

Analyses on Criminal Personality and Its Typical Category

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Abstract

Criminal personality is a physical and psychological organization system with unified antisocial psychological characteristics and behavioral tendencies, a summation of antisocial psychological characteristics possessed by perpetrators or potential perpetrators, and a kind of antisocial personality seriously deviated from the norms. It can be clearly divided into normal criminal personality and abnormal criminal personality. Psychoanalysis, cognitive school, behaviorism, “Big Five” theory of personality and cognitive-affective theory have different points of view on its core components and formation mechanism, and have different application strategies and techniques for combating and preventing crime and correcting judicial practice of perpetrators.

Key words: Criminal motivation; Criminal thinking patterns; Criminal self-efficacy; Criminal personality

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INTRODUCTION

Criminal personality is a unique type of personality that is closely linked with biological factors and social factors, and seriously deviated from social norms.

This concept has a potential correlation with born criminals. The research of such extreme type of personality is originated from “mania without symptoms of madness”, “mean of mental pathology” from psychiatrists in the 19th century and other descriptions of clinical symptoms and discussion of brain pathology (Pinel, 1806; Moebius, 1894), feature description of antisocial behavior with a center of “selfishness” and “no moral sense” that is prevalent after the mid-20th century (Cleckley, 1976), and discussion of psychopathy and its diagnosis and intervention criteria, and intervention measures from clinical psychopathological experts in the late 20th century and in the 21st century, whose cores are “callous unemotional” (CU), and “conduct disorder” (CD) (Hare, 1995).

1. CONCEPT OF CRIMINAL PERSONALITY

Criminal personality is a summation of antisocial psychological characteristics possessed by perpetrators or potential perpetrators, a kind of serious antisocial personality, and a serious physical and psychological organization with serious antisocial behavior tendencies, wherein, criminal thinking pattern and antisocial personality disorder is one of the specific characterizations of the criminal personality. The criminal personality is a physical and psychological organization system with unified antisocial psychological characteristics and behavioral tendencies, with stability and continuity, which supports and maintains the criminal impulse, but it does not mean to necessarily lead to crime. Such characteristic of psychological tendency is consistent with the criminal motivation.

2. VIEWPOINT ON CRIMINAL PERSONALITY

2.1 Psychoanalysis and Criminal Personality

The psychoanalyst presents three main sources of criminal personality and criminal behavior; they are related to severe superego, weak superego or deviant superego. Severe superego and criminal personality: The criminal personality reflects severe superego. The needs of safety, recognition and status fail to meet in the family. Juvenile gangs or gang crime may represent an alternative satisfaction of these needs. Weak superego and criminal personality: Due to negative factors in an early development of personality, for example, narcissism or weak superego caused by maternal deprivation may exert influence through psychopathic personality in adulthood: Egoism, impulsively, non-guilt sense, non-sympathy and other personality traits play a primitive and aggressive role in criminal behaviors. Deviant superego and criminal personality: The third source of criminal behavior caused by negative personality (especially juvenile delinquency) is normal development of the superego standards, but the content of superego standard reflects deviant identity. When the juveniles consider illegal and criminal activities as an alternative

satisfaction of their own unconscious conflict, the criminal juveniles may not have much sense of guilt.

2.2 Theory on Wrong Thinking Model

American psychiatrists S. Yochelson and S. Samenow propose that, the so-called criminal personality is a unique type of personality, with the thinking model as the core to induce criminal behavior. This wrong thinking model can be divided into three categories: Criminal thinking model with the “personality traits” as the core, automatic thinking errors, and thinking errors that are directly linked to criminal behavior.

2.3 Eysenck’s Theory on Criminal Personality

The criminality is viewed as a kind of inherent tendency to commit a crime, describing criminal personality characteristics with the personality dimension related to differences in human temperament (i.e. ENP dimension). Eysenck’s theory of criminal personality focuses on the research of “initiative antisocial, psychopathic perpetrators”. Such perpetrators are an extreme example of insufficient socialization. The theory of criminal personality is not a theory applicable for all criminal behaviors, but it leads a trend to apply biological factors and social factors to the research of personality and criminal personality, and it is also an innovation of positivism methodology, which has an integrated view of criminal personality to a certain extent. Many subsequent judicial psychology researchers have adopted Eysenck’s viewpoint—the basic personality trait may extensively influence criminality (Huang, 2002).

2.4 “Big Five”, “Big Seven” Models of Personality and Criminal Personality

The personality structure will be fully discussed from five aggregation factors of personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism). Accordingly, the research of criminal personality also carries out OCEAN multi-dimensional difference analysis, for example, contrast of personality traits from five factors of the perpetrators and non-perpetrators. However, these researches are more in an existential state of groups of big factors and differences, which still fail to have definite conclusions on internal consistency and dynamic mechanism of criminal personality of perpetrators or potential perpetrators. The representative research in China in recent two decades is a comparative research between perpetrators and non-perpetrators, on a theoretical basis of “Big Seven” personality model (Wang & Cui, 2005). That is, for seven dimensions of extraversion, goodness, emotion, competence, interpersonal relationship, acting style and attitude of life, the difference between a criminal group and a control group: In addition to two big factors of competence and attitude of life, the perpetrators have a significant difference between other five factors and the control group. For small

factors, compared with the control group, the criminal group has lower gregarious, optimistic, altruistic, emotional, rigorous, self-controlled, amiable and patient properties, while the attitude and behavior are more frank. In addition to a higher emotionality, the violent perpetrators are not significantly different from non-violent perpetrators in other indicators.

