option at this time, both in terms of practical and psychological self-defence (Malmquist, 2006).

The post-offensive phase is also characterised by a kind of resigned attitude, passive resignation to the situation, postponing solutions, and withdrawal from the situation. At the same time, however, efforts to change the situation and to find a solution are activated, although the already low level of problemoriented coping and tension control is further reduced after the crime.

Two distinctive post-offensive coping themes emerge in late apprehended offenders. In the first theme, the negative perspective and the tendency to intensify it, the tendency to magnify and catastrophise negative consequences, the rumination and grinding about them, and the experience or even magnification of one's own responsibility form a coherent and distinct circle in the post-offensive processes. The second theme focuses on a coping strategy where the person's efforts are directed only at eliminating the negative, unpleasant emotional state of the threat through coping manoeuvres of procrastination, quitting, as well as distraction and redirection of attention focus. However, maintaining stability in this way does not necessarily mean giving up on changing the situation, and it is likely that the reduced tension will open the way to problem-focused coping and the development of plans to resolve the situation.

Linking objective post-offensive behaviours to offence characteristics or stressful experiences did not yield substantive results. However, significant results were obtained from the assessment of subjective post-offensive reactions, which were grouped into six thematically consistent and well-defined clusters using factor analysis. The post-offensive reaction with the highest average was oral and dissociative stress management, i.e. alcohol/drug use, daydreaming, emotional escape from the situation, which were counteracted by dreaming about the apprehension, following the case in the media and in the conversation of others, and increasing the number of conflicts. This was followed by a factor of indifference characterised by a lack of emotional reactions. Also among the most typical reactions is the third factor, restlessness and anxiety, and the associated symptoms of exhaustion, which are not so much coping as the appearance of tension indicating the progression and exhaustion phase of the stress reaction. The next response is a scale covering a range of problem-focused and goal-driven mental and behavioural defensive strategies, tactics and manoeuvres. The rarest were acute and chronic somatic symptoms, which again could be interpreted not as coping but as manifestations of chronic stress.

One of the hypotheses of the research was that the stress experienced in relation to the offence creates a link between offence characteristics and post-offence events. This hypothesis was not confirmed, mainly because the relationships between offending characteristics and stress indicators turned out to be quite and surprisingly sporadic. However, in my own experience in psychological profiling, when analysing the cases it is very easy to track at which point or points in the offence the perpetrator is under stress, at which elements he or she is rational, calm and focused, and where his or her behaviour becomes disorganised, hasty, purposeless, impulse-driven. From a psychological perspective and by looking at

and reconstructing the offence in depth, this can be clearly seen and established. It is therefore a surprising result for me to see such a lack of support for this hypothesis. However, in my view, this does not mean that the hypothesized relationship does not exist, only that it is barely detectable by statistical methods, or at least by the method used here, or with a relatively small sample. Previous research also points out that it significantly matters whether we are looking at behavioural or psychological layers, individual behaviour or psychological themes. In this case, it seems that it is more the internal (psychological) variables that may lead to results, and a deeper, more refined analysis, perhaps with a larger sample size or a clustering not feasable here, is needed to explore the relationship between offending characteristics and stress indicators. This also indicates to us that the omission of in-depth psychological examination from the analysis of offences and from the profiling process undermines its effectiveness and can lead to a significant loss of information.

In general, the stress associated with the offence and the post-offence phase are highly stressful events and periods in the lives of offenders. However, the degree of stress experienced during the offence did not show any relationship with any variable across the whole study, supporting the separation of the offence and the post-offence phase, which is also supported by the sporadic association of offence characteristics with other stress indicators. This separation of the offence and post-offence phases, as opposed to treating them as a single process, is important information for profiling and future research in this area.

Among late apprehended offenders, the degree of stress experienced after the offence was most associated with offence characteristics that indicated impulsivity, spontaneity, expressiveness and disorganization of the offence. Among post-offensive behaviours, elements associated with increased risk of being caught or awareness of this threat, and areas of confrontation with external and internal impulses related to the offence (e.g. following media content related to the offence) were also associated with higher anxiety and stress. This parallels the findings for other internal experiences.

The results on the course of the stress response frame previous results well and can be interpreted as an extension of the earlier results of Cassar and Ward (2003). Furthermore, the emergence of more tense, hurried, less tolerant and more calm, goal-driven, problem-oriented types is reminiscent of the core concepts of the organized/disorganized and expressive/instrumental dichotomies, respectively.

