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# A New Way of Teaching Criminology for Investigation and Trial: A Narrative-Based Approach

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## Abstract

The narrative-based approach acts as the only tool capable of creating and assigning a meaning to individual life stories, linking individuals to their actions. The use of narrative as a reference frame for understanding the motive of the crime therefore offers an innovative perspective into criminology and its forensic application. Through the stories of the criminals and the victims, of society, and the world of justice as a whole, doing narrative criminology means listening to and accurately analysing criminal life stories to shed some light and meaning on the obscure elements of reality that from time to time take shape as a violent act. After a review of the most recent literature in the criminological narrative area, the present work analyses the role of the criminologist as an expert who provides an essential contribution during investigation and trial phases. Moreover, the work proposes the use of a narrative approach and the contribution of a narrative criminologist in two different moments of the criminal procedure: during the investigation phase, through a preventive methodological narrative training of forensic experts, with emphasis on team work, and in the trial phase through the use of criminological interviews to assess criminal liability and dangerousness.

**Keywords** narrative criminology; life stories; narrative-based approach; investigation; trial

## INTRODUCING THE RELEVANCE OF A NARRATIVE FRAMEWORK IN THE CRIMINOLOGICAL FIELD

In recent decades, narrative criminology has entered the scientific landscape by identifying itself as a theoretical paradigm centred on individual life stories, attributing a fundamental role to them as a key aspect in the unveiling of criminal dynamics and in the studies on the aetiology of crime (Canter 1994; Canter, Kaouri, and Ioannou 2003; Canter and Youngs 2012; Ioannou et al. 2015; Ioannou, Canter, and Youngs 2017; Maruna 2001; Presser 2009, 2016; Presser and Sandberg 2015,

2019; Youngs and Canter 2009, 2011, 2012). More precisely, narrative criminology corresponds to an inquiry that considers the narrative of life stories as a “key instigator of action” (Presser 2009:177), as a real architect of the implementation of criminal behaviour. In this sense, doing narrative criminology means understanding the motives of crime through a complex interweaving of the multiple narratives of the perpetrators and victims, the justice realm and society, trying to identify and analyse the factors that influence and provoke a violent act (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018a, 2018b). This means that a narrative criminologist cannot disregard the fact that the world, understood in its individual, relational and social meaning, is constituted and shaped by stories within which every human being considers him or herself and others as characters that actively participate in the forming and development of complex individual plots (Presser and Sandberg 2019). In identifying and understanding the factors that contribute to the execution of criminal behaviour and the motivations that push an individual offender to commit a crime, an expert accordingly considers the crime as a relationship phenomenon (Monzani 2013), where the perpetrator and the victim are an integral part of a story in which each of them plays the role of a particular character who has a very precise function in the evolution of the events and even in the plot modification of individual life which, in this case, can lead to the committing of a crime. Within this framework, criminology embodies, in a certain sense, the very act of narrating stories. As a result of this consideration, the criminologist is configured as a storyteller (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018a, 2018b; Monzani 2016), or as an expert able to grasp the different ways individual life history takes place (in this case that of the offender), trying to go in-depth and somehow even becoming an integral part of the story. In this context, the narrative as a structure within a criminological investigation based on individual life histories coincides with that single device capable of promoting dialogue and deep listening of the so-called “narrative of evil” (Verde and Barbieri 2010) through which it is, therefore, possible to focus on the subject’s unique and unrepeatable interpretative modality, on the one hand with the aim of understanding the complex and intricate phenomenological substratum and on the other in an attempt to attribute meaning to the dark part of individual reality. Ultimately, in fact, doing narrative criminology allows the expert to identify the constitutive elements of a personal life story that make up and institute the functioning, understood as a particular way of *behaving and being in the world* typical of a specific individual plot, which sometimes can fall apart to the point of shattering the entire existence of the subject, resulting in a deviation from normality and materializing into a criminal and/or violent act (Ciappi 2013).

