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PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES OF MURDER: A PERSONAL CONSTRUCT APPROACH

VICTORIA SEBRANEK

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

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Abstract

This mixed methods research study uses Personal Construct Theory to extend current understanding of the psychological process underlying murder. Many psychologists have theorized as to the reasons why people kill, usually offering a nomothetic perspective. Fewer psychologists, though, have developed theories based on idiographic studies of murderers. Additionally, much focus has been given to the Instrumental/Expressive dichotomy in understanding motive, yet this distinction has presented issues regarding clarity. The current study aims to add to the understanding of Instrumental and Expressive murder and the potential differences between these taking a rarely utilized approach—conducting and analyzing interviews provided directly by offenders to 1) explore the construing of a sample of convicted murderers and 2) examine any differences in construing between those committing Instrumental murders and those committing Expressive murders. The personal constructs of 25 murderers were elicited using Kelly's Repertory Grid Technique. To inform the development and manifestation of their constructs, life narratives and crime narratives as well as existing documents such as court records, were also collected. Grids were analyzed using Idiogrid and RepIV computer software to gain insight into the relationships between the constructs and the structure of the construct system in the case of each participant. A content analysis was applied to the constructs, resulting in a number of themes including Power, Intimacy, Hedonism, Chaos, Achievement, Active Shaping, and Persona. The committers of Instrumental murder tended to see others, if not actually supporting them, as being "against" them. The committers of Expressive murder tended to view others with a broader array of constructs, usually in terms of Intimacy and Relationship and in terms autonomous to the participants themselves. A comparison of the construing of those committing Instrumental vs Expressive murders, then, led to the tentative identification of two different self-orientations—Self-promoters and Self-preservers-- that may be helpful in understanding these murderers. Self-promoters tend to see others as either in service to or against them, and Self tends to be regarded as the nucleus of their environment. Of significance to the Self-preservers, who perceive others in broader terms and place more value on others, is an attachment to their self-identity, which is often defined, idiosyncratically, by their role in relation to Others. Finally, the possible implications of the findings for theory and practice are discussed.

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List of abbreviations

AI	After Incarceration
ATC	At or near the Time of the (index) Crime
ATI	At the time of Interview
I/E	Instrumental/Expressive
GC	Grade completed
GED	General Equivalency Diploma
GL	Actual grade level upon testing
IP	Investigative Psychology
MDS	Multi-dimensional scaling
PCs	Personal Constructs
PCP	Personal Construct Psychology
PCT	Personal Construct Theory
RG	Repertory Grid
RGT	Repertory Grid Technique
SE	Special Education
UI	Upon incarceration

Introduction

"There isn't anyone you couldn't love once you've heard their story."

Mary Lou Kownacki

(Mr. Rogers' favorite quote)

Understanding why a person behaves the way they do is oftentimes difficult for another. Even the *desire* to understand how another person thinks is perhaps outside of the realm of most, as many seem content in their own interpretations of things or with what they have been guided to think through popular culture, media, family, friends, etc. This might even more-so be the case when that other person has committed an offense of some sort upon them—an offense to their personal morals, an offense to their principles, an offense to their beliefs, to their family, to those they call friends, to their community, etc. In a world where people might be easily offended or where cohesion amongst some is found in the mutual distancing of others, then, an openness to others and to understanding why others do what they do grows rarer and rarer. When the offense is as serious and abhorred as murder, even more distancing and perhaps less interest in the *why* of one's behavior seems to occur.

I have witnessed this in both my professional life and personal life, having clients and friends both who were marginalized by much of society. The distancing of these people from others became most apparent when I worked with a population labelled "Not Guilty (of a crime) Due to Mental Disease or Defect." These were people who had committed not just Disorderly Conducts or Theft but Sexual Assaults, Batteries, Homicide and even triple Homicide. Furthermore, they were "insane." In meeting monthly to weekly with each of them, it was proven to me over and over again that these are not "bad" people and that some are even quite pleasant and enjoyable. Moreover, getting to know them provided a story behind their development and their illegal behavior. A sort of "logic" became apparent, even in these cases where logic was skewed by mental illness. Yes, they had done bad things but even the fact that they were legally insane at the time they committed their crimes did not sway me that others— "sane" others who have done similar things-- are necessarily "bad" people and that, if I were to hear *their* story, their actions might actually make sense.

When I was a child, our community had an influx of Cuban refugees. I was told that these were all criminals—murderers… rapists… let loose by the Cuban prisons… even their government no longer wanted them—*bad* people! I was told to stay away from them and to not let them approach me. As a young adult newly on my own, I met one of these Cuban refugees through mutual friends. He began to visit with me on my porch or at my kitchen table, drinking coffee and telling stories. This took place nearly every day for 6 years… it

took about that long for me to understand his accent… but I was patient, and I eventually did understand his accent, and him. An openness, willingness, and even desire to understand him and "his people" revealed great depth and reason for the actions which led to his eviction from his society. And his somewhat frequent conflict with others in our society began also to make sense. His accent alone was oftentimes enough for others to turn a sideways glance at him if not brush him off completely, but interactions between the way he saw the world and the way his American counterparts in our town saw the world, neither of which was 'wrong,' led to a great deal of tension and, at times, outright conflict. One result of this was him receiving a 14-year prison sentence.

These experiences taught me that everyone has a story and, if one is willing to listen and try to understand, the other's behaviors can oftentimes be understood and sense can be made of them, no matter how "illogical" they may seem to an outsider. Listening credulously to the other's experience—honoring their story *from their point of view*-- opens up a whole new understanding and, with this insight, an acceptance is nourished. It is hoped that, here, such an acceptance (not a condoning), will lead to greater knowledge and lay some groundwork for the advancement of preventing, treating, and investigating those who have committed murder.

Openness to a murderer and his/her story is a perspective that often conflicts with that of society, particularly media, which regularly vilifies those who commit such crimes. Such people are labelled "monsters," "evil," "psychopath," "butcher," "beast," "ripper," and the like. The nicknames given these (usually) men are colourful, nasty, and meant to stimulate a reaction (and sell media). These labels in effect separate *us* from *them.* They put the perpetrator into a category which serves the purpose of drawing such a distinction between him and *us*, thus, to our relief, no conceivable comparison can be drawn. *We* are not like *him.* He is a monster and we could never be like him.

Murder, then, is oftentimes professed to be something we cannot understand, we will not understand, or we will at least not often admit to understanding. As 'monsters', we expect these people to be locked up for years, decades, even lifetimes. At a maximum, we take their lives for what they have done; at a minimum, we lock them away for years in attempt to remove them from the free world entirely. Rarely do we seek to understand them, and even more rarely yet, do we seek to understand those who murder by studying them *directly*. The argument here is that it is absolutely necessary to try to understand people who commit violence and murder. Who better to cast light into these shadowy psyches from which great devastation has arisen?

Nearly 1.2 million violent crimes were reported to United States law enforcement agencies in 2018 and, of these, 15,498 were murder or non-negligent manslaughter (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018). What must be considered are the effects these

have on victims and the whole of society. Of course, there is the loss of life for the primary victim. The impact on those left behind is immeasurable-- the experiences of grief, depression, anger, fear, anxiety, and/or guilt; inability to work, sleep, eat, perform daily tasks, socialize; loss of income, expenses related to the funeral, loss of the deceased's income, bills related to medical/psychological services; loss of support, caregiving, companionship… and the list goes on. Society as a whole, too, experiences some of these things—fear, anger, anxiety, insecurity, expenses and resources involved in investigations, and more. It is inarguable the devastation murder has on those touched both directly and indirectly by it.

Yet, little research has been done on murderers as individuals, gathering an understanding of their behavior from *their* perspective. Many psychologists, philosophers, and criminologists have presented their theories as to the reasons people kill. Very few, however, have developed theories based on the thought processes of murderers. Instead of studying homicide at the economic, environmental, or societal level, which have long delivered causal factors, a few authors do speak from the psychological perspective. Toch (1969) writes of the interpersonal phenomenon of violence—how one person perceives the actions of another and how those interpretations impact on the notion of one's self and instigate a violent response; Katz (1988) speaks of the foreground of crime and the perceived seduction of crime that motivates an offender; Athens (1992) speaks of *violent socialization*—the learned behavior of violence through developmental stages. In short, what might be highlighted as salient contributions by these authors are the importance of the perceptions of the offender which motivate one to murder, that one goes through stages which develop these perceptions, and, the crux of it all, the significance of the Self--how one perceives Self and how the environment and others impact or interrelate to that Self. These can most accurately be divulged by hearing directly from the perceiver-- the offender himself[1]. His stories are essential in revealing events and characters in his life and a Personal Construct Theory (PCT) approach lends itself well to how he interprets those events and characters. This research, utilizing both narrative and PCT, aims to gain a deeper understanding of offenders who have committed murder and why—the underlying psychological process(es) that contributed to the choice to murder.

In Chapter 1 (Literature Review), firstly, four theoretical perspectives on the psychology of murder are discussed, together with the empirical research upon which they are based. Underscored, and perhaps just as valuable and highlighted by three of these theorists as essential, is their approach—studying offenders themselves and assessing

[1] In the text, often the pronouns "he," "him," "himself" and the like will be used to simplify reading and because all research participants were males.

situations/people/events from their perspective. The fourth highlights the impact of history, environment, and culture on one's perspective and how violence is nourished in certain communities and its inhabitants. Secondly, the research applying the Instrumental/Expressive dichotomy and issues stemming from that are explored, and a rationale for exploring the psychological processes behind these is posed.

In Chapter 2, Personal Construct Theory (PCT) as a viable approach to the research aims is proposed and various tenets of PCT deemed to be potentially relevant to the current research and the issue of murder are discussed. Relevant PCT empirical research in the forensic field is also reviewed.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) describes the development of the research. It presents the constructivist approach adopted here, which employs interviews to collect life narratives and crime narratives, together with construct elicitation and Repertory Grid Technique; the research design; sampling and recruitment of participants and details about participants and their crimes; and data collection.

Chapter 4 (Analysis) describes the analysis of data collected.

In Chapter 5, the first of two findings chapters, the themes and several subthemes in construing from the participants are presented. Examples of how these constructs may have manifested in their life and/or crime are provided.

In Chapter 6 differences in content and structure of construing by those who committed Instrumental homicide and those who committed Expressive homicide are presented. The chapter describes how the analysis of the data suggested the potential importance of a number of psychological characteristics which were then explored in relation to the Instrumental and Expressive groups. The findings from these additional analyses are presented and the concepts of self-promoting and self-preserving are introduced. Then, a consideration of how the concept of the Experience Cycle may be used to further understand the development of self-promoting and self-preserving construing is presented.

In Chapter 7, I provide four case illustrations, bringing together many of the concepts explored in previous chapters. The chapter demonstrates how construct themes and the proposed construal processes may have developed and manifested in regard to the act of murder. The case studies thus draw on both idiographic and cross-case analyses to provide an understanding of how key concepts developed from the research may be used to understand individual cases of homicide.

Finally, in Chapter 8 I provide a discussion of the key findings from the research, outline my contribution to knowledge and address the limitations of the research. I discuss its potential implications therapeutically and investigatively, present suggestions for future research, and provide a brief conclusion of main points.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review: Psychology of Murder

In this chapter, several seminal theories on murder are discussed in chronological order. Unlike much of the research that had been done on the psychology of murder up to the time of these theories, the focus is on the perceptions of the offenders. Each offers an idiographic approach, many interviewing offenders for their data, to develop their theory on how violent behavior transpires.

Theories of Violence

Few authors/researchers have put forth well-developed, detailed theories about how one comes to commit extreme violence upon another person. Theorists of the past have come to develop conceptions of the etiology of criminality, such as Bandura's (1973) Social Learning Theory, Skyes and Matza's (1957) neutralization theory, Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory, and Lemert's (1951) labeling theory, which do go a long way to explain the broader, more general causes of criminal behavior. Even fewer authors/researchers have focused on murder, specifically, as a form of violence, and how one comes to engage in murder and fewer still have developed theories based on the perceptions of the offenders themselves. Four authors, though, have taken such an approach and sought to study offenders' perceptions in regard to their murderous or violent behavior. Toch (1969), Katz (1988), and Athens (1992) stressed the notion that the key to understanding violence is within the individuals themselves and, as such, they sought to study offenders' perceptions, Toch and Athens specifically through interviews with the offenders.

Toch's Violent Men

Toch's (1969) was the first seminal work in developing a theory of violence using an idiographic approach. In the Foreword of Toch's *Violent Men: An Inquiry into the Psychology of Violence*, T.C.N. Gibbons writes "this book deals with one particular aspect of violence, … the individual's self-perception and his perception of his role in relation to others." Toch's focus was on the immediate precursors of violent acts, specifically on the perpetrator's perception of the other involved, of himself, and the interpersonal dynamic between the two.

Toch saw violence as an interpersonal phenomenon. Through interviews with violent men and police victims of violent men, his focus of study was violent interactions between his participants, specifically people who were recurrently involved in violence, and others. His participants were of four specific populations: 19 men who attacked police officers; 32 police officers who were assaulted (14 of them were assaulted by interviewees in the former group and the rest had the most substantial records of being attacked in the departments from which they came); 44 male inmates who had committed several assaults while in prison, at least one within the last year; and 33 men on parole with a chronic pattern of

serious assaults. Structured, peer interviews were utilized-- convicted offenders interviewed convicted offenders (in prison); paroled inmates interviewed parolees; and police professionals interviewed police participants. Participants were asked to talk about each violent incident and the actions leading up to it, giving as much detail as possible; the relationship to the other person; and the participant's feelings and attitudes during the unfolding of events. Patterns of interpersonal dynamics and events were then identified. Steps in each violent incident were diagrammed and graphically represented. Discussion between both professional and non-professional researchers identified similarities in the genesis of incidents and similarities in approach of participants to others involved in the incident. Inferences about the interviewee's social orientation, his approach, and his general goals regarding the incident were also mediated and identified.

