

Abstract

Serial killing is a dark and complex phenomenon. As researchers have begun to recognize that serial killing exists and interacts within a broad modern context, how these factors affect its occurrence has received more attention. This includes serial killers' occupational preferences and the influence that occupations have on their offending. However, studies on serial killers' occupational preferences have been limited to the United States and the United Kingdom. This thesis sought to classify the occupational preferences of 36 Canadian serial killers and subsequently analyze how these occupations may have influenced their offending, both instrumentally and psychologically. According to Canada's 2016 National Occupational Classification, Canadian serial killers preferred occupations in "Management occupations," "Sales and services occupations," and "Trades, transports and equipment operators and related occupations." Using content analysis on biographical cases of Canadian serial killers, it was proposed that these work environments were the most preferred since they contained occupational elements advantageous for their offending. Specifically, the freedom of movements—typically through a vehicle—the lack of supervision, and the provision of solitude. Hence, Canadian serial killers' offending was shown to be influenced by a lesser-known contemporary lifestyle factor: occupation. This thesis adds to the greatly under-developed literature on serial killers' occupational preferences and encourages further exploration for both research and application.