## NARRATIVE AND LIFE STORIES: WE ARE OUR OWN STORY

The act of telling is a particular aspect of the human being, and for this reason, it has always had a highly significant influence on the existence of each person. Many authors including Bruner and Sartre, in agreement with Fisher, define the human being as “homo narrans, the storytelling animal” (Fisher 1987:62), emphasizing the importance of the dimension of narration and narrative thought as preferential tools that allow the organization of an experience and the construction and transmitting of meanings, representing events and transforming them into objects of analysis and reflection.

Hence, a human being is history, or rather, is one's story, a dense, complex and unique plot that each individual creates and develops throughout their entire life.

From the earliest authors who considered narrative as a crucial aspect in the life of a person (Bruner 1987, 1991; James 1890; Polkinghorne 1988; Sarbin 1986; Tomkins 1979), to the most recent contributions (McAdams 1988, 2001, 2006, 2008; Schiff 2012), which not only underline the continuity between narrative and personal identity, but also the importance and value of individual life history within the psychological context, there have been a series of fundamental steps leading to the so-called "narrative turn" (Punday 2002; Herman, Jahn, and Ryan 2005). Many authors have in fact been concerned with describing how narrative affects the development of the identity and the Self, and how this enters so deeply into the life story of an individual. Among the most influential, we mention Sarbin (1986), who reassumes the theories of James, affirming that in each individual there would be a "narratory principle" (Sarbin 1986:8), organizing thoughts and experiences according to narrative structures; Tomkins (1979), who proposes the *script theory of personality*, where a human being can be compared to a sort of playwright creating one's own emotional life in terms of salient scenes and recurring scripts based on how these events are effectively taken on by the individual Self; Polkinghorne (1988), who states that the plot of the individual Self is held together by what he calls "emplotment" (Polkinghorne 1988:152), consisting of all those episodes of life within the context where a person expresses oneself, together with the schemes, possible fantasies and imagination that derive from their life history and have the purpose of reunifying the life events of the subject into a single global meaning. Finally, Bruner (1987, 1991), considered by the entire scientific scene as one of the precursors of the centrality of narrative theory within psychology, states that the individual organizes their own experience and memories of past events using above all the narrative form, emphasizing the relevance of culture as an essential aspect for the creation of individual meaning attributed to life history and one's own Self, as well as cultural cohesion. Among the most recent contributions regarding the importance of the narrative of life stories within the psychological discipline is undoubtedly that of McAdams (1988, 2001, 2006, 2008), indicating a new defined personality model, the *life story model of identity*: this underlines the correspondence between self-identity and internalized individual life story. Personal life story is therefore made up of a series of critical chapters and segments where existential events take on new meanings like "nuclear episodes" (McAdams 1988:63), that is the particularly significant life events that we consider solely ours, through which individuals dynamically construct and re-construct their own story, giving a certain sense to their existence first of all in the *here and now* of the life story while allowing the reinterpretation of the past with an imaginative capacity directed into the future.

Ultimately, narrative can be considered as the "imprecise metaphor for understanding life" (Schiff 2012:33). It is therefore intended as a dynamic existential plot that aims to create and assign a specific meaning to the Self and the external world, particularly to each individual's life history, making it consistent with the development of the Self and identity, keeping it stable over time and subsequently directing one's actions towards certain objectives in the achievement of a specific life direction. Narrative, therefore, appears not only as a metaphor for understanding human existence more deeply but also as an essential aspect for the creation of

personal meaning. Thanks to the construction of one's own individual life story, the subject is able to make meaningful attributions not only to others and the world around them but also to oneself.

There is no doubt that narrative of life stories now covers a role of fundamental importance in understanding human behaviour and experience: a subject's life story, in its dynamism and continuous becoming, is certainly a key component of what constitutes a person's individuality. A life story is, hence, an intrinsically present dynamic process that continues evolving in a human being and which in turn integrates the different narratives within a specific historical, socio-cultural and family context. Narratives are understandable and legible by virtue of the cultural framework of reference within which they are intercalated, and at the same time, they differ from one another because of the uniqueness that characterizes each individual subject in terms of individual life story.