From this Toch developed a typology comprising two categories of perceptions—either of the would-be perpetrator being threatened or viewing others as only existing to serve his own needs. More specifically is his identification of ten types of reactions to those perceptions, as follows. The first group involves those who perceive themselves as threatened:

1. Reputation defending: This is engaged in by the person who has received notoriety for violence and must defend that image or by he whose size, physique, or group status obligates him to violence, or so it is perceived. His violent reaction is more to fulfill an assigned role than out of internal desire to act that way.

2. Norm enforcing: This participant assigns himself to the role of status quo enforcer. When someone breaks a rule, he feels it is his job to set them right. The focus, however, is on his role, rather than on actually correcting a problem. This participant sees it as his obligation to exercise violence in the face of challenged norms.

3. Self-image compensating: Here the participant is either defending or promoting his own self-image. He may not have the imposing reputation that the defender has, but here the participant's integrity is perceived to be at stake in some way. This sort is split into two subtypes:

a. Self-image defending: This is done by he who thinks his image is one of manliness and this, or some other aspect of his integrity, is being challenged. The participant may not retaliate at the point of insult but may wait until later, when he is sure to win, so that his image is not damaged further; or, some of these participants will actually contrive a situation in which his integrity as a "man" can be challenged and met. An element of paranoia is often present in these participants—an underlying and consistent notion that he is being slighted in some way.

b. Self-image promoting: The self-promoter feels that his manhood and worth equates with the use of violence. He goes out of his way to demonstrate that he should not

be messed with, as he is fearless and dangerous. His violence goes beyond just asserting himself or protecting his self-esteem-- it is meant to destroy.

4. Self-defending: The participant perceives that his physical safety is at risk. His diagnosis, however, is only rivaled by his ability to cope with the situation. He will attack and ask questions later. Paranoia may be an element here. Fear always seems to be.

5. Pressure removing: This is the attempt of the participant to rid himself of an overwhelming altercation for which he cannot respond verbally. He is overwhelmed by tension and underequipped to verbally deal with the situation; his frustration prompts him to violence. The point is not so much to harm another as to stop the disturbance.

The second group, below, is comprised of those who see their needs as the only thing of relevance. Other people are considered objects rather than humans who also have needs and feelings. This group, according to Toch (1969), involves those who resort to violence by way of:

1. Bullying: The participant here gains satisfaction from causing suffering for others. He will seek out others to whom he can deliver his unfair and merciless treatment. He uses force to terrorize, probably to build immunity against his own fear. The participant will choose to target the weak, as they are easily terrorized. His doling of intimidation and violence is disproportionate to any threat from his target but is believed to correspond with his sense of inadequacy. His satisfaction lies in the suffering of others and his violence is meant to damage, intimidate and impress. The means, however, are more relevant than the ends.

2. Exploitation: This is used by the person who sees other people as instruments to be used to extract personal gain. The participant may use conniving, manipulation, and trickery to convince others to give to them for nothing in return and, when they do not, the participant resorts to violence. Violence is not a preferred means, but it will be used if the person unwilling to give stands in the way of a sought-after trophy.

3. Self-indulging: This is an infantile tendency to go about one's life assuming that others exist to take care of the participant and satisfy the participant's needs. The participant's self-perception is that of the victim, with life meting out impenetrable obstacles at every turn. The participant does not set out to deliberately take advantage of others but, when one does not comply with fulfilling the participant's needs, he takes it as mysterious insolence and violence is issued as the punishment.

4. Catharting: This is much like pressure-removing, however, in this situation the internal pressure has built up over the course of more than just the current incident. Accumulated internal emotions build up so intensely for the participant he is unable to deal with it and explodes, using violence as a catharsis. The situation that results in this may be arbitrary but is directly tied with the internal, personal needs of the perpetrator. The

participant may be so at the point of needing catharsis, he may go in search of violence in order to release these internal feelings.

Toch (1969) states that these two categories of perceptions which result in violence—one in which the individual feels threatened and the other in which the participant sees the other people as objects, instrumental in serving his needs-- are really two faces of the same coin. Both are founded on the premise that human relationships are power-centered and one-way affairs and both involve desperate and heated attempts at self-assertion, qualities that suggest insecurity and a need to advance Self in some way. In each of these instances, a person responds over-zealously, ignores the norms of equality and reciprocity, and assures personal sovereignty at the others' expense. According to Toch, "This is the nature of the violence-prone game" (1969, p. 227).

Katz' Theory of Crime as Seduction

Katz (1988) also dissected criminality, including murder, on an idiographic level. Instead of studying the broader economic, environmental, or social factors which have long been theorized to be causal factors in crime, he advises empirical researchers to focus on the foreground of crime, the very moment in which a crime is committed. Katz sought to find, through studying the way offenders construe their experiences, the "qualities" of their criminal experience, something *between* their background and their subsequent acts which *propels* them into the act of violence-- something beyond saying that people either just choose to act or not to act that way.

Katz (1988) used a variety of previously published material for his data, including life histories gathered by other social scientists, reconstructions of crimes by police and academics, autobiographies of criminals, biographies by professional journalists, and, in some instances, *cinema verité* observations of participants to perform analytic induction to develop his theory. He "does not produce abstract, summary forms of evidence (sampling designs, statistics of association, tests of agreement among coders, and the like)" (p. 11). His "analytic results did not emerge from a straightforward, deductive, hard, or inflexible application of theory to fact" (p. 11). Instead, he revised his theory with each disconfirming case, increasing methodological quality each time it was "pushed around and beaten into shaped by frustrated applications" (p. 11). Rather than utilizing a straightforward approach that could be repeated and quality tested by another, a critical and detailed "search for evidence and the development of theory proceed[ed] in mutually altering steps" (p.11).

Focusing on the *quality* of each experience of violence, he concluded it is the seduction of violence—the reaching of a level of transcendence-- which prompts one to commit it. This may be a transcendence to uphold the Good, a transcendence of power, a transcendence over humiliation, or, simply, a transcendence over the mundane. Arguments

regarding his and rival hypotheses are made within and throughout the text, supporting the methodological quality of his research.

Katz (1988) proposed that three conditions are met when a crime is carried out: 1) A line of action—the practical requirements for successful commission of the crime. 2) A line of interpretation—one's personal way of interpreting the situation, himself, and how others will see him; and 3) An emotional process--seductions and compulsions that have distinct dynamics. His focus was on these emotions and he found that, central to these instances, were what he called "moral emotions: humiliation, righteousness, arrogance, ridicule, cynicism, defilement, and vengeance." (p. 9), contributing to the "seduction" to engage in violence. In the case of humiliation and self-righteousness, for instance, the offender's self-righteousness leads him to defend moral values and he attempts to equalize the moral ground, attacking (s)he who has in some way insulted or humiliated him or has otherwise denigrated communal morality (Ioannou, Canter, Youngs, & Synnott, 2015). Thus, the perpetrator feels justified in attacking. What is significant is that the details of the event define the killer's experience psychologically. It is explained in three parts (Katz, 1988, p.18-19):

1. The would-be-killer must interpret the scene and behavior of the victim in a particular way—as attacking what he regards as an eternal human value. Also required is a last stand in defense of his basic worth.
2. The would-be-killer must undergo a particular emotional process transforming what he initially senses as an eternally humiliating situation into a rage. This rage can blind himself to his future yet forge him with a momentary sense of eternal unity with the Good.
3. The would-be-killer must successfully organize his behavior to maintain the required perspective and emotional posture while implementing a particular project--honoring the offense that he suffered through and then violently engaging upon the victim.

The author calls this a sacrificial slaughter. These types of violence often lack premeditation and the relationship between what the assailants are actually attempting to accomplish, and the actual results are arbitrary. Interestingly, Katz observes that these killers do not typically try to evade arrest and even, oftentimes, call the police themselves. This is, in Katz's (1988) interpretation, a way of saying that they are, once again, in control of themselves.

Being "mean" is a distinctive phenomenon of Katz's (1988) next type of killer—the "badass." He must appear cool in situations that ruffle most, must be tough, and not be morally malleable, influenced by others, or care what others think. He alienates himself by his extreme use of violence and by appearing hostile to the world or by living in his own world, a world that is incomprehensible to others. Now and then, he must go a little bit 'mad' to instill uneasiness on others. The Badass might not be the one who fights the most often, but the one who conveys that "he means it" when he does. "He must seem prepared

to use violence, not only in the utilitarian, instrumental fashion but as a means to ensure the predominance of his meaning, as he alone understands that, whatever 'it' may be" (Katz, 1988, p. 100). The seduction of this type of kill is found in the spirit of meanness, superiority, and, possibly, hate. This seduction becomes transcendence over rationality whereby others kowtow to the badass on the sake of his reputation alone; he has become superior to them and the world around him (Katz, 1988).

A third type of seduction is found in Katz' discussion of "Street Elites"-- those who engage as a group in radical political or social movements (e.g. the punk movement that grew out of blue collar workers in Britain or the Skinheads of America, gangsters of the Capone era, 'homies' of the 'hood,' etc.) These groups are showing a loyalty to a cause-- whether it be to protect the pride of the family, of the gang, or what they stand for. The seduction of the gang is to feel a part of something and bonded to others. The focus of the *street elite* is more so about the proof of one's valiant commitment to the group and less so about the suffering of others (Katz, 1988). Members must individuate themselves in a way that sets them apart from the rest of society; they must portray themselves as serious by utilizing practical activities of violence; and there must be an emotional process that binds them to each other by way of their experiences. They exaggerate their superior ability to transcend boundaries and freely and emphatically move outside of social norms and limitations. "Violence is essential so that membership may have a seductively glorious, rather than a mundane, indifferent, significance" (Katz, 1988, p. 128)—creating an eliteness on the streets. Seduction lies in notoriety, a feared isolation and desire for status in the eyes of one's peers and the surrounding society.

Another seduction of crime presents itself when one engages in a life of armed robbery. Katz (1988) calls this *persisting with stickup*. Going through with a life of committing "stickup" requires commitments that are experienced as transcending rational consideration. Many factors can go wrong in the smooth execution of a robbery. The transcendence of rational consideration in face of wanting to be the 'hard man' is characterized by a commitment to deviance. The author states true hard-headedness is essential to stick with stickup-- "the ultimate challenge for the would-be stickup man is to convince *himself* not to 'give it up'" (Katz, 1988, p. 194). The transcendence, then, lies in being willing to pursue it against all odds and the seduction, then, in 'winning.'

Finally, Katz (1988) speaks of what seems to be an evil, murderous desire, where the offender commits what are often referred to as cold-blooded, senseless killings. These types of killing are the result of an underlying, emotional, and personal chaos for those who commit them, which even they do not understand. To help make sense of it, the author examines the "dizzying" dynamics involved for these offenders. He explores three factors: 1) the image the perpetrator wants to display for others—one of a pariah who now takes

pride in society's rejection of him—2) the emotions that oppose each other just prior to the act—lost in the dizziness of being a known, deviant outsider and being observed living 'normally,' and, in a paranoia of conformity, a need to re-substantiate his image – and 3) the act's completion—a reversal of an equation whereby, in the past, suffering had been dealt upon him and now the participant is dealing out the suffering. Katz adds that there must be present a context through which an offender can fulfill his murderous desire. Contextually, just the right doses of particulars are "cosmologically" aligned to provide for this offender the necessary practical elements to carry out his crime, or he must give way to the emotional dynamics which are playing on the would-be-killer's mind (Katz, 1988). A longing to be in control is touted by the anger he feels toward society and a recent event which leaves him feeling out of control—the loss of a girlfriend, for example. Added to this is the goading of his need for the spiritual freedom which he finds in non-conformity. These elements come together to allow him to seek "the peace of transcendent significance" (Katz, 1988, p. 296). This killer's significance becomes realized when he goes over the top—when he kills the most innocent, when he acts in the most brutal way, when he steals just a few dollars in the taking of lives, when he goes far out of his way to kill, when he takes no steps to hide his identity—as, perhaps, an 'evil, cold-blooded killer' who conjures up horror and dread.

In short, very similar to Toch's theory, a perpetrator's interpretation leads to an emotion which leads to a line of action. Also similar to Toch's (1969) theory, the focus is very much in the moments leading up to the violent act. Unlike Toch, however, Katz (1988) did not interview offenders for his data, instead he used data previously collected by others for purposes other than research, such as investigations, auto/biographies, etc. The next theory will explore what closely resembles Katz's "badass," and will take a much longer-term, developmental viewpoint— Athens' (1992) dangerous violent criminal.

Athens' Theory of Violent Socialization

Athens (1992) argues that psychological theories of violence in the past have centered on one of two etiologies, either bio-physiological or the social-environmental. In development of his theory, he sought to integrate the two, supporting a holistic approach to theorizing the psychology of violence.

Athens (1992), as Toch (1969) did, felt it was important to formulate a theory about humans by studying their actual behavior, by going to the source and interviewing *them* about their experiences. He emphasized,

> One should never formulate social experiential theories of human conduct from mere deduction from more general theories of criminal behavior, including quasi-experiential ones. The theories constructed from this method, no matter how artfully practiced, can never yield a theory equivalent to one constructed from the actual study of the social experiences of the people for whose formation in explanation is desired (p. 88).

As such, he interviewed offenders directly. He goes on to say:

> Few, if any, of our theories of violent criminals are based upon the social experiences which make them violent...Thus, our crime policy makers have not had at their disposal ideas firmly grounded on the experiences of the very people whose actions they seek to control in fashioning their policies. (Athens, 1992, p. 90).

His focus was on the development of the "dangerous violent" criminal, using the words "dangerous" and "violent" in the same phrase to denote this category of people from those who are simply violent offenders. He narrowed the number of assumptions in his study to two: that people are a result of their social experiences and that the experiences which make one violent occur as a process, not all at once. He believed that because social experiences build upon earlier social experiences, there must be some sort of developmental process to extreme violence (Athens, 1992). Athens studied two groups of violent offenders—an incarcerated, "seasoned" group (n=8) of males whom he identified as needing minimal or no provocation to spur them into violence, who were able to inform about later stages of violent socialization, and an "unseasoned" (n=30) group of incarcerated males and females he felt would be able to talk about initial and early stages of violent socialization-- the process of violence which is learned and utilized as a way of life and means to many ends. These were compared to a sample of half a dozen non-violent offenders and to half a dozen victims of domestic abuse— who had undergone victimization but had not become abusive, as the two non-control groups had. In this way, he felt he would gather data to assess both the initial and subsequent stages of the development of violence and compare this to the development of non-violent victims and non-violent offenders.

