

VALIDATION OF A TYPOLOGY OF PAKISTANI CRIMINALS BASED ON SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

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The purpose of this investigation was to compare two models of the classifications of criminals in terms of their psychological meaningfulness. 220 male convicts randomly selected from Pakistani prisons were interviewed in depth. On the basis of information obtained, the convicts were classified in terms of the traditional model based on the type of crime: against person versus against property. The same group was again classified in two groups of professional and non-professional criminals on the basis of an analysis of certain social and psychological factors like convicts' personalities, attitudes, offence patterns and interactional settings in which their crimes took place. The two groups based on each model were compared on a number of psychological variables indicating adversity during childhood and adolescence. The model based on social psychological factors seems to make better discrimination. The findings are discussed in terms of the cultural conditions of Pakistan, and implications for research and handling of convicts have been pointed out.

Crime represents heterogeneous forms of behaviour and there are many ways in which criminals might be classified. Two common categories yielded by legal definitions are property offenders and the criminals who commit violent crimes of assault and murder. But types of crimes denoted by legal statutes do not represent any homogeneous patterns of criminal behaviour. Moreover, as laws change in the course of time and vary from one society to another, the legal definition of crime and criminals has not provided a satisfactory category for purposes of scientific analysis. To illustrate, legal categories do not accurately distinguish various offence patterns. A person originally charged for murder may be finally pleaded guilty to a charge of only abetment in murder. Following the legal articles, thus, the murderous nature of his offence will become doubtful. Another problem with legal offence categories as the basis of classification is that the offenders do not, in many cases, consistently commit only a single type of deviant act; a person labelled as a thief today may become a murderer tomorrow.

A more serious difficulty is that legal classifications do not identify theoretically significant types. There is little reason to suppose that persons who commit murder in dacoity, at one hand, and those who commit the same crime in an interpersonal situation on some dispute, on the other hand, are the product of a uniform etiological process. Accordingly, the study of causal patterns in deviant behaviour is not likely to be advanced through such taxonomic schemes. It will be aided only through discovery of classifica-

tion categories which sort offenders into types in which a single etiological process does characterize the individuals included in a specific type. Many theorists and researchers thus maintain that within crime and delinquency, homogeneous patterns of deviant conduct can be identified if attention is directed toward investigation of specific offender types (see, for example, Bloch & Geis, 1962; Cavan, 1962; Cjinar, 1963; Gibbons, 1968; Lindesmith & Dunham, 1956).

The modern scientific approach, thus, views crime and criminals essentially as a social phenomenon. This approach stresses the need of classifying criminals in accordance with their personality types, their social orientation and the values and cultural definitions of the social world in which they live. Gibbons' (1968) emphasis on the analysis of certain variables like offense-pattern, interactional setting in which the crime takes place, and the attitudes and self-images of the offenders, in fact, makes it explicit that for understanding of criminal behaviour it is important to study the personality of the criminal and the process through which they adopt criminal roles and career in their lives. Gibbons argues that this approach yields homogeneous types in which the etiological process is the same for all members of the category. Thus the typology which is based on the social and psychological factors closely related to specific criminals is likely to give significant categories in both causal and treatment terms.

In the specific socio-cultural milieu of Pakistan, a typology based on social and psychological factors seems applicable, and looks somewhat necessary if one wants to explain different patterns of criminal behaviour. For example, the personality of a murderer who is a professional dacoit in an urban setting will be explained in a different way from that of a villager who commits a murder under the pressure of the social value of taking revenge, or on some interpersonal dispute.

In the present study, a typology based on social and psychological factors related to criminals has been employed to see whether in Pakistan same or a similar type of taxonomy can be used to classify criminals meaningfully in terms of both causal explanations and adequate handling of the offenders.

METHOD

Sample

The data collected in a previous study (Tariq & Durrani, 1983) were used to serve the purpose of this article. The data consisted of 220 male convicts who were randomly selected from various prisons of the country.