### CRIMINOLOGY: A NARRATIVE-BASED APPROACH

Narrative constitutes the dynamic aspect shaped by the experience that contributes and at the same time influences the development of individual life story, reflecting in turn on human behaviour. Premised on this assumption, many authors (Canter 1994; Maruna 2001; Presser 2009, 2016) have affirmed that there is a strong correlation between narrative device and criminological discipline, intrinsically linked by an interdependence bond: narrative constitutes the macro-category where criminology operates when it aims to identify and analyse factors and motivations that lead an individual to commit a crime. It is, therefore, clear how the close relationship between experience and narrative is the key to understanding the ways narrative criminology theorizes a close relationship with actual narrative.

The motives that drive an individual to commit a crime are unequivocally multiple, and at the same time, they derive and are influenced by multiple intertwining factors that form an intricate network of kaleidoscopic components that are often difficult to extrapolate and analyse separately. However, these elements are contained within a single device, the narrative one, able to give meaning to existence and, more specifically, to individual life story, making it coherent and stable over time.

Some of the most important theories for the criminological–narrative discipline – referring here to the theoretical contributions of Canter (1994), Maruna (2001) and Presser (2009, 2016) – underline how criminal narrative is considered a direct and instantaneous background of the criminal act. Canter was undoubtedly the first modern author to consider individual narratives as aspects that have the potential to shape future criminal actions, thus providing a completely different and interesting way to study and understand criminal behaviour. Emphasizing the concept of agency, the author, in fact, affirms that it is precisely the criminal's own actions to disclose how they have individually decided to lead their life, or in this case to carry out a crime. And it is through individual narrative, albeit confusing and distorted, which the subject is nonetheless aware of in some way, that it is possible to know and analyse the different aspects and factors regarding the offender's life story directly involved in the enactment of a crime and who acted as “turning points and climaxes” (Canter 1994:303) within the personal narrative leading to a deviation

from everyday life. The author, therefore, suggests that there are certain particular events in the life of the offender that contribute to the making of multiple small *slips* which, when accumulated, lead to the execution of the crime. Within this framework, the challenge for the criminologist, therefore, lies in identifying such *slips*, revealing the main plot of the criminal's life story, and thus identifying and analysing those individual distinctive aspects that lead to the committing of the crime. Maruna (2001) also emphasizes the use of the narrative approach in the study of the dynamics and causes that lead a subject to commit a crime. The author stresses the value of criminal narratives in a process of offender rehabilitation not simply as compared to the crime committed but especially before their own will to proactively give a different meaning to their life and make amends for the offence that was committed and for the criminal life that was lived.

Equally paramount are the contributions of Presser (2009, 2016; Presser and Sandberg 2015) concerning criminal narrative as an explanatory variable of crime execution and marking a turning point in the study of criminal acts. Through the re-conceptualization of the criminological discipline in a new paradigm called *narrative criminology*, the author identifies individual life stories "as antecedent to crime" (Presser 2016:139), allowing all the processes elicited by the stories themselves to emerge. A framework constituted by the individual narrative is, therefore, able to clarify and explain in more detail the *here and now* of criminal behaviour, including the dynamic factors that occur when a violent act is carried out, thus contributing to a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the internal states that underlie the committing of a crime.

The importance of narrative within the context of criminological sciences and the study of criminal behaviour, therefore, emphasizes the importance of the study of criminal activity through thorough analysis and understanding of the offender's personal life stories, the so-called "inner secret narratives" (Canter 1994:321), which would lead directly to the committing of the crime, when considered as a direct and instantaneous fact of the criminal act. According to this approach, crime is considered both an aspect and a product of the individual life story of that particular subject to which it belongs. For this reason, criminology cannot disregard narrative device: narrative not only links the individual to their actions, but proves to be the only discipline able to reveal and interpret the plot of the "criminal shadows" (Canter 1994) with the aim of not only understanding how the life story is reflected within the criminal act but also examining the different criminogenic dynamics more elaborately.