He conducted private, in-depth interviews with them, each lasting between seven and nine hours and divided into two or three separate sessions. He had the interviewees describe experiences which they seem deemed significant, not those which he deemed significant (Athens, 1992). The author used the "deceivingly simple, but time proven method of constant comparison" (p. 23) of the offenders' descriptions of their different social experiences against one another to try to isolate the nature of their social experiences and the sequence in which they had undergone them. He preliminarily developed a process of their experiences in stages then compared this back to the significant social experiences of the participants (the seasoned and unseasoned offenders) until he found a process which applied to them all. To his surprise, his assumption that the unseasoned offenders were in the early stages of violence development was wrong. They had mostly completed the experiential process he derived based on seasoned offenders and, because their experiences were more recent, they actually provided *better* and *more* detailed information on the stages, both early and late.

This theory derived by Athens (1992) consists of four separate stages: 1) Brutalization, in which he is brutally victimized, usually by an intimate; which he then further divides into violent subjugation (coercive and/or retaliatory), personal horrification, and violent coaching; 2) Belligerency, in which the participant resolves to stop being victimized by using violence but only when he is provoked; 3) Violent performances, in which he practices violence and builds his confidence; and, finally, 4) Virulence, where the participant has become emboldened by his infamous, violent reputation, feels invincible, and now attacks people out of little or no provocation (Athens, 1992). Athens' research supports his claim that if the participant enters but does not complete any one of the stages, he will not become a dangerous violent criminal. "However, any person who does ultimately complete the virulence stage, and consequently the entire experiential process, will become a dangerous violent criminal;" adding, "as long as their degree of mental and physical competence is sufficient for them to perform a violent criminal act" (Athens, 1992, p. 81). He calls this process *violent socialization* (Athens & Ulmer, 2003).

Winlow and Hall—Past Humiliation and Social Acceptance of Violence

Winlow and Hall (2009) also stressed the significance of one's history in understanding behavior in a particular moment. "History is a constellation that incorporates both past and present, and thus it becomes a crucial means of grasping the actuality of the here and now" (2009, p. 288). They, too, interviewed offenders directly. While their population had committed violent acts, they had not been convicted or imprisoned. At the time of the interviews, all were under 30 years old, all were white and from white-dominated areas, and all "hail[ed]… from the 'working class,'" (p. 285) specifically, lower-economic class, and all but one had an enduring history of physical violence. Two groups, one of successful, dedicated criminals and one of 20-something men who were not 'dedicated' criminals but were involved in the night-time drinking culture, were interviewed about their social status and relationships and the role violence has played in their lives.

Highlighted in this study were the roles that memory, humiliation, and regret played on violent incidents. The memories or previous experiences entailed once upon a time being assaulted and feeling loss of control and humiliation or backing away from a confrontation or attack and feeling regret. Engagement in violent acts in the present are seen as an attempt to make up for those past insults, even by constructing an opportunity to revive the past. The "interviewees' ruminations on past humiliations could be rehabilitated only if the self became dominant and refused to back away from future social or physical challenges… on a journey towards ultimate self-becoming" (Winlow & Hall, 2009, p. 294). The suggestion is that these emotionally charged instances shape and feed back to one's self-identity. Of importance, too, was the recognition that, if the participants were not able to

acquire status and power through socially acceptable means, violence became a viable option.

This study, too, recognized that, for its participants, violence was seen as a viable option. The authors noted the cultural impact on one's psychology and how communal factors beget violence. Within society, micro-cultures exist. These might include street gangs, a sports team's fan base, white-supremacist groups, etc., which instruct their people to "not take any shit" and to "look after" one's own (Winlow & Hall, 2009, p. 288). There is a drive to not be dominated by another. In such communities, which are often wrought with "insecurity, aggression, and domination," violence carries with it value. Yet, they explain, it is not so much the violence that is valued as the "ability to retain some sense of dignity and respect in the face of it" (Winlow & Hall, 2009, p. 288). In societies wrought with insecurity, aggression, and domination, in particular, and in which one is, thus, trying to 'save face' as an ongoing challenge, violence has developed as a socially accepted and sometimes 'necessary' solution (Winlow & Hall, 2009).

Theories of Violence: Summary and Discussion

Theories of violence by Toch (1969), Katz (1988), Athens (1992), and Winlow and Hall (2009) have been explored herein. All offered reasonable explanations of violent, even murderous behavior. All understood the importance of and took an idiographic approach, interviewing offenders directly or studying the specific actions taken by offenders in the administration of violence. All emphasized the importance of the murderer's perception of events and their feelings and/or attitudes as seminal in understanding their crimes. What was noted but less thoroughly explored, and is discussed in greater detail below, were perceptions of self and others, however. All at a minimum either noted or more thoroughly explained how their constructs of violence were a result of the offenders' experiences. All implied or even laid out that there are stages of violence which one goes through. Some focused on immediate precursors and the detailed psychology within those moments; others focused on the personal history and environmental factors which shaped the development of their violence.

Toch's (1969) examination of the step-by-step interactions between an offender and his victim produced a typology highlighting perceptions of the offender and his subsequent actions. Katz' (1988) step-by-step examination of the stages of violence, resulted in the theory that there must be a line of action, a line of interpretation, and an emotional process, which consists of being seduced by and giving into compulsions that have distinct dynamics and provide transcendence over some concept. Athens' (1992) thorough examination of the life-long development of violent behavior shaped his theory of violent socialization, particularly in regard to dangerous violent criminals. Winlow and Hall (2009) drew together both the culture and personal history as factors in the development of

violence, highlighting the roles of memory, humiliation, regret and the cultural acceptance and even admiration of violence.

If these contributions to theory are all accepted as viable and viewed, perhaps, as offering the notion of successive stages in the phenomenon of murder, a long-running process in the development of violence that culminates into one remarkable moment is implied. What deserves further empirical investigation is the process by which personal history, experience, culture, and/or environment erupts, in one notable moment, in fatality out of a perception that either triggers one to violence or gives way to a plan of violence. The authors discussed have indicated the importance of one's perception of others. They, too, have alluded to the possible importance of offenders' self perceptions. However, it seems they only provide hints at the latter and both seem to potentially be areas worthwhile of further examination.

What Toch (1969) and Katz (1988) did was identify the perceptions of the participant which motivate a person to violence in the stages immediately preceding the violent act. Within these examinations were noted the influence of the participant's perceptions of others. The following quote underscores specifically the impact of the unconscious assumptions of others. Gibbons, in the foreword of Toch's (1969) book, writes that violence is often

> accompanied by a lack of understanding of the motives of others, a serious immaturity in interpersonal relationships. Other people are thought of as merely the givers or with-holders of what is immediately wanted; if they refuse, this is merely out of ill-will and hostility, which then deserves to be attacked. Such individuals show callousness and lack of conscience baffling to the observer (Toch, 1969, p. 19-20).

Winlow and Hall (2009), too, share one perpetrator's view of others. Michael, who was a financially successful yet committed, violent criminal, saw the world as one in which others are constantly trying to wrestle dignity from one another. Although these assumptions of others are noted as contributors to violence, what remains is still the question-- what guides the participants' assumptions of others as with-holders of what is wanted, hostile, or ill-intending? This notion of the perception of others is recognized as salient to a violent interpersonal moment but seems to have gone unexplored more fully, particularly in the context of a theoretical perspective spanning a life course rather than focused on the immediate moments before a violent act. The "unconscious assumptions" (Toch, 1969, p. 172) which make up stable frames of reference exist prior to the crime and contribute to these motives but where they come from needs further exploration.

Although perhaps more important than the perceptions of others, the notion of the perception of self, while common to these theories, is still attenuated— perceptions of self, self-identity, threat to self, self-servitude, etc. have, although alluded to, not been highly substantiated points within these authors' discussions. Katz (1988) demonstrates the

understanding of violence to the self as (s)he might qualitatively experience it. The second stage in his trajectory to committing a violent act was a line of interpretation—a unique way of understanding how the violator is and will be seen by others. Katz frames the overcoming of each of the "moral emotions" as a demonstration of personal competence—an aptitude of the self, so to speak. He also highlights the need to separate self from others as a factor in each one of the areas of transcendence of which he speaks and, in some cases, the perpetrator's actions are "an experiment with the boundaries of the self" (Katz, 1988, p. 67). Winlow and Hall (2009) speak of a common theme from their interviews being the avoidance of injury to one's self-identity and the need "to retain [one's] dignity and protect the self from painful humiliation" (p. 295), noting that a key component on one interviewee's violent antics is his "culturally informed self-image…. If these components cannot be retained the 'self' in its present form is lost" (p. 296). They conclude that the "complexities of identity construction" are the instigators in what seem to be random acts of violence. Toch's (1969) entire typology highlights the impact of a participant's interpretation of others' intent toward or effect upon him/herself. His two categories essentially revolve around the Self feeling either threatened by another or Self as using others for his/her advancement. Yet, still, this notion has lain in the periphery in his and others' discussions and has not been underscored to be as relevant as it might be. The concept of Self, then, while demonstrated to be significant, is seemingly still a fruitful area for further exploration.

Another area for further exploration is touched on by Katz (1988), who states that "moral emotions" are present and central to this process of committing crime. What remains is the question of how/why such emotions are so impactful on the participants that they are driven to murder. *What* causes them to feel so humiliated, righteous, defiled, etc. to feel the need to commit murder?

Toch's (1969) two categories (self as threatened and self as to-be-served-by-others) also turn attention to another area of exploration in the topic of murder which was not explored by Toch but has certainly been studied by other authors of violence—the idea of threat from others or, alternatively, the idea of using others instrumentally toward reaching his/her goal as instigators in violent behavior. These instigators correlate to expressive and instrumental violence, respectively.

Instrumental and Expressive Homicide

Response to threat or, alternatively, the desire to obtain a future goal as motivators in crime has long been a distinction used by researchers (Feshbach, 1964; Miethe & Drass, 1999; Prentky, et al., 1985; Salfati, 2000; Santtila, et al., 2003) to categorize a crime as either expressive or instrumental, respectively. This has also been an important distinction to investigators and administrators of law. Because an expressive crime is committed in response to emotional arousal and an instrumental crime is committed as a means to reach

some desire, for example money, sex, or successful completion of another crime, expressive crimes are seen as, perhaps, more socially acceptable, and are, thus, often less punishable by law. The distinction can be as important as life and death, as an instrumental homicide carries greater likelihood of a charge of First-Degree Murder and an expressive homicide carries a greater likelihood of Second-Degree Murder. The result of this difference could mean the death penalty as opposed to life in prison in some cases. As such, it is an important distinction to understand.

A significant amount of research has been conducted that explores the utility of the concepts of expressive and instrumental in understanding types of murder. The foci have primarily been on either 1) categorizing a crime scene as either expressive or instrumental based on the actions that took place (Salfati, 2000; Salfati & Park, 2007; Santtila, Canter, Elfgren, & Häkkänen, 2001; Santtila, Häkkänen, Canter, & Elfgren, 2003; Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011), specific to juvenile offenders (Gerard, Whitfield, & Browne, 2017), specific to male offenders (Goodwill, Allen, & Kolarevic, 2014), and specific to patients institutionalized in a mental health hospital (Last & Fritzon, 2005); 2) motives (Miethe & Drass, 1999; Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011), specific to organized crime (Hopkins, Tilley, & Gibson, 2013); or 3) linking offender characteristics and backgrounds with crime scene behaviors so that characteristics of a crime scene might be helpful in determining a type of suspect (Meneses-Reyes & Quintana-Navarrete, 2017; Santtila, et al., 2003). Weapon type (Fox & Allen, 2014), specifically a firearm (Meneses-Reyes & Quintana-Navarrete, 2017), and victim-offender relationships have also been researched in terms of instrumental or expressive homicide (Fox & Allen, 2014; Last & Fritzon, 2005; Salfati, 2000; Salfati & Park, 2007; Santtila, Häkkänen, Canter, & Elfgren, 2003).

Most often, a multi-dimensional scaling procedure (MDS) (Gerard, et al., 2017; Salfati, 2000; Salfati & Park, 2007; Santtila, et al., 2001; Santtila, et al., 2003; Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011) has been employed for this. In MDS, the variables (i.e. crime scene actions, offender characteristics) are plotted, using computer software, nearest to other characteristics which appear at similar frequencies. The characteristics which recur in conjunction most often with others are measured using association coefficients and presented in a visual representation as points in a geographical space. From the patterns of points in a given space, thematic differentiations are delineated and named by the researcher. The characteristics which are plotted and show patterns based on geographical distance are taken from many offenders/crime scenes. To say that two points (i.e. characteristics) close to each other always occurred within the same crime is not necessarily the case. This may present an issue in how we interpret and make sense of the data as either expressive or instrumental in a particular offender-- a less common behavior might

be indicative of instrumental thinking in one offender's mind and indicative of expressive in another's mind.