Instrument

The data were collected with the help of an interview guide. It consisted of different parts in which carefully stipulated and mostly indirect questions were set as guide lines for the interviewer. The questions were constructed and asked in such a way that the analysis of the responses could yield pertinent information about the convict. The information thus elicited related to the psychologically adverse conditions explored in the study, as well as to the offence pattern, the interactional setting in which the crime took place and a host of allied factors. Clinical method of probing was used while interviewing each subject.

Classifications of the Convicts

For the purpose of this article, the subjects were first categorized in terms of a traditional model of classification based on the nature of crime: convicts who had committed violence against person by indulging into crimes like murder and serious hurt, etc., and convicts who had committed crimes against property like theft and pickpocketing, etc. The only criterion followed in this classification was the main charge, as denoted by various articles of Pakistan Penal Code, for which the convicts had been tried and convicted.

The convicts were also categorized in terms of certain social and psychological factors. According to this model they were grouped into professional and non-professional criminals. For that, a set of definitions were formulated which clearly show that the type of crime was not the criterion which would classify criminals into one or the other group. It was mainly the personality of the criminal as evidenced by the offence pattern and social interactional setting in which the crime took place which defined him as a professional or a non-professional criminal. The set of definitions given below are mainly derived from the constructs propounded by Gibbons (1968) and Lindesmith & Dunham (1956).

Professional Criminals

(a) A professional criminal commits crime because crime is the main source of living for him. In other words, he carries out crime as an occupation. Thus, his life-style speaks of criminality. An analysis of the attitudes, self-concept and personality in general gives clues as regards the criminal life-style a professional has.

(b) As crime is a source of income for a professional criminal, he mostly engages himself in a variety of non-violent property crimes. However, those who commit crimes of violence against person while committing crimes

like dacoity, robbery, etc., could also be classified as professionals as their prime motive is usually the assault on property and not on person. However, it should be noted that it is not merely property offence which earns them the title of 'professionals'. It is, their way of life, and crime being an occupation which makes them professionals. A careful analysis of a law violator's offence behaviour gives information about his being a professional or a non-professional criminal.

Similarly, another specific type of criminals would also get included in the category of professionals who might indulge in any type of criminal activity including assault and murder. In fact, these are 'Gundas' (rogues), who would do anything to retain their influence in their respective areas. They are the persons who would harass ordinary people, and beat them up if they oppose or object to their activities or refuse to pay 'Jagga' (coercive) tax they usually demand. Backed by influential and rich persons of the locality, they themselves usually give protection to petty thieves and pick-pockets of the area. They do manifest a criminal life style through which they endeavour to seek power, money, and at times, fame as well.

(c) A professional usually commits premeditated crimes with planning and he carefully excutes them.

(d) A professional usually has past criminal record. His previous crimes, if any, also indicate that crime is his way of life and that he has been committing crime for living, out of habit, and peer pressures.

(e) A professional usually has criminal associations with others.

Non-Professional Criminals

(a) A non-professional criminal is the one who does not commit crime for a living. Neither does he manifest a criminal life style.

(b) A non-professional criminal commits crime mostly due to interpersonal conflicts in interactional situations. Thus, he usually commits crimes of violence against person like assault, aggravated assault or and murder.

(c) As most of these crimes take place in interactional situations on interpersonal disputes, many of these are committed in a spur of moment usually lacking premeditation and malice afore-thought. However, exception to this general observation is the fact that some crimes of even non-professional criminals could have the elements of detailed planning and careful execution. For example, those crimes which are committed under the pressure of certain social values like personally avenging the wrong done to somebody, have at times planning and careful execution. Nevertheless, such

crimes and their committers do lack an involvement in crime career, occupational skills, training, and a professional criminal life style.