## THE ROLE OF A NARRATIVE CRIMINOLOGIST FOR INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL

In a narrative framework, when integrating a criminological discipline that studies and understands the different dynamics that the offender sets in motion upon committing a crime by analysing their personal life story, we wonder how narrative criminology, and in particular the figure of the narrative criminologist, can provide a contribution within a criminal case. To date, the Italian legal system contemplates the figure of the criminologist in a very residual way during the phase of the execution of the sentence (Art. 80 Italian Penitentiary Law 354/1975). Differently, clinical criminologists working as forensic psychiatrists or forensic psychologists work more

effectively in the criminal justice system performing forensic and insanity defence evaluations (Art. 88 Italian Penal Code), with the aim of re-educating the offender with observation and the help of a treatment team. However, in the current Italian penal system, some rules in favour of the role of the criminologist have entered into force through fact in issue over the last twenty years. In particular, law 397/2000 (Disposizioni in Tema di Indagini Difensive; Instructions on Defensive Investigation) imposes and emphasizes the principle of equal treatment between prosecution and defence by means of defensive investigations, effectively assigning a role to the criminologist also during other phases of the trial. In this context, the criminologist can therefore operate during the trial phase, through the drafting of evaluations and being asked to testify on some procedural aspects such as the incrimination of the alleged offender, the assessment of the social dangerousness or the capacity to stand trial (from art. 220 to art. 233 of the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure). Finally, the criminologist can also operate during the investigation phase in the area of pre-trial hearing for gathering evidence before a criminal trial (art. 392 of the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure) or as an external consultant who actively collaborates with law enforcement agencies in analysing evidence (from art. 220 to art. 233 of the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure). It is therefore clear that the role of a criminologist consultant (in this case one who uses a narrative approach) becomes fundamental, making it necessary to train an expert able to support the private parties of the process (defence and plaintiffs) in addition to the prosecution. The task of criminology is, hence, to be a technical–operational science capable of contributing effectively and concretely to the functioning of the criminal justice system, bringing their specialized knowledge to the different judicial contexts and various procedural moments (Ciappi 2010).

In the light of the Italian regulatory references regarding the criminologist's contribution in the criminal fact in issue together with the importance of the use of narrative criminology within the Italian legal view, the present work proposes the use of the narrative approach and the contribution of a criminologist as an expert in two different moments of the criminal incident: during the investigation phase, through preventive methodological–narrative training of forensic experts, with emphasis on the importance of supporting the expert, thus, teamwork, and in the trial phase, through the use of the criminological interview for the purpose of drafting an insanity defence evaluation so as to assess criminal liability and dangerousness.

### ***The Narrative Criminologist During the Investigation Phase***

In the investigation phase, the task of the criminologist (in this case of the narrative criminologist) must not be confused with that of the criminalist or the technical expert of the investigation which, during the technical–judicial inspection, searches for the physical evidence of the crime through the use of knowledge and methodologies of mathematical, physical, chemical and natural sciences, as well as technology, for the purpose of ascertaining the crime and identifying the perpetrator. The criminologist has the task of attributing intrinsic and absolute value to the factual evidence, and this evaluation, mainly of a technical nature, has a value directly proportional to its objectivity. However, the different phases of choice, gathering, analysis and evaluation of the evidence are not immune to prejudices, inferential errors and subjective expectations of the criminalist. Therefore, forensics is identified

as a science of the evidence, in which the first object of study is a physical piece of evidence. However, evidence of a crime does not only mean the physical evidence, since it is also the mnemonic evidence of an event that occurred, such as a testimony, that is evidence present in the memory of people who participated in the crime, namely witnesses or particularly the victim who, having survived, plays a fundamental role in the investigation progress and success. Hence, in our view, the importance of the role of the narrative criminologist during the investigation phase, which has the task of assessing whether, how much and how a particular fact emerging during the investigation is useful for the purposes of such. The narrative criminologist is the one who not only should provide a distinct and authentic contribution to the evaluation of the evidence that emerged during the entire investigation (whether physical or mnemonic) but is also and above all the one who attributes an extrinsic value to the pieces of evidence, linking them and giving each a particular meaning, a *relative weight* derived also from the complete assessment of the *absolute weight* of each single element (Monzani 2011). All the collected evidence must, therefore, be included in a context, comprising relationships and stories, precisely the narratives which the investigator (in this case the narrative criminologist) cannot disregard. The task of the latter is therefore to provide a narrative framework, an interpretive key that makes it possible to link together and subsequently evaluate the individual evidence emerging not only singularly but especially reciprocally and as a part of a story, a narrative of which both the offender and the victim are part, in order to provide them with both extrinsic meaning and relative importance, dependent also on the weight of the other individual elements, and, ultimately, an initial notional postulation from which it is possible to start constructing the narrative of the crime and the characters who have actively participated in it, all done by means of applying a rigorous falsificationist approach to scientific method (Monzani 2011). Its function is to link the different sources of evidence by placing them in a single story that acquires coherence in terms of the temporal dimension of the crime. The construction of the crime plot by the narrative criminologist leads in fact to the disclosure of the underlying relational dimension, considering the crime as a relational phenomenon in which the perpetrator and victim are intrinsically united via the individual narratives that are somehow intertwined within the crime plot. From this emerges the figure of the narrative criminologist as a true storyteller who arranges the various sources of evidence and the narration of events and experiences in a coherent plot that ensures the unveiling of its profound meaning and underlying dynamics (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018b).