Researching Instrumental/Expressive (I/E) categorization of homicide in this way seems to have its problems, as the findings have been contradictory. For example, Salfati & Canter (1999) and others (Goodwin, et al., 2014; Salfati & Park, 2007) found that forensic awareness or attempting to conceal evidence are indicative of Instrumental homicide while Salfati (2000) found that destroying or ridding the scene of evidence is indicative of Expressive homicide. Several studies found that carrying a weapon to the crime scene is indicative of Expressive behavior (Salfati; 2000; Salfati & Canter, 1999; Santtila, et al., 2001) while others found it indicative of Instrumental behavior (Salfati & Park, 2007). Salfati & Canter's 1999 study found that both carrying a weapon *to* the crime scene and using a weapon *from* the crime scene, which are intuitively contradictory of one another, were indicative of Expressive behavior. Moving the body from the crime scene and /or hiding it was found to be an Instrumental behavior by some (Salfati & Canter, 1999) and Expressive behavior by others (Salfati, 2000; Salfati & Bateman, 2005; Salfati & Dupont, 2006; Salfati & Haratsis, 2001; Santtila, et al., 2001); additionally, the victim being *left* at the crime scene, rather than moved from it, was *also* found to be indicative of Expressive behavior (Salfati, 2003). Shooting a victim (use of a firearm) has also been determined to be both Instrumental (Fox & Allen, 2014) and Expressive (Salfati, 2000; Santtila, et al., 2001). Even offender-victim relationships have varying results. Fox and Allen (2014) found that victims are strangers or acquaintances most often in Instrumental homicides and found them to be stranger, acquaintances and family in Expressive homicides. Thus, it is unclear how the perpetrator's relationship to the victim might be related to the nature of the crime as Instrumental or Expressive.

It was thought that some of this confusion may be mediated by finding sub-types of Expressive and Instrumental homicide but it seems to have just muddied the waters further. For example, Salfati and Park (2007) sub-typed the I/E dichotomy into planned and unplanned. The planned-instrumental subtype included transporting the body from the crime scene; the unplanned-expressive subtype included hiding the body. It is not clear that there is a difference in this crime scene behavior, as the body most likely has to be moved in order to be hidden. The confusion lies in the fact that the research seems to supports that moving/hiding is done by both subtypes, thus, again, not clearly delineating them.

Researchers have challenged the Instrumental/Expressive (I/E) categorization, noted it to be problematic, and offered a less dichotomous approach. Block & Block (1993) present Instrumental and Expressive motives as on a continuum—that homicide is not strictly one or the other but, instead, that Instrumental homicide and Expressive homicide are opposite poles of a continuum and any crime can be placed somewhere along it, noting both types

may be present in the same homicide. For example, an offender who plans a robbery (usually considered Instrumental) is faced with the unexpected – the store owner holds a gun up to him—and the robber shoots in a panic (an affective response, usually considered Expressive). Alternatively, the same sorts of homicide can be represented as either Instrumental or Expressive. Gang killings, for example, can be the result of Instrumental behavior such as in drug trafficking or the result of Expressive murder such as revenge for a killing a member of their group. Another author, Felson (1993), considered all aggression Instrumental because it is executed in attempt to reach a goal. Miethe & Drass (1999) found that Instrumental and Expressive homicides do have social contexts that are unique but that most homicides take place in situations that are common to both the Instrumental and Expressive categories. For example, lovers' triangles are common to both Instrumental and Expressive homicides in 78.6 % of those particular types of situations. Arguments over money are common to both Instrumental and Expressive cases in 80.5% of those types of cases. In short, there is a great deal of variability in the prevalence of elements both unique and common to Instrumental and Expressive crime. Adding research of a more idiographic nature might be useful in refining of our understanding of Instrumental and Expressive behavior. First, a look back at the origin of the I/E categorization might be helpful.

Feshbach (1964) is often cited as the originator of the Instrumental/Expressive 'dichotomy' (Adjorlolo & Chan, 2017; Meneses-Reyes & Quintana-Navarrete, 2017; Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011). Incorporating the findings of previous studies on human behavior, Feshbach's basis for the difference was the motive or the goal of the offender. What researchers of Instrumental and Expressive homicide neglect to acknowledge is that Feshbach's typology noted *three* categories of aggression. In expressive aggression the goal is *not* necessarily to harm another but to release affective expression (usually anger) and an "overflow of energy"-- i.e. the "frustration produces an instigation to hit rather than hurt; [and] the topography of the response is more important than the noxious consequence" (1964, p. 262). This is shown to be the case in the early stages of human development. Feshbach then cites Sears (1958) to explain that the desire to injure another-- hostile aggression—evolves due to secondary reinforcements-- of both elimination of aroused emotion and the evocation of pain in another (which often stops their behavior which is frustrating to the offender). Feshbach points out that the latter reinforcement is an assumption and, up to the time of his writing, there was no evidence to support or refute this. Moreover, he explains that the contrary might occur, as causing another to experience pain by hitting is often met with punishment of the aggressor, thus *reducing* likeliness for reinforcement. (As discussed above, however, there are certainly cases in which aggression is reinforced by attention, albeit often negative, and promotion of status). So, Feshbach goes on to explain that, as the aggressor learns through modelling of punishment

deliverance, a perceived norm in the infliction of pain develops and a view of it as appropriate and even as, perhaps, required is instilled. (This is assuming the punishment was corporal.) Thus, it is learned that hitting is not enough and hurting becomes the goal. Even though this evolution from expressive aggression to hostile aggression may happen in some, there is still consideration given to aggression resulting from a desire to expel unwanted emotions and to not actually hurt someone.

Feshbach (1964) also

> "draw[s] a sharp distinction between aggressive acts which are instrumental to the attainment of non-aggressive goals and aggressive acts which are motivated by the intent to inflict injury upon some person or object. This distinction becomes blurred when hostility is elicited by a threat to self-esteem" (p. 265).

He delineates hostility from anger, noting that anger "refers to mediating affective responses" (p. 266) and hostile behavior is carried out with the goal of injuring another. The key here is that, although expressions of anger may result in injury, hostility may not be the intent. He differentiates these as expressive-aggression (of which the goals is catharsis of emotion only) and hostile aggression (of which catharsis may be the goal but, additionally, so is injury upon another). With the addition of instrumental aggression, there are, then, three forms of aggression distinguished by Feshbach (1964).

In spite of this, researchers continue to present, as a foundation from which to categorize types of aggression, a *dichotomy* of Instrumental and Expressive aggression. The delineation between hostile and emotive-based aggression has not endured and may account for a dizzying degree of contradictions in current Instrumental/Expressive aggression research. However, while even Feshbach (1964) himself was fully aware of the difficulty in separating the components of each, noting that all response modes have instrumental functions and that "expressive, hostile, and instrumental functions are interwoven in most aggressive acts" (p. 270), the I/E categorization does appear to have some substantial value to it. When motive is the basis for the distinction, there do appear to be two different catalysing agents—one being threat (which could result in expressive aggression and/or hostile aggression) and the other desire (the catalyst in instrumental aggression). Thus, although reducing Feshbach's original categories of aggression from three to two may be causing some of the difficulty in the separation of Instrumental and Expressive violence, an examination of this notion (I/E homicide) from the perspective of motive (i.e. the psychological basis from which their behavior stems-- the etiology of such behavior) may be helpful in refining our understanding of the I/E concept applied to homicide.

So, whether the problem with the I/E dichotomy as it stands is due to simplification of behavior into two categories from Feshbach's (1964) original three, the contradictory findings creating contradictory definitions of crime scene behaviors as either Instrumental or

Expressive, the methodology used primarily thus far to examine this categorization, or the lack of understanding of murderers' thinking and behavior on an idiographic level is not clear. Rather than debasing the I/E concept as entirely 'wrong' or useless, in order to better understand this dichotomy, this research will take a step back from these strictly categorical approaches and try to understand the Instrumental and Expressive concepts by returning to earlier approaches—looking at the offender's perspectives, their development, and the crime itself as an act within the context of his (again, all participants are male) lifespan.

Summary

Discussed above were some of the valuable contributions that each theory of murder has made to our understanding of this phenomenon. In short, these authors, at various points, stress the importance of the participants' experiences, their culture/environment surrounding them, and their perceptions; the necessity of action, emotion, and interpretation, specifically of others involved in the violent event; and the effects of these upon the interpretation of self. However, although all of these notions were touched on by these authors as contributing factors to a person's violent behavior, the integration of these factors and their effects upon each other and the self have not been fully explored as a life-long process and how they culminate in motivation to murder.

Noted, too, was a recurring concept of self-identity and/or self/others perception and, although it was addressed in terms of how the self is perceived or experienced in the lead up to the violent act, the self's history was not significantly explored by Katz (1988) or Toch (1969). Toch, for example, focused on the interpersonal exchange of self and the other immediately preceding the violence and identified threats to one's self/self-identity as contributory to violence but he does not address what lies beneath the volatility of that impact on self—how does such an extreme reaction develop? He also identifies as a catalyst to violence the act of using others for one's gain, yet he does not explore how one progresses into viewing others this way. Katz (1988), too, focused on how the self perceived the immediate precursors to violence and the sensuality within the event that the self experienced, yet did not explore what, within the history or development of self, might have made the precipitating event so triggering. While Athens (1922) did explore the history of self, he primarily focused on one aspect-- the violent socialization-- that formed the "dangerous" violent criminal and did not explore the development of other potential constructs at play or the one-time violator who has no history of violence.

Additionally, although the I/E dichotomy has presented with some problem areas in current research, Feshbach's categorization of aggression as expressive (i.e. affective) or instrumental, which has been the foundation of much research, seems to be useful, particularly in terms of motive—as a catalyst to release emotion, usually anger, and/or to hurt or stop another in response to threat; or, out of a desire to obtain a goal. A step back

to more fully examine this qualitatively and from an idiographic approach may prove beneficial. Interviews directly with offenders, rather than or in addition to behavioral statistics, could provide the data for such an in-depth examination.

The idea of a process assumes an evolution over time-- adjustments being made in response to experience so as to increase 'fit-ness' of that process. Might it be assumed that, whatever the psychological process that eventually culminates in murder, its inner workings have served to benefit the processor? Toch (1969), Katz (1988), and others made reference to the perceptions of the offenders as misconceptions in some way— 'misperceptions,' 'errors in thinking,' 'misinterpretations,' or, according Toch, that "violence is a symptom of social maladjustment," (1969, p. 266). Although the offenders' perceptions may appear to the observer as irrational, maladjusted social development, errors in thinking, etc., the offenders' perceptions likely developed because they, in some way, served the offender-- brought him benefit of some kind-- and, as such, the present research takes the viewpoint that the offender's perceptions were, as he saw them leading up to or at the time of the crime, not necessarily 'erroneous' or 'maladjusted.' Those perceptions are but judgments of the observer. If such was the judgment of the do-er—that his thinking was erroneous or maladjusted—his perceptions would likely not have evolved and, ultimately, developed to the point of resulting in murderous behavior. They are likely, on some level, logical to the actor and have served purpose. It is this thinking that gives credence to the suggestion that what took place in the mind of the offender at the time of the crime can be traced as part of a larger pattern or process that was useful to him in other situations or aspects of his life and, as such, can be identified and studied.

George Kelly (1955), too, contended that one's actions make sense, on some level, to the actor. His Personal Construct Theory (PCT) explains humans as a form of motion-- a process. PCT also employs the notions of perceptions of self, others, and events (cognitions); behaviors; and emotions as all parts of a meaning-making system. As such, PCT appears to be a practical theory by which to explore murder as a process. And, as two types of motivation to commit homicide— Instrumental and Expressive-- have been theorized and researched by many and were also distinguishing concepts in Toch's (1969) typology, this categorization will be a focal point from which this PCT approach will proceed. The following chapter will address key aspects of PCT and the limited amount of research that has employed PCT forensically and, specifically, applied it to murder.

Chapter 2 – Personal Construct Theory

To be punishable by law, murder must be within the confines of rational thought. If it were not, one could not be adjudicated as guilty and a special adjudicative category is reserved for such cases, in some places referred to as *Not Guilty by Insanity* or *by Reason of Mental Disease or Defect*. Chapter Eight of Canter's (1994) *Criminal Shadows* is committed to the position that criminal behavior, violence included, is a product of rational thought. This is an important point to be made in regard to the propensity to investigate, and possibly someday more efficaciously predict, violence. And, if, indeed, it is rational, it must have some basis or foundation of thinking upon which it is established. This research will apply PCT and its tenets to the psychological processes that result in murder.

Like the authors discussed in the previous chapter, George Kelly, the father of PCT, also emphasized that the importance of a phenomenon—its key to relevance—lies in how it is conceptualized by the experiencer. He developed PCT using that premise as its foundation. Kelly (1955, 2003) has written two comprehensive volumes, one outlining his theory and another applying it clinically. Over the decades, he and others have enhanced and tested his theory, adding to the literature innumerable written works on the theory and its many applications. Thus, it seems PCT may be a viable theory to use to deepen understanding of murder as a psychological process and has also, in fact, been used in the field of forensics specifically.

The classical division of emotion, cognition, and action prominent in psychology prior to Kelly is abandoned in Personal Construct Theory. This allows for the psychology of individuals to be explored more copiously, as individuals' meanings of events, people, self, etc. (i.e. *elements*) are both comprehensive and nuanced. This non-detachment of affect/cognition/conation also highlights psychology as a *process*, as meaning is both interpreted by and exemplified through their affect/cognition/conation. This *process*, a term which indicates movement, might be thought of, then, as what moves-- or motivates-- a person. This process, in PCT, is known as personal construction or *construal*. Kelly's theory, then, was one of motivation and, as such, "motivation" herein is thought of as a psychological process referring to the affect/cognition/conation of the research participants and, as such, goes deeper than previous explorations of motivation that have focused on the immediate trigger to a violent episode. I will next outline the theory and present key concepts that are likely relevant to the phenomenon of homicide.