(d) Normally, a non-professional criminal does not have past criminal record. Mostly, he is one-time loser, as the crime for which he gets convicted is the first ever committed by him. However, even if they are technically recidivists, a careful analysis of their previous encounters with law enforcing agencies reveal a non-professional pattern. Their interpersonal conflicts lead to scuffles and brawls resulting in physical and property losses. Such disputes trigger a chain of actions and reactions as a result of which the parties and individuals involved keep on facing arrests, trials, and even convictions. Thus, despite being a repeater, an individual could still be called a non-professional criminal.

(e) A non-professional usually does not have criminal associations typical of the professional.

Psychologically Adverse Conditions

The data on psychologically adverse conditions on which two models of classifications of criminals were compared were also taken from the previous study referred to above. The rationale of the inclusion of particular conditions in the study and their definitions have been given in detail in that study. To recapitulate, the adverse conditions studied were Physically Broken Home, Psychologically Disrupted Home, Defective Modes of Discipline administered by parents in childhood and early adolescence, Being not married and Having no children.

Scoring

As regards the afore-mentioned psychologically adverse conditions a subject got a score of one for each adverse condition if it was established that he had been exposed to that condition in his life. Thus, each subject could obtain a total of 0–5 score called the score of 'Psychological Adversity'.

Initially, two individuals (one being the author) did the classification and scoring independent of each other. Then discrepancies in both classification and scoring were thoroughly discussed and a consensus was attempted at. A few cases were excluded from the data where agreement could not be possible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows, firstly, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of Psychological Adversity as earned by convicts who committed violent

crimes of murder, hurt, etc., and those who committed only property offences. The same table then shows mean and standard deviation of scores of Psychological Adversity as earned by convicts when they were categorized as professionals or non-professionals.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Scores on Psychological Adversity
in types of crime and in types of criminals

Types	Mean (N)	SD	t
Against Person	1.53 (162)	1.357	
Type of crime			1.76*
Against Property	2.03 (33)	1.45	
Professional Criminals	2.5 (28)	1.69	
Type of criminals			2.82**
Non-Professional Criminals	1.56 (190)	1.23	

(*df = 190, $P < .086$; ** df = 216, $P < .008$)

It can be seen that when convicts classified as having committed different types of crimes are compared on Psychological Adversity Scores, they do not differentiate significantly ($p < .086$) among themselves. But when convicts are grouped according to their life-style, personality disposition, patterns of their offence behaviour, the interactional setting in which they had committed their crimes and other such allied factors, and then are put in two broad categories, namely, Professionals and Non-professionals, they differentiated quite significantly ($p < .008$) on Psychological Adversity Scores. This tend to support Gibbons' (1968) assertions that for a meaningful causal analysis, it is more appropriate to study the criminals and the social and psychological factors associated with them rather than what types of crimes they have committed.

In the context of Pakistani society, studying criminals rather than types of crimes they commit is likely to be not only useful but also indispensable. Normally, one might intuitively think that more heinous is the crime (murder, hurt, etc.) greater are the chances to suspect the psychological health and 'normality' of the individual who commits it. The findings of this study do not support this. In Pakistan, professionals commit mostly crimes of property and non-professionals indulge in heinous crimes against person (see table 2).

Table 2

Distribution of Types of Crime in Types of Criminals

Type of Criminal	Type of Crime		Total
	Against Person	Against Property	
Professional Criminals	14	12	26
Non-professional Criminals	147	20	167
Total	161	32	193

$$(X^2 = 16.60954 \text{ df} = 1 \text{ p} < .001)$$

An earlier study (Tariq & Durrani, 1983) had indicated that in Pakistan most of the murders and assaults take place in the rural areas and most property offences occur in cities. A sizable portion of violence against person is caused by land disputes and old enmities on land. The same study also revealed that many murders and hurts are caused by matters related to women. Family problems are another big source of causation of crimes of murder and hurt. The problems generated by matrimonial affairs, exchange and forced marriages of the girls and ensuing marital maladjustment are main factors of crimes of murder, particularly among female criminals (Tariq, 1981).