2.5 Theory on Cognitive and Affective Synergy

The theory was put forward by an American psychologist, Walter Mischel in the 1990s. Now, it has become one of influential personality theories. The theory of cognitive and affective synergy is adopted to investigate criminal personality, which is specifically embodied as two aspects of cognitive variables and affective variables: Cognitive variables of the criminal personality include: Cognitive selection of criminal tendency (the most typical manifestation is criminal thinking model with the wrong cognition as the core), criminal value, expectation of criminal results and efficacy, and criminal ability. Affective variables of criminal personality are mainly represented in two aspects: The perpetrator's positive affection of criminal value and criminal efficacy; strong emotion and affection of the perpetrators (potential perpetrators) may inspire criminal personality to play a role, for example, strong senses of hostility and jealousy, etc. of the perpetrators may quickly establish a structure of criminal personality and immediately exert behavior motivation. Criminal personality is generated under the effect of two variables of criminal cognition and criminal affection. In the process of criminal cognitive selection, criminal value and criminal self-efficacy, it must contain and accompany with criminal emotion, affection, positive emotion; the emotional experience promotes and encourages criminal cognition, while negative emotion and affection obstructs and restrains criminal cognition. In the evolution process of affective variables, it also constantly re-weighs and evaluates cognitive variables, while its results continue to react to ongoing cognition. Meanwhile, cognitive and affective variables also play a role in an interaction of environmental events. The exchange and feedback of bi-direction, bipolarity and continuity of such cognition and affection, and synergies of subject variables and environmental information help criminal personality evolve into relatively consistent physical and psychological organization with constitutive property and dynamic property. That is, the criminal personality epitomizes anti-sociability definitely directed by the cognitive and affective dimensions (Mei, 2004).

3. CRIMINAL MOTIVATION AND CRIMINAL PERSONALITY

The perpetrator's personality is comprised by a dynamic system with the needs, motivation and value as the core, as well as a characteristic system with the disposition, temperament and ability as the core. The constituent of criminal

personality is also like this: criminal motivation is an impetus to stimulate and intensively train criminal behavior; criminal motivation leads to completion of criminal behavior, and positive criminal experience can be strengthened in behavioral outcome; criminal motivation, need and value become a dynamic system in the formation and development of criminal personality; criminal motivation promotes and strengthens criminal personality. In essence, the criminal motivation and criminal personality are consubstantial, that is, both of them are consistent in essence: Criminal motivation forms criminal personality; criminal personality is impossible to form without criminal motivation; as a physical and psychological organization with constitutive property, criminal personality directly represents criminal motivation, so that criminal motivation can obtain more adequate support and expression from cognition, affection, will and temperament in their inner world. Criminal motivation is a basis for the formation of criminal personality, and a core component of criminal personality, as well as a dynamic and typical element of criminal personality; criminal personality typically represents criminal motivation, relatively static complex and structured criminal motivation. As the core content of criminal psychology, criminal motivation and criminal personality are closely related and interacted, and play a dominant role in an integrative process of criminal psychology discipline and criminal science through re-examination and construction of criminal psychodynamic theory, and their application in investigation, interrogation, trial, correction of perpetrators and other aspects.

4. CATEGORY OF CRIMINAL PERSONALITY

Criminal personality is one of differences in essential characteristics of the perpetrator or potential perpetrator and average person. Criminal personality with the criminal motivation as the core determines the existence of criminality. Based on the psychological state of criminality possessed by perpetrators or potential perpetrators, the criminal personality can be divided into normal criminal personality and abnormal criminal personality.

4.1 Normal Criminal Personality

Since the criminal motivation is a core component of criminal personality, and criminal motivation and criminal personality are consistent in essence, combined with differences of criminal motivation in the criminal personality, normal criminal personality includes:

a) Survival criminal personality: Criminal personality is dominant in survival criminal motivation. The purpose of such personality characteristic is to achieve survival needs by fair means or foul. It is mainly manifested as criminal personality with greedy occupation of property and safe criminal personality in modern society.

b) Sexual criminal personality: Criminal personality is dominant in sexual criminal motivation. The purpose of such personality characteristic is to pursue sexual satisfaction as a major impetus. It is manifested as sexual crime in modern society, and part of crime with criminal means of sex. It is also a more primitive and natural driving force of criminal personality.