Introduction to Personal Construct Theory (PCT)

Personal Construct Theory (PCT) is a humanistic, phenomenological psychology developed by George Kelly in the mid-1950s that aimed to keep intact in its study and application the cohesion of cognition, affect, and behavior. This personality theory of Kelly's

is humanistic in that it states that people act as free agents in life and are responsible for the decisions they make. It is phenomenological in that it stresses the importance of the awareness of the participant, or patient—what is conceptualized by the one who experiences the phenomenon (Butt, 2008) and considers the patient the "expert" on him- or herself. In this way, it is also a very individualistic approach to psychological phenomenon. In contrast to the behavioral psychology popular in Kelly's day that claimed people's behavior is shaped by conditioning, *reacting* to forces which act upon them, rather than giving consideration to their thoughts and feelings, Kelly believed patients themselves are responsible for their behavior. His approach, then, is consistent with a commonly held view that offenders are to be held accountable for their offending. It is, however, more complicated than this. Although in PCT all people are ultimately responsible for their own choices, they nevertheless act in accordance with the choices that *appear* available to them according to the system of meaning we have created. Kelly also felt that, contrary to Freud's psychodynamic theory that came before him, around the turn of the 20th century, a person's behaviors are not due to some deep lying "unconscious" need that is striving to be met. Instead, Kelly conveyed a psychology in which people's thoughts, affects, and behaviors were all based, not upon the way the world actually is, but on how the world and its characters are conceptualized by a person, which is subjective and personal, and that, using these conceptualizations, individuals try to anticipate events. The way in which a person construes his world, experiences, and people in it, including him- or herself, Kelly called *personal constructs* (Kelly, 1955; Butt, 2008).

As an individual experiences and cognizes things, (s)he develops constructs or uses his/her pre-existing constructs (i.e. frameworks) to give meaning to (and also get meaning from) elements (events, people, etc.) of his/her life, thus building an entire construct system. It is by this system that (s)he gives meaning to things in life. The ways of construing are idiosyncratic; one individual's construction of an event may differ a lot or very little from another's.

Motive as Interpreted by PCT

Because this research strives to discern why people decide to kill, a discussion of motive according to PCT is necessary. Kelly notes that psychology "refers to a group of systems for explaining behavior" and is, then, the study of "motive" (p.48). It follows that in aspiration to understand the why and wherefore of humans, his theory is one of 'motive.' Kelly addresses his Fundamental Postulate-- "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the way in which he anticipates events" (1955a, p. 46) -- in some detail. According to Kelly (1955), humans *are* the process-- a person is not simply in a temporary state of motion when behaving but *is* a form of motion. This underscores the redundancy of studying motive (which shares the origin of 'motion'- to move) *apart from* the why and

wherefore of humans themselves. So, understanding that Personal Construct Theory is a theory of motivation-- highlighted as a *process* by which an individual "makes sense" for him- or herself-- rationality of behavior is a concept embodied in PCT. Murder is presumably no exception.

Kelly begins construction of his theory with two notions which are foundational to his theory. The first is that the understanding of humans is improved if viewed over the course of centuries rather than as a flicker in time. As such, he focused on that which seemed to account for humans' progress, rather than those factors which highlighted human's errors. Although this will be an important point to be considered later in the research, as murder and the ensuing possibility of life-incarceration or death is presumably not inherently thought of as *progression*, it makes sense, for now, to consider progression and the advancement of humans as seeking the fulfillment of their very nature, which is to exist into the future. Kelly negates the notions of other psychologists who believe that humans are driven by "inexorable drives" or "gluttonous pursuit of sustenance and shelter" (1955, p.5) by questioning which of these notions has truly propelled man into long-term, progressive existence. According to Kelly, it is surely not "appetites, tissue needs, or sex impulses;" more certainly it is the endeavor of man to "predict and control" his surroundings (1955, p.5).

The other notion from which Kelly's initial proposition sprung was that each person interprets events in his or her own way. Each set of eyes, each mind, construes things a bit differently. Considering these two notions together—that each human in *his/her own way* seeks to predict and control-- Kelly proposed that all humans are scientists ("Man-As-Scientist"). And, in much the same way that people of science seek to predict and control, so do humans-- by creating hypotheses, which are borne out of and supported by previous experiences, interpretations, and experimentations (1955).

Tenets of PCT

Anticipation

Kelly (1955) saw all individuals as like scientists, using their understanding of past experiences to anticipate, or create hypotheses about, future experiences using their constructs and construct systems, which are personal. Essentially, experiences mold a person's constructs (ways of viewing the world) and these constructs, in turn, shape his/her interpretation of future experiences— i.e. constructs serve to anticipate, and, conversely, the process of anticipation guides formation of constructs. Kelly's fundamental postulate, again, states, "A person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events" (p.46). Breaking down this statement, the terms used are of importance. *Process* indicates the ongoing and ever-changing nature of humans, who are considered a "form of motion," (p.48) not simply objects upon which other things act. It is

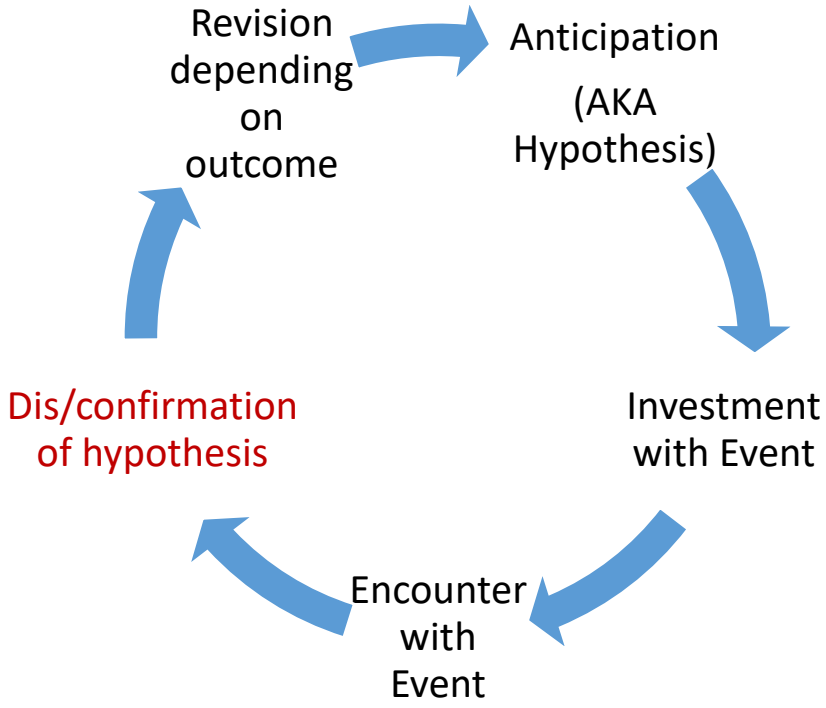
understood that this process is not taking place randomly or in a vacuum but, instead, has structure to it—it is *channelized*— and, as any structure does, it both facilitates and restricts its subject. These channels form a *way*—a means to an end—they serve purpose-- which is to *anticipate.* The notion of *anticipating* highlights the theory's "predictive and motivational features. Like the prototype of the scientist that he [sic] is, man [sic] seeks prediction…. Anticipation is both the push and pull of personal psychology" (p. 49). Thus, PCT is an ideal theory to use in examining the complex psychological motivations of others-- the psychological ingredients and process used by a participant.

Construing and experience

Kelly (1955) elaborates on his theory through several corollaries, some of which are specific to the content of constructs and some specific to their structure. Some of the main points to consider are, firstly, what is meant by construing-- "plac[ing] an interpretation upon that which is construed" (p.50). A person recognizes aspects of things, events, people, etc. as characteristic of some things and uncharacteristic of others. Similarities and contrasts are distinguished. Next, through their recognition of similarities and differences, people hypothesize, or anticipate—holding a prediction in their head of the way things are likely to occur based on what they have experienced before and their interpretations of those experiences. Thus, they use their past experience to interpret events, people, and so on, to anticipate future experience. This tenet, then, supports the previously asserted notion that patterns exist in the way people, murderers as well, construe and, because they are trying to anticipate, they use what they have already experienced to do so. As such, their previous experiences will inform their current and future behaviors. Kelly (1970) later developed the Experience Cycle (EC), using experience to predict and control (Fransella, 2003), to demonstrate this process. This cycle consists of 5 stages: The first stage is the formation of the hypothesis and is called *anticipation*. It is what Humans-as-Scientists, through previous experience and application of their interpretations of those experiences, predict. The second stage in this cycle is *investment*. This is the point at which Humans-as-Scientists gamble on the likelihood that their hypothesis is accurate, based on past experience. The third stage in the EC is an *encounter with an event*. The Humans-as-Scientists openly experience something which then either, as the fourth stage indicates, *confirms or disconfirms their hypothesis* (see

below).

Figure 1. The Experience Cycle (Kelly, 1970)



If the hypothesis is confirmed, the Humans-as-Scientists then use this to bolster and perhaps further advance their hypothesis. If the hypothesis is disconfirmed, they might accept that the hypothesis was disconfirmed and subsequently revise their hypothesis. They might do this by either adjusting their construct system-- allowing their constructs to shift so as to make room for their interpretation of the event-- or by giving an alternate interpretation to the event itself which will allow it to fit within their existing construct system (Kelly, 1955). The EC, then, describes how a person is subject- to a process of validation or invalidation of their system so that it might be refined and enhanced so as to better incorporate their varied experiences. Also, people tend, when decision-making, to choose the option which seemingly provides the best foundation-- from their perspective at that time-- for anticipation of events. According to Kelly (1955), they will seek to replicate events in a way that extends or defines their existing system. However, although people *can* experience change in their construing, they are often highly invested in their way of seeing the world and, thus, can be resistant to change. People differ in their openness to changing (refining and enhancing) their construct system and, for some, a potential change is a threat to their system that would have too many implications for their familiar way of being. They may, in such cases, reject a disconfirmation of their hypothesis.

PCT commentators have written that completion of the Experience Cycle is what characterizes the "optimally functioning person" (Winter, 2003b, p. 201). Winter (2003b) indicates that Kelly has implied that "disorders involve failure to complete the Experience Cycle" (p. 201). Thus, a dysfunction as serious as resorting to murder may be identifiable by contemplating any failures in one's process through the Experience Cycle. Kelly's (1955) notion of hostility, discussed below, is one such avenue, more specifically, the rejection of disconfirmation of one's hypothesis.

Individuality and commonality

Other points from PCT that are potentially pertinent to the current research are 1) that similar constructions by different people indicate similar psychological processes. Juxtaposed to this is 2) the idea that an event or thing will be perceived, to a lesser or greater degree, by one person differently than by another. This underscores that, although similarities exist between people and their thought processes, so do distinctions. These two points together support the assertion that common construals might be found amongst some individuals which will, at the same time, distinguish them from others.

The structure of constructs and the construct system

The above points refer to construct content development and manifestation. Points pertinent to the construct system's structure, its development, and manifestation are this: people's constructs are dichotomous (i.e. a thing is only recognized because there is something to oppose it) and they are finite, both in number and in their range of convenience (i.e. the scope within which a participant understands a series of elements). For example, *gravy* would not fall within the construct of *short v tall*—i.e. the construct of *short v tall* is limited in what is accepted into its range of usage.

Additionally, people's systems change and are refined as they continue to construe and experience and experience and construe. When they recognize something as resembling something which they have previously experienced, they are able to anticipate what will happen next. If, however, something a bit different or unexpected happens, variance in their construction process will typically take place. This replicative aspect of the system is responsible for the enrichment or significance of a series of events, as it provides patterns, themes, ties between, and relevancy to other events. Thus, meaning and an orderliness to people's construct systems emerge.

Enhancing this orderliness, people hierarchically organize their constructs to minimize inconsistencies and contradictions. Constructs are, essentially, ruled over by other construct(s) that are greater in the hierarchy of the system. So, when one of these 'ruling' constructs is tested or threatened, as alluded to above, it can shake all of the other constructs ruled over by this reigning construct, jeopardizing the whole system or a major

extent of it. These over-ruling constructs Kelly (1955) calls superordinate constructs. Those that are subsumed by them are called subordinate constructs.

PCT and Emotions

A discussion of the PCT perspective on emotions is salient, as Expressive murder is essentially underscored as an affective (emotional) reaction to an event. Kelly described people's emotions as their experience of or resistance to change (Bannister & Fransella, 1986; Houston, 1998) and that emotions "have particular relevance to transition" (Kelly, 1955, p. 488-489). What people experience is due to their interpretation of an event and when they are faced with the perceived potential for change, particularly if it is unwanted change, they might experience anxiety, guilt, threat, and/or fear and may even respond with hostility or aggression (Kelly, 1955). Kelly offered systematic definitions for each of these particular to PCT, and the definitions he offered are quite different from the conventional idea of emotions. They are not based on objective events but are from the perspective of the experiencer-- the person *undergoing* the threat, hostility, aggression, etc. Also, they do not refer to endocrinological processes but are, instead, entirely psychological.

In PCT terms, "*Anxiety* is the recognition that the events with which one is confronted lie outside the range of convenience of one's construct system" (Kelly, 1955, p. 495). If events (and their consequences) are not anticipated by an individual, they are unknown to the individual, which produces anxiety (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). "*Threat* is the awareness of an imminent comprehensive change in one's core structures…. The prospective change must be substantial" (Kelly, 1955, p. 489-90). As above, one's constructs are subsumed by more general constructs, called *superordinate constructs* (Kelly, 1955). When one is faced with a situation in which these superordinate constructs-- those at the very core of his being-- are invalidated, he feels threatened (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). "*Fear* is like threat, except that, in this case, it is a new incidental construct, rather than a comprehensive construct, that seems about to take over" (Kelly, 1955, p.494). This is less overarching than in the case of being threatened, as core constructs may be challenged, but one's *entire* system is not fully invalidated (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). However, the fear that change is looming is felt and may be experienced as more real because it is more acute and, thus, seen as more *probable*. Guilt, in Kellian terms, is the "perception of one's apparent dislodgment from one's core role structure" (Kelly, 1955, p. 502)-- the more one recognizes (s)he has acted out of alignment with his or her core role, (s)he is likely to experience guilt.

An individual anticipates events in order reduce anxiety, threat, and fear (Kelly, 1955). Anxiety, threat, and fear are responses to a disturbance in the ability to anticipate—due to an incompatibility within or ineffectuality of one's construct system. A challenge has been introduced to the person's construing. This challenge—to one's hypotheses, which

have served one well in one's ability to anticipate up to the point in question-- represents potential for change. This is a change either in circumstance for which one does not have a hypothesis, leaving one unable to anticipate, or is a need for imminent change to one's construct system, which also leaves one unable to anticipate and one's whole system at risk of dissolution. One is left experiencing anxiety, threat, and/or fear.