Such a contribution by the narrative criminologist during the investigation phase is possible through a presence that does not interfere with judicial police work during the crime scene inspection, but, on the contrary, sees the narrative criminologist play a supervisory role in operations, with the functions of connecting the different subjects, verifying continuously and paying attention to the different emotional and behavioural dynamics, more or less evident, that can arise. This is possible through the relational-narrative training of the judicial police by the narrative criminologist (Ciappi 2013, 2015). First of all, because a knowledge of the inferential principles and errors that can occur in the phases of selection, gathering, analysis and evaluation of the physical elements of proof emerging during the investigation can considerably reduce the various possibilities of error. Then in the gathering and initial assessment of the mnemonic evidence, that is the different testimonies concerning the crime, this training

aims to make the police officers aware of how invaluable the memory element is as the first important factor in reconstructing the crime narrative for the subsequent identification of the offender. The different narratives that are constructed and that emerge more and more distinctly through the grouping of various elements and supporting evidence both by the police and the criminologist during the investigation phase are a source of specific evidence and at the same time fundamental for the correct investigation progress. This relevance inevitably leads not only to flanking by the criminologist during the investigation phase but also to an active collaboration between the police officers and the narrative criminologist, who has the purpose of correctly evaluating and assigning a precise significance to all the evidence that emerges in the investigation phase, inserting them into the narrative device. Relational–narrative training focused on the importance of the narrative of life stories as an influencing factor that actively contributes to the perpetration of a crime together with the teamwork of professionals specialized in this field, as well as law enforcement, not only allows police officers to formulate investigative hypotheses taking into account the narrative component of the evidence, with the awareness that each of them is inserted within a plot that must be constructed from scratch to reveal the underlying dynamics, but also gives the narrative criminologist and the police the time to evaluate the extrinsic value of these pieces of evidence and their relative weight within the investigation, linking them within a single coherent narrative and trying to attribute a particular meaning to the elements that have surfaced, taking into account the different individual factors present in the narrative of the offender or victim, leading to the committing of the crime.

### ***The Narrative Criminologist in the Trial Phase***

As seen during the trial phase, the role of the criminologist is fundamental since, in the psychiatric examination, they can be called to testify on various aspects of the criminal proceedings concerning the offender, such as imputability, social dangerousness, the capacity to stand trial and the ability to bear witness. In the face of the evaluation, which may concern both the assessment of mental capacity, or the offender's power of judgement and legal capacity at the time of the fact, and the assessment of his or her social dangerousness, the criminologist is in a position to answer questions just as sensitive as they are fundamental to the success of the entire trial. Once called upon to give an answer to such questions, in order to write the report, the expert then needs to gather not only the various information regarding the crime (including the physical and mnemonic evidence mentioned above) but also the different factors that make up the life story of the offender and that have in some way contributed to the execution of specific criminal behaviour. In our opinion, the role of the narrative criminologist is fundamental because, through the criminological interview and the use of a basic relational–narrative approach, the criminologist has the task of listening and carefully analysing the offender's life story, trying to make sense of the obscure part of reality that sometimes takes the form of a criminal act, with the aim of assessing and establishing a fair and most correct criminal responsibility, respecting the victim(s) and, at the same time, reflecting the various facets of the offender's narrative regarding the crime committed. In order to do this, the narrative criminologist first needs to identify the object of research in this area, or the person who committed the crime, and in particular, their