In the final analysis could be discovered factors like social values, institutional inefficiency and malpractices and complete dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of law enforcing agencies in the country as responsible for most of the crimes in Pakistan, particularly of murder, etc. Most such crimes are committed by simple, illiterate people who are in no way professionals but are usually unaware of the complicated legal procedures and repercussions of its violation. These people are mostly dissatisfied with the speed and fairness of justice dispensed in the country, and above all, are often compelled to take law in their own hands under the pressure of certain social values

like personal vengeance. Thus, once a hurt or murder takes place, a vicious chain of hurts and murders ensues. Old and persistent enmities are the natural outcome of cultural practices and result in many crimes committed by non-professional criminals.

The type of psychological adversity explored among the subjects of this study, thus, can hardly have a relevance to the non-professional criminals described above. In fact, their crimes do not seem to be aberrant or a socially deviant behaviour. On the contrary, it is a behaviour which is the outcome of a socialization process in a society where a social value is exalted and practiced to an extent that it becomes a potent force in the personality dynamics affecting behaviour. Hence the committers of such offenses, despite being free from psychologically adverse circumstances, succumb to pressure of social values and become criminals.

The professional criminals as defined in this study seem to have been exposed more frequently to psychologically adverse home conditions in childhood and early adolescence. The development of a criminal behaviour thus is to be explained with the help of some traditional theories. The psychologically adverse conditions at home combined with defective modes of discipline may adversely effect the social development of the child developing in him not only aggressive tendencies but also feelings of vengeance for the real or fancied wrongs happened to him in early life. The unpleasant home environment may repulse individuals from home and may motivate them to seek fulfilment of many deprivations outside home, particularly in association with delinquent and criminal groups existing in the society. Thus the crime of a professional speaks of the lack of constructive influences in his life and the chaos of his social environment. However, the research evidence is available which tells that adverse social and psychological conditions though become instrumental in producing professional criminals, these by no means are sufficient conditions. What is usually the determining factor is the contact with already developed 'criminal culture' and active criminal class (see, for example, Lindesmith & Dunham, 1956, p. 202 and Sutherland & Cressey, 1955, pp. 171-188). The surest opportunity to be in contact with such criminal influences is available to a first offender in a prison.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study have research as well as practical implications. It seems that for a better understanding of the etiological processes of criminal behaviour, attention should be directed toward specific types of criminals and the social and psychological factors concomitantly related with them, and not toward the crime or delinquency in general. As crime and delinquency represent heterogeneous forms of behaviour, different types of crimes as

denoted by legal articles do not indicate theoretically significant types. Instead, a taxonomic scheme which describes and classifies specific forms of criminals, like professionals and non-professionals, "one-time losers" and hardened recidivists, is likely to be more meaningful in terms of causal explanations. Therefore, further research should direct itself to the discovery of meaningful classifications of criminals, by breaking up the general category of law violators, into subgroups like the ones proposed in this study. Only then it seems possible to get homogeneous types of criminals whose behaviour could be explained with the help of some pertinent theories of crime causation.

As regards the handling or treatment of the offenders is concerned, there seems to be a great need of segregating inmates in prisons. Two main classifications could be suggested. Professional criminals, as defined in this study, should be kept away from the non-professionals and the first offenders. The professional criminals need different treatment and security measures. Any rehabilitative and reformatory steps, if taken, are likely to produce less effective and fruitful results on them. It could be even all right if they are kept in a maximum security prison at some farlon places. But the non-professional criminals should remain near their relatives so that they could have an easy contact with them. This segregation is also desirable as by this the first offenders and non-professional criminals could be protected from those harmful effects which the professionals are most likely to cast on them if both types are kept indiscriminately together. As regards the labour taken from prisoners, the non-professionals should be paid reasonable wages. This would assist in rehabilitative efforts of such convicts because if they receive wages in return of their labour, they will adopt a favourable attitude towards law, support their families outside and even accumulate savings to assist them in the difficult task of adjustment after release.

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