Permeability

While one can tolerate a certain amount of incompatibility with one's constructs, the amount of toleration depends on one's permeability. "A construct is permeable if it admits newly perceived elements to its context. It is impermeable if it rejects elements on the basis of their newness." (Kelly, 1991, p. 6). Permeability is a measure of structure and refers to how much variance there is in one's construing—or how deeply one's constructs are embedded by a singular way of thinking. For example, even though elicited constructs may appear in the form of various words or phrases (e.g. Hard-working, Not Lazy, and Self-sufficient), a similar meaning, to the subject, may be conveyed by them all. These constructs might be representative of a singular dimension, or "component" or "factor," of one's construing. Although not identical, tightness and looseness are terms which allude to one's permeability and how allowing (s)he is of potential change or challenge to his/her way of construing. It is relevant because a person who has rigidity (tightness) in thinking is likely to have less permeability and may be more likely to perceive challenge to his construing or find that a potential for change to his/her system is too much of a challenge, thus, resulting in feelings of threat, anxiety, fear, etc., which, in turn, may lead to external conflict—a factor common to violence. If a person construes more loosely, his/her thinking is more permeable and, as such, more amenable to the prospect of change (i.e. challenges to one's construing). A challenge to his/her construct system may be less threatening or not a threat at all. However, if a person's constructs are excessively loose, a relationship between constructs is barely identifiable and the possibility of 'too many' ways of construing can be overwhelming, leaving one feeling, again, threatened, anxious, fearful, etc. Tightness and looseness, as indicators of acceptance or non-acceptance of the prospect of change, likely play a part in perceived challenge and, as such, one's congruity in interpersonal relationships.

Each of the above points plays a part in construct system development and, as such, will likely be relevant to some degree in the comprehensive analyses of murderers' constructs/construal process as well. Anger, hostility, and aggression are also clearly relevant to understanding violence and murder. PCT offers a radical reconceptualization of these emotions and behaviors.

Aggression, hostility, and anger

Hostility and aggression, in PCT terms, are recognized as pathways to violence by Winter (2003a, 2007). Kelly's definition of aggression is quite different than the conventional definition of aggression. In PCT, "*aggressiveness* is the active elaboration of one's perceptual field" (Kelly, 1955, p. 508). Aggression, here, refers to one's quest to expand one's construct system—exploring and spreading in new directions (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). Contrary to the conventional definition of *aggressiveness,* it does not necessarily imply violence. It does, however, comprise assertion and may, at times, constitute violence. A non-violent example is of a woman who goes to travel on her own, purposefully without her spouse-- her usual companion-- in an effort to experience new things and feel self-empowered. Whether or not her behavior is in conjunction with her spouse's desires, Kelly's definition seems to be exemplified here. Again, according to Kelly's definition, the aggression is from the perspective of the wife, not the husband. Although her actions may feel to the husband aggressive (in the conventional sense) because they might threaten or impede him, Kelly's *aggression* explains what is going on inside the construer's mind—the wife, here-- not how her husband perceives her behavior. While this is a non-violent example of aggression, the act of elaborating one's perceptual field actively could, however, entail violence.

Kelly defines hostility as "the continued effort to extort validational evidence in favor of a type of social prediction which has already proved itself a failure" (Kelly, 1955, p.510). In spite of having been 'proved' wrong-- or his/her hypothesis as disconfirmed,-- (s)he cannot accept this, as it is too big a challenge to his/her construct system and, thus, (s)he forces his/her interpretation upon a situation. For example, a bully's usual target may have shown great strength in a particular endeavor. This provided the "unacceptable" evidence against the target's 'cowardliness.' Thus, the bully goes out of his way to mistreat his usual target so that the target, in his response, ends up acting in just the way bully judged him—'cowardly,' for example-- so as to 'prove' the bully's point (which serves to reinforce/reinstate his construct of himself as 'tough') (Bannister & Fransella, 1986). Hostility is "an extortional undertaking designed by the person to protect a heavy investment in his own construction of life" (Kelly, 1964, n.p.). Something to consider is what this heavy investment might be.

Cummins (2006) readdresses his previous definition of anger when he states that "Anger is *an* emotional expression of invalidation" (p. 3). (Italics is in original to note that it is not the only emotional expression to invalidation.) He notes six key PCT concepts associated with anger: anticipation, invalidation, hierarchy, hostility, permeability, and sociality. Invalidation refers to the interference with one's ability to anticipate events. Someone possibly "changes the script" in regard to what is expected, and the experiencer of

this change is resistant to it. When this perceived change affects a core construct, a constellation of constructs is dislodged, as mentioned earlier. Hierarchy refers to the various levels of constructs that might be assaulted by an invalidation. Hostility occurs when one refuses to accept the invalidation and forces his construction of the event upon it. Permeability, again, refers to one's openness to/acceptance of alternative perceptions, hopefully making way for one to be less likely to act in anger. Sociality, referring to the extent to which an individual is able to construe the construction processes of the other, is, according to Cummins, another PCT concept associated with anger. He provides an example of lack of sociality-- when they are choosing participants for their anger management group, they did not allow into the group one who was not willing to tolerate (i.e. would be physically violent toward) another member potentially saying something that would be "annoying' to him. His point, it seems, is that the *lack* of sociality, more so than the presence of sociality, is associated with anger. As is always the case with PCT, anger must be understood in terms of what it means to the experiencer and an event which might trigger it must also be assessed in terms of how (s)he experiences it.

Previous authors have explained what anger is from a PCT perspective and have indicated that it serves several purposes. Yorke and Dallos (2015) explain that anger, from the PCT perspective, is a reaction to perceived invalidation or threat and notes, as also hinted at above, that the more foundational the constructs perceived as threatened, the more intense is the experience. The reaction of anger, they suggest, is meant to balance out a perceived injustice and/or its effect on self-esteem, to express frustration, as a justification for being judged, to express strength, and/or to gain control. While anger often serves to isolate, it, contrarily amongst those who honor violence, may serve the purpose of increasing status and solidifying bonds with such group members (Houston, 1998). Again, it must be understood in terms of its meaning to the experiencer.

A review of PCT Forensic Literature

In search of the forensic application of PCT, particularly to homicide but not exclusive of other types of crime, the terms searched were ("Personal Construct" OR "Repertory Grid" OR "Experience Cycle") AND (Murder* OR Homicide OR Offend*). Databases searched individually were PsycINFO, Scopus, PsycARTICLES, and Criminal Justice Abstracts, and Taylor & Francis Online, which includes the Journal of Constructivist Psychology. More broadly, searches were conducted through Summon via the University of Huddersfield, which includes Science Direct, Wiley Online Library, SpringerLink, Sage Online, and many other databases. This search produced 1,634 results. This was further narrowed by eliminating all items that were not psychology-related, resulting in a more manageable 521 results. These were sorted by relevance. Beyond the first approximately 110 results, virtually all articles were deemed non-relevant, as, while the search terms may have been

mentioned, the *focus* on murder, homicide, or other relevant types of criminal offending (e.g. violence) was minimal or absent. Similarly, other items which focused more on offending had little to no relevance in terms of application of Personal Construct Psychology. Many more were eliminated due to use of non-offenders (e.g. practitioners, probation agents) as research participants and/or the item's primary focus being issues such as treatment/treatment outcomes, punishment, post-release from prison rather than on motive or the psychology behind the commission of a violent crime. Ultimately, about one-third of those 110 items were used.

Personal Construct Theory has been used in several sub-fields of forensics, primarily sexual offending, but also in the examination of murder and violence. PCT and the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), specifically, have been used to explore self-concept as it relates to particular populations-- recidivism in juvenile offenders (Byrd, O'Connor, Thackrey, & Sacks, 1993); offenders with intellectual disabilities (Mason, 2003, 2008); offenders with mental illness and/or personality disorders (Houston, 1998; Howells, 1983; and others); terrorists (Canter, Sarangi, & Youngs, 2012; Sarangi, 2010; Sarangi, Canter, & Youngs, 2013); and female offenders (Pollock, & Kear-Colwell, 1994).

Sexual offending

Much of the forensic PCT literature has focused on sexual offenders (Horley, 1988, 2003, 2006, 2008; Horley & Quinsay, 1995; Howells, 1979). More recently Blagden, Winder, Gregson, and Thorne (2012, 2014) and Blagden, Mann, Webster, Lee, and Williams, 2018) report using PCT to understand the construing of sexual offenders-- the patient's construal of himself and how this affects his identity; differences in construal of himself now and ideally; how he construes others, particularly his victim; and how he construes his future. The tendencies reported are for sex offenders to view themselves as different, separate, and isolated from others; often with low self-esteem; and with a negative and untrusting worldview; and that they struggle to reconcile their past self with their future self (Blagden, et al., 2018). They see others rather indifferently (Blagden, et al., 2012) or in extremes (Blagden, et al., 2018). Kitson-Boyce, Blagden, Winder, and Dillon (2018) also utilized RGT in their analysis of sexual offenders' construing about their upcoming release from prison with the focus, again, being on how they perceive their future. Again, constructs of isolation, loneliness, and alienation were present with this population as they looked toward release from prison.

Homicide and other violent assault

PCT has been applied to perpetrators of violence sporadically over the past several decades. Its researchers have put forth a few notions as to what contributes to violence/murder. While much of his work revolves around sex offenders, Horley (2003) uses PCT to offer various reasons why people might kill. One is to extend one's construct system.

This might be considered aggression, in Kellian terms. He uses the example that a gang member may kill his rival to extend his status in the group. Or, offending could be a way to refine one's sense of self, for example, if their identity is one of being "tough," powerful, "top dog," one to not be messed with, big man, etc. Horley suggests that the choice to kill is dependent on one's experiences and efforts to construe experiences. Watson, Gunn, and Gristwood (1976) was an early study using RGT's of 90 prisoners and which constructed a consensus grid based on their responses. As contributors to violence, they identified "interpersonal frustrations," such as being laughed at, experiencing rudeness, and witnessing a fight. The first two appear indicative that violence can be a response to perceived invalidation. Winter has suggested PCT diagnostic constructs as reasons for or pathways to violence including tight construing (Chetwynd, 1977; Lawlor & Cochran, 1981;Topcu, 1976; and Winter, 1993 as cited by Winter 2003a, 2006, 2007; Landfield, 1971 as cited by Winter 2003a, 2007); guilt and shame (Winter 2003a, 2007); constriction and dilation (Winter 2003a, 2006, 2007); foreshortening of the circumspection-preemption-control (C-P-C) cycle (Winter, 2006); and escaping chaos (Winter 2003a, 2006, 2007).

PCT has also been applied forensically to examining notions of offenders' selves. Horley (2003) poses the question of the origination of constructs, particularly of self. Pollock and Kear-Cowell (1994), using the RGT, examined self-construing of two female offenders who had stabbed their boyfriends and who were formerly victims of sexual abuse. Highlighted was the notion that the relationship roles of these women were narrowly defined-- as either abuser or abused. It was found that the participants were "unable or unwilling to view themselves as victims" (p. 18), as this produced within them guilt, and instead they saw themselves as "abusers," deserving of punishment. This seemingly allowed each to confirm her belief of herself as malevolent. Byrd, O'Connor, Thackrey, & Sacks (1993) studied 40 male juvenile, institutionalized offenders using RGT. Their focus was on differentiation in self-concept between frequent (3 or more arrests) and non-frequent (2 or fewer prior arrests) offenders using RGT and the Self-Consciousness Scale. Their hypothesis, "that a direct relationship exists between self-concept [as delinquent] and delinquent behavior, was not supported…. [However,] a slight but notable trend in the opposite direction was evident" (p. 199). Perhaps surprisingly, infrequent offenders had more delinquent self-concepts. Here, too, the salience of self-concept as contributory to criminal acts is highlighted. In regard to construal of self, Houston (1998) cites several studies which suggested, in summary, that many personality-disordered offenders do not construe a difference between the offending self and the ideal self and, as such, do not experience guilt. In other words, their Self that is doing the offending is no different than how they would like themselves to be ideally—i.e. their offending behavior is an accepted (and seemingly preferred) part of who they are. She notes, though, that sometimes these

ratings tend to be polar opposites. She attributes the latter to the notion that their "self-esteem is so low that the client cannot allow themselves to make a success of anything and do not think that they deserve to do well" (Houston, 1998, p. 192)

Other PCT research looked at not only self-construal but construal of others, as well. Howells (1983) used the structure of repertory grids to compare 106 "mentally abnormal" violent offenders-- 29 who were one-off offenders and 77 who had previous convictions—and 24 non-aggressive prisoners. In regard to self-construing, self/other construing, and victim construing, he made some interesting findings: that the distance between actual and ideal self was greater in one-off offenders (they are more dissatisfied with selves); they compare themselves to others more negatively; that they have greater tendency to provide positive construct poles, rather than negative poles, of others first; and they exhibit more biased grids (i.e. tend to rate others as extreme toward one pole or another). In short, they demonstrated a positivity bias toward others but not in regard to selves, typically. The comparison groups—those with previous convictions and non-aggressive prisoners-- were more likely to view themselves more positively and their victims more hostilely. Houston (1998) looked specifically at personality disordered offenders using previously published research—Fransella & Adams, 1966; Howells, 1978; Klass, 1980; Thomas-Peter, 1992; and Widom, 1976. While she addressed their construal of self and how they may see others, the lens through which she does this is primarily the structure of their systems. She addressed intensity (a measure of tightness and looseness in construing, i.e. permeability), in particular. Citing Widom's (1976) study and Howells (1978) study, she noted that the former found no difference in overall intensity between psychopaths and controls and that the latter, albeit only one case study, found that a psychopath's construct system to be very tight, or rather impermeable. Houston also noted that the structures of the psychopath's systems indicated impulsivity and dualistic thinking and remarked that their systems may be dominated by superordinate construct systems such as Good v Bad; that they tend to rate others to the extreme, as in black-and-white thinking, all good or all bad; and that they rated them rather quickly, demonstrating impulsivity. Two case studies of hers involving two female, personality-disordered offenders seemed to support these findings, as they demonstrated cognitive simplicity and the tendency to rate others either ideally or to denigrate them (i.e. in extremes).