Tension and anxiety symptoms and their somatic manifestations generally increase with the intensity of the stress experienced in the post-offensive phase, but this is particularly the case for offenders who were calm after the offence and gradually became more and more stressed. The initial calmness or even indifference is mostly characteristic of anger and retaliatory type offences, where the homicide releases the aggressive or other affective tension that has escalated to intolerable levels, or diminishes the external or internal conflict or sense of threat that has triggered it, and results in a high degree of relief (Bakóczi, 1984; Keppel and Birnes, 2003; Schlesinger, 2004). There are also offenders who are satisfied with the offence and initially experience calmness or indifference, but over time they experience mood swings, paranoia or hypersensitivity, feelings that are more related to the apprehension than to the

offence itself (Cassar et al., 2003; Keppel and Birnes, 2003). In this type, after an initial calm, the anxiety tension is renewed and intensified. This may be characterised by a coping pattern where the period between the offence and the apprehension is dominated by high levels of stress and guilt and self-blame, as well as by the perception or even exaggeration of one's own responsibility, and catastrophising the negative aspects and harmful consequences of what happened, ruminating and grinding over what happened.

In this group, the failure to calm emotions in the aftermath of an offence, to seek peer support, to put events into perspective, to compare them with others' experiences or different ones, and perhaps to invest them with positive meaning, can result in a significant build-up of stress, anxiety, guilt and shame, which coincides with the course curve of stress (Adshead et al., 2015).

In the other type of course of stress, after the initial tension, there was a calming down and even indifference, a lack of emotional reactions. This is probably also due to the fact that stress reactions usually disappear if the triggering factors diminish, or if the person moves away from the triggering event in time, or if the situation becomes stable and the person slowly gets used to and adapts to the new situation. However, it is also possible that this is due to the coping strategies that are thought to be associated with this course of stress. Here, the effort to maintain emotional stability in the post-offensive phase is mainly associated with coping manoeuvres related to distraction and redirection of attention. This can result in a kind of resigned attitude, passive resignation to the situation, postponement of solutions, withdrawal from the situation, all of which serve to distance the threat. In this context, the low level of peer support seeking and use may also have a different meaning than in the other group, and psychological self-protection and distancing from anxiety-provoking stimuli may be more pronounced. The balance thus created may open the way for the activation of problem-centered coping strategies, efforts to change the situation, the search for solutions, the production of plans, active situation management, which are otherwise typically weak. This disengagement in the pursuit of balance and concomitant preoccupation with situation management is specific to late apprehended offenders and may be a significant element of apprehension avoidance. This is in line with Cassar and Ward (2003), who found that generally offenders who avoided being apprehended for a longer period of time were often characterised by a calm or even indifferent attitude after the offence (although this may have changed over time) and a continuous assessment of the situation.

The results suggest that lower levels of stress and associated indifference in the post-offensive phase are typical of perpetrators who plan or commit an additional homicide. This may be due to the fact that psychopathy associated with general emotional indifference and reduced stress sensitivity is of particular importance among serial offenders (Christianson et al., 2007, 7; Häkkänen et al., 2007; Sturup, 2016). In addition, prolonged periods of undetection can bring not only peace of mind to the offender, but also a sense of achievement, self-confidence, a sense of superiority, and an overestimation of one's own criminal and intellectual abilities. In addition to tranquillity and narcissistic satisfaction, homicide can also appear as a means of solving problems or obtaining pleasure, which can be used when necessary

and which is more easily accessed at other times. This constellation can almost inspire further homicides (Barta, 2003, 189).

Of these two distinct themes, the first can be called "escalating tension and self-blaming-catastrophising coping", the second "attenuating tension and indifferent-distancing coping".

It should be borne in mind, however, that the correlations described here, although consistent with previous findings, are best considered as hypotheses worthy of further, more detailed and deeper research.

New scientific results

My research has led to the following independent scientific results.

1. I have proved that deeper psychological analysis is essential in the profiling process, and that a move towards purely statistical methods undermines the usefulness of profiling. My position is supported by my results which show that the linking of offender experiences to offence characteristics, the differences between early and late apprenhended offenders, and the analysis of what happens in the post-offence phase cannot be meaningfully analysed by purely statistical analysis of surface behavioural characteristics. This should be investigated through a deeper and more subtle psychological analysis.

2. I have shown that the link between the homicide and the post-offensive phase is not the stress experienced during or after the offence. My results show that, contrary to the view that the post-offensive phase is an integral part of the homicidal offence and process, the two are rather distinct and should be treated as separate phases.

3. I pioneered exploring the internal events of the post-offensive phase and grouping them thematically. This is a significant advance in understanding the homicide process, in that the internal events of the post-offensive phase can be classified into six thematically consistent groups: oral and dissociative coping; indifference; restlessness and anxiety and associated symptoms of exhaustion; defensive strategies; acute somatic symptoms; and chronic somatic symptoms.

4. I have proved that among homicidal offenders who have not been apprehended for at least one week after a homicide, the pattern of coping and post-homicide coping is similar, and typically distinct from the Hungarian general population. Furthermore, after homicide, there is an intensification of the coping patterns that are common to offenders. This result also supports the consistency premise of profiling.