unique and unrepeatable individual interpretative modality elicited by the narrative of the life story. Only through the use of the relational–narrative approach, which accordingly coincides with analysis and listening to the *non-violent story*, that is the individual life story constituted by experiences, relationships and moments particularly significant to the life of the offender, always ensuring to consider the reality they bear, is it possible to consider the offender, and consequently the violent action and crime they perpetrated, based on different points of view. Trying to analyse and understand the unique and very personal modalities of the subject through the criminological interview in fact allows the narrative criminologist not only to unveil the offender’s narrative, bringing out all those constitutive elements of their inner functioning but also to know and understand the more fundamental aspects of crime, understood here as a possible manifestation of the Self (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018b). In this sense, the narrative framework has a very specific task, which is to give meaning to what is hidden and obscure, restore order to chaos, and bring together an individual plot that is sometimes ripped and disorganized. Hence, within this context, it is mandatory for the expert criminologist to refer to some fundamental assumptions, since deviant behaviour represents an aberration of normality, and the outcome of a way of behaving and being in the world (Ciappi 2012, 2019) refers to human cognizance that may be identified with the concept of “human agency” (Canter 1994; Verde and Barbieri 2010). Supporting the concept of human agency makes it possible first and foremost to consider the offender as an active agent, protagonist of one’s own story and, for this reason, able to intentionally make a conscious choice regarding one’s own path of life and individual narrative, and in this case even one’s choice to commit a crime. At the same time, this concept refers to another fundamental aspect without which it would not be possible to refer to a relational–narrative approach, that is the idea of the offender’s human nature. This means considering the offender before anything else as a human being through a sort of paradox, which concerns the ability of the narrative criminologist to accept that the complexity of life depends heavily on the degree of adaptation to the latter. Accepting the *dark part* of reality, or the crime, the offence or the behaviour that results in a violent act as an integral part of human existence thus becomes the only way that the narrative criminologist is able to really enter and be immersed in the so-called “narrative of evil” (Verde and Barbieri 2010). This aspect, albeit difficult but necessary, not only gives the expert the chance to enter into the other’s world, revealing those dark meanders often hidden from others and forming an integral part of the individual narrative, which likely led to the execution of the crime, but also encompasses a way to reason within which the *tear in the veil* is revealed. This rip in the offender’s narrative is intended here as a maladaptive way to tell one’s own story (Ciappi 2013). This means, by virtue of this viewpoint, listening to a story, interpreting in detail the uniqueness of the story being told, while at the same time trying to grasp those particular and exclusive details that make the entirety of individual events visible, and subsequently deconstructing and taking it apart by looking for a shared modality that has the purpose of disambiguating this fracture (Ciappi 2012; Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018a). The narrative criminologist must therefore be guided to a certain extent by the subject’s story while trying to bear in mind the real and authentic common thread of the narrative in order to distinguish the internal coherence. Through dialogue with the offender, the narrative

criminologist is, in our opinion, the only figure able to identify a meeting point with the individual who committed the crime, making sure to adequately conduct the expert inquiry expressed in the report, respecting the victim(s) and equally considering the unique and unrepeatable *kosmos* that coincides with the whole world the subject faces (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018b). The criminal, in fact, acts by behaving while aware of the different narrative possibilities that may be carried out, and by such actions the offender stages a certain story, a particular plot that the narrative criminologist has the task of re-constructing in the most accurate way possible. The use of a relational–narrative approach supported and made explicit with the criminological interview therefore has the objective of linking the perpetrators to their actions through deduction, interpretation and meaning assignment of the respective story with the further task of rewriting it and trying to reconstruct the plot by stitching up the threads (Ciappi 2012, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