Additional contributions to the understanding of offending using PCT are also suggested by previous researchers. Mason (2008) provided two case examples of repertory grids of violent offenders who were intellectually disabled and misusers of alcohol, the inquiry being concerned primarily with the change in grids pre- and post-treatment. Violence was not the primary focus, but he does indicate that looseness of construing is indicative of readiness to change, which would be important to treaters of violent offenders.

Pollock and Kear-Cowell (1994) suggest that an offenders' index offense can be examined using PCT to see if "psychological sequelae are linked to the instigation of the offense," (p.13) noting that this may be critical to reducing the chance of recidivism. Here, again, the focus was on the establishment of treatment hypotheses, but this study suggests that examination of grids, particularly role-identification, to shed light on the psychology contributing to the instigation of violence is likely a fruitful inquiry. Byrd, O'Connor, Thackrey, & Sacks (1993) comment, too, that their study may justify the continued use of RGT on offenders to differentiate self-perceptions of different types of offenders. Horley (2003), too, noted that "systematic differences in construct systems among various categories of offender are likely" (p.7), and these might be better understood if we can apply PCT to various offender groups. This suggests that we might find similarities among themes and differences between themes of murderers, such as those who commit Instrumental and those who commit Expressive homicide.

Much can be gleaned, it seems, from examination of the structure of grids of offenders. In regard to the content of grids of offenders, however, very little has been mentioned. Widom (1976) offers that there was no difference in between psychopaths and controls in the types of constructs elicited but offers little exploration into this. Howells' (1983) study is also lacking in such exploration. While he found one-off offenders to be less-likely to demonstrate constructs related to criminality, providing two examples of such constructs, "criminal… law-abiding, a thief…honest" (p. 124), no other construct content themes are provided, let alone what themes might be more frequent in one group as opposed to the others.

So, while the use of PCT and, in particular the RGT, has been valuable in assessing violent offenders much more can be learned in terms of murderous offenders in terms of their construal process and, particularly, the types (content themes) of constructs with which they construe, as this has gone rather significantly unexplored.

Summary

This chapter has addressed PCT tenets which are likely to be pertinent to the study of murder, including the goal of anticipation for humans and that goal's effect on their construct development, content, and structure. The Experience Cycle is Kelly's explanation of how experience affects hypothesis building and refinement. Individuality, commonality, and permeability in construing may all have an impact on interpersonal congruity with others, which may affect, in turn, one's emotions and their perceptions of threat. Being that murder is an interpersonal conflict, all of these may be pertinent to the current research.

Researchers have applied PCT to the forensic arena, most prominent recently, perhaps, in examination of sex offenders, but they have also applied PCT to the topic of violence/murder. It has been suggested that PCT may help us to understand why one kills--

perhaps, according to Horley (2003), to extend one's construct system or to refine one's sense of self—and examination of the crime and its contributory factors alongside the RGT has been encouraged in order to better understand the instigation of one's crime. The application of Personal Construct Psychology and the RGT, specifically, has demonstrated its value in the exploration of offenders in terms their self-identity/self-concept, the perceptions of their role in relation to self and others, and even their experience of interpersonal frustrations.

The minimal work that has been done in regard to application of RGT to violent offenders has provided valuable insights into their psychology based on the structure of their grids. Intensity, extreme views of the world and of others, perception of victim in comparison with self, and differences in construing between offending self and ideal self are particular areas of inquiry upon which RGT has shed light. However, there have only been a few distinct, limited populations from whom this information has been gathered. There is certainly room for expansion of this and, perhaps even more so, for further exploration of the content of constructs of violent perpetrators and how that may impact their crimes.

The focus of much PCT work with offenders has been on the future (how they perceive it) and for the purpose of treatment. What has been less the focus when applying RGT to criminal, particularly violent, behavior is understanding the *why* of one's behavior. Howells (1983) did actually apply RGT to this question and was able to offer a hypothesis as to why a particular offender committed his crime based on the offender's grid. He stated that the RGT provided "a rich and detailed description of the individual case" (p. 128). It seems such an inquiry into a greater number of offenders and their crimes might be valuable.

By identifying and assessing a group of violent offenders' personal construct content and structure, we might more fully understand the longer-evolving process behind the behavior and accurately surmise *why* an offender acted violently. We might better comprehend what constructs were at play and how they developed; why they were so salient to the offender; and how it was/why were they perceived as being challenged. Additionally, a clearer understanding of Instrumental and Expressive behavior, potentially as psychological processes, may highlight a resonance throughout and potential connections between background, development of constructs, and manifestation of constructs at the time of a violent or murderous episode.

Rationale and Research Aims

The existing literature, then, has given us several theories of violence/murder as a process, each stressing the importance of examining the phenomenon from the perspective of the individual committing the offense, and each focusing on different stages of the development of violence or a violent act. PCT literature has additionally highlighted the

importance of construal of self and others in offending behavior. Criminological research has also identified a categorization of homicide-- as Instrumental or Expressive-- which seems to have been readily accepted in the field as a useful typology. However, issues have been raised in regard to the lack of clarity of this distinction and the contradictions that have been found. A fruitful way forward may be to focus on the more complex psychology of the perpetrators than the features of the crimes themselves or simple characteristics of offenders. PCT is posed as a viable theory, which has been underutilized in the empirical study of murderers, to help us understand violence as a process, the actions of murderers, and any differences between those committing Instrumental vs. Expressive murders. The aims of this research are, therefore:

1. To explore the construing of self and others in a sample of convicted murderers.
2. To examine any differences in construing between those committing Instrumental murders and those committing Expressive murders.

Chapter 3 -- Methodology

Epistemology

A constructivist approach

Whereas much research focuses on objective data about participants, constructivism views reality as subjective (Denicolo, Long, and Bradley-Cole, 2016). Reality, by the subjectivist, is recognized as a product of the person's internal workings—for example, their uniquely experienced processes, beliefs, interpretations, and emotions. A constructivist approach examines the internal workings of its participants, deepening understanding of the meaning of events as applied by an individual— an exploration for which objective analyses do not allow. A constructivist method, in its aim to understand the ways in which people who have committed murder view the world and how those views are developed assumes four things according to Charmaz (2008):

> (1) Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed—but constructed under particular conditions; (2) the research process emerges from interaction; (3) it takes into account the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research subjects; (4) the researcher and the researched coconstruct the data—data are a *product* of the research process, not simply observed objects of it. Researchers are part of the research situation, and their positions, privileges, perspectives and interactions affect it (p. 402).

This interaction with the data and the researcher's subjective response to it, then, are recognized as part of the research process. To develop richer insights into people's reality, which is assumed by subjectivists to be internal and experiential (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000, cited in Denicolo, et al., 2016) a subjective approach rather than an objective approach is essential.

This research expects to add depth to the current understanding of those who murder, adding, to the very few authors who have directly interviewed murderers, a constructivist approach. From that flows a number of assumptions, such as, the data collected from the prisoners represents their constructions of events, not 'the truth,' and that my analysis represents yet another construction, again, not 'the truth', but a perspective which, it is hoped, will be useful. This research seeks not to honor what these participants have done but to divulge and appreciate what these participants have to teach, as they are *the* keys to understanding the psychological process which led to their actions. Although they may not fully understand *why* they did what they did, they alone have the first-hand knowledge of occurrences or keys to insights that might be useful to others who work to prevent, apprehend, treat, and supervise perpetrators of violence. Once again, Athens (1992):

> If society fails to take any significant steps to stop the process behind the creation of these dangerous violent criminals, it tacitly becomes an accomplice in creating them" (p. 6).

A credulous approach

As stated, the present research employs PCT, a constructivist approach, which concerns itself with how the participant conceptualizes events and, some might go so far as to say, that reality exists through the perceiver. Kelly points out, though, that his theory is not *strictly* phenomenological, Kelly (1955) suggests that psychologists take a credulous approach to their clients. While this is an acceptance and openness offered to the client and what he is saying in order to understand the world as he sees it, it is not necessarily a *belief* in what the client says. Kelly urges that, "the perceptive clinician always respects the content of the client's 'lies'… careful not to be misled by them" (p. 322) and encourages psychologists to "lift our data from the individual at a relatively high level of abstraction" (p. 173. The client has an intrinsic truth which is relayed within his words and the way he delivers them. As such, psychologists must concern themselves with why the client has not told the truth. For this reason, Kelly even notes that, if a psychologist discovers that his/her client is not being truthful, (s)he

> is careful to lay out both versions side by side and not erase the client's version in order to replace it with the 'true' version. Indeed the perceptive clinician may be quite as much concerned with the client's version of an event which happens to be 'incorrect' as he is with the event itself or with the fact that the client has not told the 'truth' (p. 322).

The present research found the laying out of the participants' versions with other versions necessary and helpful.

Design

The participants for the current study were 25 convicted murderers sentenced to Life and incarcerated in a medium security prison in Southern USA. A Life sentence means that they are committed to incarceration *for the duration of their life*, as those who murder another 'unjustifiably' in the State in which this data was collected primarily receive the death penalty or life in prison. Each participant engaged in an interview which provided their life narrative, crime narrative, and completion of a Repertory Grid.

The Importance of First-Hand Accounts

Some researchers might agree that the most efficacious method of fully understanding one's participant is to gather information directly from that participant (Toch, 1969; Athens, 1992). This is particularly important for the study of offenders, when society is so widely and deeply affected by the act of a few very violent criminals, and its resources to house and treat them are limited. It should be pertinent to those professionally associated with offenders to understand to every degree possible what drives them to behave in such socially devastating manners. For it is through this type of understanding that investigatory procedures can be enhanced or more effectively guided and the

probability of identification, prevention and/or treatment of those who engage in violence might be increased.

Athens (1992) notes that the typical claim of experts on violent crime is that they do not have to have first-hand knowledge of their participant to be an expert. He compares this to claiming that one does not actually have to have heart trouble in order to be able to cure it. Athens says, "True;" but adds that one must at least experience diseased hearts up close by seeing, touching, smelling, and personally examining them if one is to make claims to offer a possible cure. "It is only a matter of common sense that extensive direct contact with violent criminals is absolutely essential if one expects ever to achieve this goal" (Athens, 1992, p. 20).

Another critical point made by Athens (1992) is that, for richness of understanding and in-depth exploration of reasons for behavior, "it is far better to study 50 people in depth than to study 5000 people superficially" (p. 21). He also cites W.I. Beveridge, a former professor of animal pathology at Cambridge, in that "more discoveries have arisen from intense observation of very limited material than from statistics applied to large groups" (Beveridge, 1957, p. 140 as cited by Athens, 1992).

I have chosen to gather first-hand accounts, specifically the narratives of the participants' lives and crimes, in addition to conducting with them the RGT, so as to add to the veracity of the research of offenders, to give them direct input into this topic of study of which they are subjects, and to obtain the data I feel is truly lacking and necessary to understand murder more comprehensively.

Repertory Grid Technique

The Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) is also a way of providing first-hand accounts though in the form of constructs. It is a very participant-led technique, allowing the voice of participants to be the focus, and serves as the primary source of data for the current study. The RGT has been applied to various populations for countless inquiries, including consumer studies (Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2011) to theatre role development (Cruise & Sewell, 2000), counselling qualities (Wheeler, 2000), staff beliefs about dually diagnosed clients (Ralley, Allott, Hare, & Wittkowski, 2009), studies of those with schizophrenia (Bannister, 1960; Bannister & Fransella 1966), and applications in business (Stewart, Stewart, & Fonda, 1981). The Repertory Grid is the instrument by which Kelly not only collected data for analysis in accordance with his theory but to demonstrate his theory as well. This grid was possibly conceptualized by Kelly mathematically before he put words to his theory (Fransella, Bell, & Bannister, 2004). It "is personal construct theory in action" (Fransella, et al., 2004, p. 1).

According to Kelly's theory, people make judgments regarding occurrences and things around them based on implicit theories they have about such events or things. The

structure and content of these implicit theories (i.e. constructs) are brought to light through the implementation of the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT). Here, a topic of elements, (i.e. *what* the participant is asked to conceptualize for the RGT), is chosen by the researcher. The participant is asked, of three elements, which two are alike in some significant way and how the third is different from that. This is called triadic elicitation of constructs. This question is repeated several times, each time with a different triad of elements. The answers the participants provide are considered their constructs, the first answer (referring to the two that are alike) is considered the emergent pole of the construct and the second answer (how the third element is different than the first two) is considered the contrast pole of the construct. Both of these make up one, bi-polar, construct.

These implicit theories are not always easily articulated, as they are "networks of meaning through which we see and handle the universe of situations" (Fransella, et al., 2004, p. 3)—humans do not have words for all experiences or thoughts. Thus, although the RGT does elicit words and/or short phrases, one cannot assume that the construct represented by these few utterances is fully and effectually conveyed by them.

Kelly also recognized that a grid could be enhanced by rating every element on every construct -- each element is identified as closer to one of the two poles of each construct, as represented in Figure 2, by a number-rating scale, often one in which a "1" represents an element as most alike the emergent pole and where a "5" represents an element as most alike the contrast pole, with 2's, 3's, and 4's representing degrees of 'alikeness' in between. An example of such a Repertory Grid is as follows:

Figure 2. Example of RGT Template with Ratings

Emergent pole 1	Mom	Sister	Boss	Grandpapa	Contrast pole 5
Construct pole A (e) pole: Kind	2	4	5	1	Construct A pole (c): Mean
Construct pole B (e) pole: Funny	4	1	5	3	Construct B pole (c): Boring
Construct pole C (e) pole: Controlling	1	2	1	4	Construct C pole (c): Accepting

Analysis of grid structure aids in further understanding of the nuances of one's system, as it demonstrates through formulaic processing of these numeric ratings provided, interrelation of constructs to each other, elements to each other, and constructs to elements. The analysis of grids with ratings allows us (through computer software) to figure a participant's tightness or looseness of construing, among other nuances. Moreover, the Repertory Grid is a tool that can gather such information without being explicit about it and do it in a way which cannot be easily sidestepped, thus reducing issues related to socially desirable responses, and arguably gets at the heart of one's psychology. Again, it is an approach conducive to analyzing *why* without actually asking *why* (Jankowicz, 2004).