c) Belonging to criminal personality: Criminal personality is dominant in belonging motivation. The purpose of such personality characteristic is to pursue satisfaction of belonging needs. It is manifested as crime caused by affective motivation, jealous motivation and control motivation in modern society; it is a driving force of criminal personality caused by interpersonal conflict.

d) Self-esteem criminal personality: Criminal personality is dominant in self-esteem motivation. Such personality characteristic is satisfaction of self-esteem needs. It is manifested as crime for realizing self-worth, self-display, and overcoming inferiority complex in modern society. It is often a driving force of criminal personality caused by spiritual motivation.

e) Cognitive criminal personality: Criminal personality is characterized by wrong and extreme cognitive style. Criminal thinking model is its typical representative.

f) Aesthetic criminal personality: The core of criminal personality is distorted and uncivilized aesthetic motivation.

g) Self-realization criminal personality: Criminal personality is dominant in self-realization motivation. Such personality characteristic is to pursue self-realization (i.e. perpetrators or potential perpetrators give full play to their own potency and creatively achieve self-criminal life goal). It is mainly manifested as crime caused by occupational criminal motivation, distorted religious motivation, reactionary political motivation and superstition motivation, as well as crime caused by beauty motivation and cognitive motivation (such as gang crime with wild and brave worship or achievement motivation). It is a driving force of criminal personality caused by senior spiritual motivation of human beings.

4.2 Abnormal Criminal Personality

Criminal personality which is most closely related to abnormal criminal is the typical personality disorder which mainly includes: antisocial, paranoid, borderline, schizoid, histrionic personality disorder.

a) Antisocial personality disorder is also known as ruthless and cool personality disorder or psychopathy, moral insanity. The most obvious characteristic is its behavior which is extremely not in line with social norms, ideological beliefs and behaviors often conflict with the society, emotional anesthesia, cruelty, acerbity, extreme selfishness, strong self-centeredness, insincerity, obliquity, no basic sense of social responsibility, poor frustration tolerance, extremely high irritability, prone-to-impulsion, more obvious premeditation and thoroughness of illegal crime etc. Some foreign research reports that, approximately 30% to 60% of the perpetrators

have antisocial personality; domestic scholars report that, among perpetrators in the prison, the proportion of antisocial personality disorder is 35.5%.

b) Paranoid personality disorder is a kind of personality disorder mainly characterized by suspicion and paranoia. The personality characteristics of paranoid personality disorder are manifested as: strong subjectivity and stubborn, distrust of others, explanation tendencies with “conspiracy”, sensitivity and strong retaliation.

c) Borderline personality disorder is a collection of eruptive, affective and impulsive personality disorder. Its basic characteristics are self-image, interpersonal relationship and unstable emotion.

d) Eruptive personality disorder, its major characteristic is that: very strong anger and impulsive behavior erupted from tiny stimulation could not be controlled. Patients are normal in the intermittent period, who feels regret for doing when they lose their temper, but could not prevent recurrence. Such people find it difficult in self-control when they lose their temper, and it often leads to disastrous consequences of crime.

e) Affective personality disorder is also known as emotionally unstable personality disorder or circulated personality disorder. Its basic characteristics are: extremely unstable and fluctuated emotion; steady depression, gloom; steadily high spirit; or both of them alternately appear, changing moods. Therefore, the perpetrators may often “feel regret after committing mistakes, but repeat offense”.

f) Impulsive personality disorder is also known as eccentric personality disorder. The main characteristic is that such people have stubborn and confusing eccentricity with an objective of inner experience. Common eccentric personality disorders are “pyromania”, “kleptomania”, “pseudologia”, “gambling addiction” and “strange love addiction” and so on.

g) Schizoid personality disorder is a kind of personality disorder mainly characterized by strange idea, obviously defective interpersonal relationship and emotional indifference. Under the role of strong suspicion, or in a stress state, they may have temporary psychotic disorder, schizoid disorder, paranoid psychosis or schizophrenia, but may also have transient antisocial (hazardous) behavior.

h) Histrionic personality disorder is also known as hysterical personality disorder or theatric personality disorder. Its personality characteristic is excessive emotion and seeking for attention. Generally, females are in the majority.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be seen, criminal personality contains two categories: normal criminal personality and abnormal criminal personality. They have significant differences in the “criminality” (anti-sociality). Normal criminal personality is a dominant aspect of the perpetrators or potential perpetrators, which is a dominant force of personality for criminal behavior; abnormal criminal personality is a special part of criminal personality, which can explain the force of personality for pathological

crime; however, not all or most of the criminal behaviors are caused by abnormal criminal personality or personality disorder (meanwhile, pure interpretation of abnormal criminal personality as antisocial personality is not comprehensive). As two categories of criminal personality, they are in a different and irreplaceable position in an integrative process of criminal psychology and crime. Not all of abnormal crimes have complete criminal personality, but abnormal criminal personality is typically manifested as personality disorder; the characteristics of a variety of personality disorders are different, but they are the same in driving the perpetrator's tendency departed and competed with social norms, and leading to social harmfulness.

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