In analysing the narrative, considered as a key for human beings to comprehend by organizing and attributing meaning to one's own existence and the context they are in, and as a criminological discipline that is employed within this framework, ascribing to the individual narrative the fundamental importance of understanding not only the different dynamics and factors that contribute to the committing of a crime but also the different motives that drive an individual to commit a crime, this contribution aims to emphasize the role of the narrative criminologist within the criminal case, underlining its relevance not only to the support and training of police officers, but also to the use of a relational–narrative approach, made explicit by conducting a criminological interview, via assessment by an expert, in determining the criminal responsibility, social dangerousness and legal capacity of the offender. We consider the figure of the narrative criminologist as a qualified expert in the role of flanking and training during the investigation phase, while actively engaged in employing a narrative framework throughout the trial phase, of fundamental importance for a good and successful outcome of the investigation and the criminal case overall. The investigation, and in general the entire criminological discipline, in our opinion cannot dismiss the narrative device in identifying the offender but before all else in analysing and evaluating all the personal and unique aspects that are part of the offender's individual narrative, which led to a criminal outcome of certain individual behaviour. The task of narrative criminology, and hence the expert criminologist, is not only to evaluate the pieces of evidence based on the value and relevance they have within a larger and more complex framework of events, or the subject's life story, but also to personally engage in narration in order to trace characters, structure, internal coherence and possible narrative developments, where the internal coherence of a story is characterized by a precise and very personal meaning, which corresponds to what captures the manner in which the person tells the story (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018a, 2018b). In this journey, the narrative criminologist inevitably bears a full load of personal experiences and ideas trying to realize a communicative situation through dialogue with the individual in question, or the offender. The goal, therefore, is not only to analyse the unsaid and reveal the more profound and

sometimes obscure aspects of the individual plot in order to identify and understand the various factors contributing to the execution of the crime, thus explaining the *here and now* of crime, but also to reconstruct such stories in a critical way (Ciappi 2012, 2013; Presser and Sandberg 2019). In the light of these considerations, crime can indeed be considered as the product of an existential plot, of a dynamic project to which the perpetrator tries to attribute a particular meaning. The collection and analysis of these narratives as valuable containers of relevant information about the factors prior to crime appears, in our opinion, to be the most suitable way of doing criminology, respecting the victims and the world of social justice (Monzani 2016). From our perspective, behind every crime or violent act that leads to an offence, there is a story, an individual life that is not always summed up behind that gesture, where that crime can be a metaphor or synopsis as well as accident, course detour or sudden deviation (Ciappi and Schioppetto 2018b). This is why the narrative criminologist's task in the criminal fact in issue and more generally within the entire criminological discipline is essential: the criminologist is the only expert figure who, in the investigation and trial phase, can link all the elements together within a single coherent story, in a *continuum* that goes from the physical and self evidence in the investigation phase to the criminological interview with the perpetrator in the trial phase. In short, only this expert has the ability to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct stories.

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## Legislation

Art. 80 of the Italian Penitentiary Law 354/1975

Art. 88 of the Italian Penal Code

Art. 220 to art. 233 of the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure

Art. 392 of the Italian Code of Criminal Procedure

Law 397/2000, Disposizioni in Tema di Indagini Difensive; Instructions on Defensive Investigation

## TRANSLATED ABSTRACTS

### Abstracto

El enfoque basado en la narrativa actúa como la única herramienta capaz de crear y asignar un significado a las historias de vida individuales, vinculando a los individuos con sus acciones. El uso de la narrativa como marco de referencia para comprender el motivo del crimen, por lo tanto, ofrece una perspectiva innovadora de la criminología y su aplicación forense. A través de las historias de los delincuentes y las víctimas, de la sociedad y del mundo de la justicia en su conjunto, hacer criminología narrativa significa escuchar y analizar con precisión las historias de la vida criminal para arrojar algo de luz y significado sobre los elementos oscuros de la realidad que de vez en cuando toman forma como un acto violento. Después de una revisión de la literatura más reciente en el área narrativa criminológica, el presente trabajo analiza el papel del criminólogo como experto que proporciona una contribución esencial durante las fases de investigación y juicio. Además, el trabajo propone el uso de un enfoque narrativo y la contribución de un criminólogo narrativo en dos momentos diferentes del procedimiento penal: durante la fase de investigación, a través de una capacitación narrativa metodológica preventiva de expertos forenses, con énfasis en el trabajo en equipo, y en la fase de prueba mediante el uso de entrevistas criminológicas para evaluar la responsabilidad penal y la peligrosidad.