5. I have demonstrated that there are well-understandable patterns and types in the post-offensive coping of late apprehended homicidal offenders. Within the general picture of late apprehended offenders, I defined two distinctive themes defined by the type of stress reaction course, which I termed "escalating tension and self-blaming-catastrophising coping" and "attenuating tension and indifferent-distancing coping".

6. Based on the results, I have proved that the intrapsychic and thus behavioural events of the postoffensive phase are not primarily determined by the level of stress experienced per se, but by the type and course of stress reaction.

Recommendations for the practical use of research results

Knowledge of post-offensive behaviour and experiences can be used in several areas. It is important for professionals working in the reintegration of offenders, especially psychologists, since processing the offence is an important element in preventing re-offending. However, the focus of my research was on its use in profiling.

Although in the present study offences could not be classified into types based on offence characteristics and offence characteristics could not be linked to post-offence reactions, the results provide us with exciting hypotheses that inspire further investigation. The increasingly tense, self-blamingcatastrophizing coping type is thematically presumably linked to disorganized, expressive, and powerreassurance, possibly anger-retaliatory types, while the initially tense but then distancing and indifferent type may be more likely to be found in organized, instrumental, power-assertive, and sadistic types of offences, which may help in prioritizing individuals to the suspect pool. These relationships are worth exploring in future research.

In the assessment of case linkage and the possibility of an offence being serial, the interpretation of reoffending as a post-offensive behaviour becomes important. The post-offensive experiences of the offenders involved are characterised by low stress levels, diminishing of inhibitions against homicide, and, over time, a sense of success, increased self-confidence and even narcissistic satisfaction. In this context, self-blaming, catastrophising, ruminative coping themes are unlikely. Such perpetrators are also assisted by a number of psychological mechanisms to deflect guilt and shame, and to devalue the victim and the offence. Thus, what is most likely is the indifferent, detached functioning and coping described here, which allows for planning and detection-preventing behaviours, and the attenuating the generally low but initially perhaps somewhat higher levels of tension. This is the case even if there is an increase in tension over time, since in this context it is a tension of needs and not of fear.

A deeper understanding of post-offensive behaviour and reactions can be a highly innovative tool, especially in areas such as developing investigative strategies, creative tactical steps, proactive techniques, targeted media strategy and communication, setting psychological traps, involving the public in data collection, targeting the perpetrator or his or her environment. In these procedures, based on the knowledge of the post-offensive emotional state a specific response from the perpetrator can be expected, by offering a stimulus targeting issues that are sensitive to the perpetrator, thus exposing the perpetrator either to his immediate environment or directly to the authorities. These are lesser known uses of profiling, but they can be of considerable benefit, especially in more complex cases requiring longer investigations. In this context, the knowledge of the types of coping styles and their

manifestations found here is of particular importance, as it can determine the basic direction of the strategy to be adopted. It provides a reference point that is well defined, easily recognisable and less subject to conscious and deliberate control by the offender. Therefore, linking post-offensive coping to the perpetration characteristics of the offence is an important area for further research.

The same is true for the planning of interrogation tactics. A homicidal offender does not open up easily and to just anyone. So in such cases it is essential to be properly prepared and to choose the right interrogation tactics. Planning the most effective techniques and warning of steps to be avoided is possible with knowledge of the offender's general and specific emotional, cognitive and behavioural reactions. For this the results obtained here provide important input even in their current form. Postoffensive behaviour is primarily a reflection of the offender's attitude towards his or her offence, its occurrence, his or her role in it, and the change in his or her identity. In fact, the interrogation behaviour itself can be considered as post-offensive behaviour. In short, with the self-punishing, catastrophising, ruminative types in their post-crime coping interrogation techniques of reducing tension, providing moral absolution for the offence and thus reducing feelings of guilt and shame that would inhibit disclosure may be effective. Whereas for the indifferent, distancing type, these are likely to be useless, while approaches that target rationality and maybe the narcissism of the perpetrator, may be more effective. However, knowing the structure of the coping pattern, more detailed strategies and approaches beyond these may be suggested.

An important result of my research is that the use of psychological variables and the analysis of the psychological functioning manifested in the perpetration - integrated with the statistical results - cannot be left out of the process, because without it the profile loses its depth and essentially its meaning.

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- 1999-2005: Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Humanities, ill. Faculty of Education and Psychology, psychology MA (full time student) – psychologist
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- 2003 professional practice Budapest Police Headquaters Criminal psychology laboratory
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 Since 2014: National University of Public Service, Faculty of Law Enforcement, Department of Corrections - lecturer and then assistant lecturer; subjects taught: Prison psychology 1-6., Psychology of homicide