**Palabras clave:** criminología narrativa; historias de vida; enfoque narrativo; investigación; juicio

### Abstrait

L'approche narrative agit comme le seul outil capable de créer et d'attribuer un sens aux histoires de vie individuelles, reliant les individus à leurs actions. L'utilisation du récit comme cadre de référence pour comprendre le motif du crime offre donc une perspective innovante de la criminologie et de son application médico-légale. À travers les histoires des criminels et des victimes, de la société et du monde de la justice dans son ensemble, faire de la criminologie narrative signifie écouter et analyser avec précision des histoires de vie criminelle pour faire la lumière et donner un sens aux éléments obscurs de la réalité qui, de temps en temps, prennent la forme d'un acte violent. Après une revue de la littérature la plus récente dans le domaine narratif criminologique, le présent travail analyse le rôle du criminologue en tant qu'expert qui apporte une contribution essentielle lors des phases d'enquête et de procès. De plus, le travail propose l'utilisation d'une approche narrative et la contribution d'un criminologue narratif à deux moments différents de la procédure pénale: pendant la phase d'enquête, à travers une formation narrative méthodologique préventive d'experts médico-légaux, en mettant l'accent sur le travail d'équipe, et dans la phase du procès grâce à des entretiens criminologiques pour évaluer la responsabilité pénale et la dangerosité.

**Mots-clés:** criminologie narrative; histoires de vie; approche narrative; enquête; procès

**摘要:**

本研究采用 ZIP 模型对中国珠江三角洲最大城市之一的 1268 个分层随机样本进行分析，在社会交换的视角下，分别确定了男性和女性配偶暴力攻击和严重程度的相关因素。结果表明，外来务工人员家庭中配偶暴力符合性别对称性，对男性的暴力主要表现为心理暴力。“抢摇篮”的新模式使男性在家庭关系中得到充分保护。但是，妇女的教育水平和经济独立并不是防止丈夫暴力的保护因素。尽管中国的家庭模式发生了变化，女性的地位也得到了提高，但父权制的认知在外来务工人员家庭中根深蒂固。年轻夫妇应该根据自己的能力为家庭做出贡献，而不应该让任何一方感到委屈。

**关键词:** 配偶暴力；社会交换；ZIP 模型；性别对称；抢摇篮

**ملخص**

يُعتبر المنهج القائم على السرد، الأداة الوحيدة القادرة على كتابة قصص واقعية من الحياة وإيجاد معنى لها، وذلك من خلال الربط بين الأفراد وأفعالهم. وبالتالي، فإن استخدام السرد كأداة مرجعية لفهم دوافع الجريمة يقدم منظوراً مبتكراً في علم الإجرام وقابليته للتطبيق الشرعي. فمن خلال قصص المجرمين والضحايا والمجتمع، وعالم العدالة ككل، بات علم الإجرام السرد وسيلة لسماع قصص واقعية من حياة المجرمين وتحليلها بدقة. وبذلك، يمكن إلقاء بعض الضوء على العناصر الغامضة للجريمة وتفسيرها بعد أن تكون قد اتخذت العنف، من وقت لآخر، شكلاً لها. فبعد مراجعة أحدث المؤلفات في مجال السرد الإجرامي، يعمل البحث الحالي على تحليل دور عالم الإجرام كخبير مساهمته أساسية خلال مرحلتي التحقيق والمحاكمة. علاوة على ذلك، يقترح العمل استخدام منهج السرد ومساهمة الباحث في علم الإجرام السرد في لحظتين مختلفتين من الإجراءات الجنائية: أثناء مرحلة التحقيق، من خلال التدريب على السرد المنهجي الوقائي لخبراء الطب الشرعي، مع التركيز على العمل الجماعي؛ وفي مرحلة المحاكمة، من خلال استخدام المقابلات الجنائية من أجل تقييم المسؤولية الجنائية وخطورتها.

الكلمات الرئيسية: علم الإجرام السرد، قصص من الحياة، المنهج السرد، التحقيق، المحاكمة

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