Another factor that had to be considered is that the RGT provides a 'snapshot' of the way one construes at a particular time. It must be acknowledged that this research collected grids of offenders who committed their crime years, some even decades, ago. As such, their construing is retrospective of a past event. However, attempts were made to mitigate this. I required that the participants use at least two elements that were significant to them at/near the time of the crime. it seems sensible to include people who were important to the person at the time of the crime (rather than currently) since this may be expected to elicit constructs directly relevant to the crime. Also, grids were elicited as the very next step in the interview process after the participants' crime narratives, possibly forming a sort of succession of events with construct elicitation. Moreover, a small number of studies have been done regarding the stability of grids and, while none covers such a large span of time as in the current study, their findings do support the stability of grids, particularly in a limited domain.

Smith (2000), who gathered the repertory grids of 20 teachers at three intervals over the course of a year, found that the "pattern of construct relationships was very stable over long time periods" (p. 227) and the consistency/stability of grids was demonstrated as significant. Smith commented that the limited domain in which the study was carried out may have attributed to the high degree of consistency, which may translate to this research in terms of limitedness of domain (environmentally and experientially our participants have been in the same or similar-type setting [jails and prisons] since the time of their crime [usually adolescence or young adulthood], demonstrating potential limitedness of their domain). Two other studies also provide evidence of moderate stability in grids over time. Horley (1996) and Sperlinger (1976) showed stability in content of repertory grids over 4 months and 7.5 months respectively. However, there appear to be no studies examining change and/or consistency of construing over the longer term.

Narrative interviews

Use of narratives in a PCT approach

Narrative is often (though not always) presented as a constructivist approach, with the 'stories' we tell ourselves and others about our lives being constructions rather than descriptions of objective reality (Bamberg, 1997; Crossley, 2000). Kelly (1955) made it clear that "to understand a person, we need to be able to understand their actions not just in terms of specific constructs but in terms of how these are located within their broader personal construct system or life story" (quote by Procter & Dallos, 2006, p. 138.) Like personal constructs (via the Experience Cycle), narratives provide a way of organizing the events of people's lives, over time and space, to assign meaning to them—to make sense of their lives. This is a basic human need-- to find meaning in phenomena, to cast meaning onto events and to gain meaning from them—and to construct them in a coherent and intelligible manner (McAdams, 1993). As PCT does, narrative provides for its examiners a way to examine the richness and depth of participants' perspectives. It highlights what is significant to the narrator, as do other forms of construct elicitation, and has actually been employed by Kelly to elicit constructs in his self-characterization technique (Kelly, 1955).

While highlighting contextually one's constructs, narrative also provides a medium through which these constructs demonstrate themselves in the narrator's reality. It provides a setting through which to observe the development and manifestation of constructs. Narrative can synthesize the elicited constructs, highlighting their significance by providing the details of circumstance, and can help provide an understanding of the reasons for an individual's conduct.

Moreover, narrative can provide greater context than the RGT, which adds to the data by which interpretations of elicited constructs can be considered. Kelly (1955) makes a point that interpretations of a client's construing can be implied in the client's illustrative statements. He adds that these interpretations are not so vast as to be unmanageable and a skilled listener "may be able to tease out the meanings and linkages of the client's personal constructs, as expressed in such a sentence, without too great difficulty" (1955, p.119). In other words, without too much difficult, interpretations—a deeper meaning, even clinical implications-- of what a speaker is saying can be teased out by a skilled listener. This includes what a speaker thinks of his/her listener by the constructs he uses and, alternatively, to shape what the listener thinks of the speaker by the constructs he uses. One example, with alternative interpretations, provided by Kelly is the statement, "Everyone is gentle." The speaker may actually be indicating to the listener, "Look, I'm such a nice person that I am willing to call everybody gentle, whether they are or not. Now don't you think I'm saintly?" Or "So many people see aggressiveness around them and I am so upset by it that I try to exemplify the virtue of seeing gentleness" (1955, p.115). These

statements illustrate well the potential for interpreting a sense of righteousness in the speaker, or in our case, superiority.

The utilization of narrative methods in combination with PCT (and, specifically, RGT,) has in the past been used in various ways, several in studies of offenders specifically. Experience Cycle Methodology was developed by Oades and Viney (2011), which uses semi-structured interviews, to explore adolescents' construal of their risk-taking behaviors through each phase of the Experience Cycle. Textual grids have been offered as a way to assess writings of individuals. They convert the written work into a data matrix resembling a repertory grid by extracting construct-element units from the attributions the writer gives individual people (Feixas & Villegas, 1991). Winter, et al. (2007; Winter, 2006) used this method to analyze writings, although not autobiographical, by serial killer Ian Brady and the autobiography of another violent offender. Self-characterization, a technique developed by Kelly (1955) in which a patient is asked to write a character sketch of himself from the intimate and sympathetic perspective of third person was used by Winter & Tschudi (2015), who explored the writings of mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik as a sort of self-characterization. A combination of the self-characterization and textual grid method was used by Reed, et al. (2014) to examine the writings of Hoess, a commandant at Auschwitz, to understand why he chose to remain in service to the concentration camp.

More closely resembling the current research methodology, the RGT has been used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews; specifically in studies regarding pedophiles (Blagden, et al., 2018); terrorists (Canter, Sarangi, & Youngs, 2012; Sarangi, 2010; Sarangi, Canter, & Youngs, 2013); child soldiers (Goins, Winter, Sundin, Patient, & Aslan, 2012); and survivors of war atrocities and disease (Winter, Brown, Goins, & Mason, 2016; Winter, 2018). Interviews have been used within an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach in conjunction with RGTs. It is carried out on, usually, very small sample sizes to explore a specific question about how participants interpret a phenomenon, thus, like PCT, it focuses on how participants make sense of their world (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis along with RGT has been used to explore anger in young offenders (Yorke & Dallos, 2015, discussed above) and to make sense of denial in sexual offenders (Blagden, et al., 2014). Of greatest current significance, perhaps, is that Turpin, Dallos, Owen, & Thomas (2009) found that the themes generated by both IPA and RGT were consonant with each other, noting that "application of the repertory grids validated interpretations [generated by IPA], but also extended and enriched understanding." There seems good reason to believe that using narratives/interviews in conjunction with RGT produce data that is richer and more wholistic than when either are used alone.

In the current research, then, narratives of the research participants will be used to not only provide their version of events but 'add flesh to the bones' of the personal constructs elicited from them and to provide a vehicle through which both the development and manifestation of their constructs might be demonstrated.

Life Narratives

The Life Narrative portion of the interview was based upon McAdams' (1993) approach simply because he was more interested and focused on entire life stories, rather than specific details of a particular incident, as Toch (1969) was. McAdams' (1993) interview schedule asks for key events in a person's life story and explains key events as moments in life that stand out for some reason. The rationale is to leave the door open for what is significant, from the participants' perspective, to talk about and to provide vital contextual information for interpretation of the grid data.

Crime Narratives

The Crime Narrative, however, was based on Toch's (1969) much more detailed approach. To really understand the progression of a violent incident, Toch focused on the details of the crimes, asked them to go through their actions step-by-step; returned to specific areas to ask for clarification; and asked for their feelings before, during, and after the violent act. He reported: "We experienced no difficulty with this inquiry, which more often than not produced rich introspections and elaborate rationalizations of purpose" (Toch, 1969, p.53-54).

Their crime details provided the context of what happened, at least in part, and, while the participants' versions of events were compared with official records, the way in which they told their version in comparison to official versions also tells us, it is hoped, what is significant to them-- for example, what they have *not* shared. The specific acts of murder were gathered and also serve as vital contextual information for analysis of elicited constructs and their pertinence to the crime scene behaviors.

Examination of secondary sources

Other data sources included prison files, court and police records, and media surrounding the crime. Court and police records were not readily accessible in each case, as some were so old that only the bare essentials of the file existed anymore; some were inaccessible due to my limited resources, as they required too much travel and/or expense. In other cases, several areas' record-storage facilities had undergone hurricanes, floods, and fires and no longer existed. Media sources were not much more helpful, as, again, many of the cases took place before records were kept electronically and made available via internet. Some sort of supplemental information, however, was found for every case, at times even being provided by the offenders from their own copies of court records or

newspaper articles. While 'official records' are yet another way of construing the crime, this information was collected in order to provide more substance surrounding the specific acts involved in the murder, as participants were seemingly avoidant or misleading at times regarding the details of what took place. This was necessary in order to more accurately classify the murders as Expressive or Instrumental and to better understand what other factors may have been at play in the offenders' sense-making, decision-making, and behavior in response to these things.

For this research to be valuable in terms of psychological investigation, having something investigable to which to compare the participant's viewpoint is essential. To consider only the self-report of the offender would be contradictory to examining the deeper psychological processing behind murder. If a participant reports, for example, that his victim had a gun and official records reveal that he did not, this will change the way I assesses the offender's construction of events. The victim having a gun and pointing it at the would-be offender easily and understandably casts an image of response to threat. However, if I find out that the victim did not have a gun, I must necessarily dig deeper to find what other possible constructs may be at work.

In this research, the events of the murder itself are just as pertinent as the offender's *relaying* of events and as his *construction* of the events, which can be all very different renditions. Although his story is how the offender *relays* events, he is still making perceptions on events that occurred which he may fail to relay transparently or to address at all. To know what happened which the participant is not addressing tells what he is perhaps trying to avoid, what he does not perhaps remember, or what he is trying to "spin" in his favor. All are very telling psychologically and, to be of investigative value, have to be applied to the backdrop of details/facts to the extent possible.

Thus, in addition to the offenders' narratives of events and their constructs, official records and other available sources were sought and included in this research as triangulation material to understand more comprehensively what took place—upon *what* the participant is casting his construing. It is presumed that the more that can be gleaned from various sources, the more detailed the picture of what took place becomes. And while, as in any investigation, there will be pieces missing, without this more objective point of view, the constructivist might appear as more of a philosophical idealist, wherein lies the notion that reality exists *only* in the mind (Crotty, 1998). This research does not prescribe to such thinking. This research also does not assert to find the truth, but, because it strives to get the most accurate assessment of the manifestation of particular constructs/processes via particular actions or due to the influence of other contributing factors, it is felt it is essential to understand as fully as possible what actually took place in relation to the crime.

Sampling and recruitment

Gaining access to prisoners posed many difficulties and, because of this, the population to which I had access was limited to who was made available from one medium-security prison which thankfully allowed access. Several States' prison systems were applied to in which to conduct this research sample. Oftentimes, lack of resources (staff, primarily) was identified as a reason for not allowing access. An email was then sent to all members of a national corrections association via their website briefly explaining the research and seeking assistance in gaining access to a prison population. A licensed psychologist from a Southern State prison system responded to the email. The research proposal was sent her. She and I then had several phone conversations so that she could clarify the particulars of the research and explain the potential logistics of interviewing inmates. The proposal was reviewed and approved (by this licensed psychologist employed by the State Department of Corrections, the Medical/Mental Health Director of the State's Department of Public Safety & Corrections, and the Warden of the particular institution they chose the study to be carried out in, and necessary others in line with Department regulations [e.g. Chief of the Department, etc.]). A copy of their approval procedures appears in Appendix 1.1.

The prison staff then chose as eligible participants the low risk 'Lifers.' Inmates' risk levels are assessed annually. Inmates who have been sentenced for murder are automatically sentenced to life-long imprisonment. Those inmates who had been sentenced to life-long incarceration due to murder and had been assessed as 'low risk' were asked by prison administration to gather in the chapel to attend a presentation by me. An introduction to the research for these 60 eligible male inmates was presented where the research purpose, goals, and procedures were discussed and questions were answered. Of those 60 inmates, 26 volunteered to participate, with the understanding that 1) they must have been involved in the actual event (homicide) that took place and 2) they must admit to having been involved in the crime, as it was no use interviewing someone about the details of their crime if they did not admit to being involved in it. For this latter reason, one of the 26 was omitted. The basic demographics of the remaining 25 participants are listed in Table 1, below.

Participants

Participant demographics were collected using a Participant Demographic Sheet and Questionnaire designed by me (as in Appendix 2.1) addressing basic demographics; work history; criminal history; some minimal details of their crime, such as where it took place, their relationship to the victim(s), etc.; and their previous experience, in general terms, with violence. (See Appendix 2.1). As Table 1 shows, the majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 29 years old at the time they committed their index crime. Approximately two-thirds were African American. Approximately two-thirds were convicted

of Second-Degree Murder[2], as opposed to First-Degree Murder. The length of time served at the time of the interview was rather evenly spread between 11 and 20 years, 21 and 30 years, and 31 and 40 years, with several outliers. The number of participants who had a violent criminal record previous to the index crime is one greater than those who did not. (Burglary was not included as 'violent.') Education level is not included in Table 1 because reports across participants are not consistent. Testing modalities varied (and included the WRAT [Wide Range Achievement Test], TABE [Tests of Adult Basic Education] and/or GED [General Educational Development] and the phase of one's life in which they were tested also varied (after arrest, upon intake into prison, some years after incarceration, within year of interview; etc.) These inconsistencies made it difficult to categorize under simple headings. Furthermore, "grade completed" does not oftentimes reflect actual education level, as one might complete 11th grade yet score a 5th-grade achievement level. (Further detail in regard to education will, however, appear in Appendix 3. Also note in Appendix 3 that some attempted robberies took place ATC [at the time of the crime]—these were not counted as 'prior' crimes, referred to in Table 1.)

Table 1. Basic Demographics of Research Participants

	Number of *Ps	% of Ps
AGE ATC**		
15-17 (minors)	3	12
18-23	12	48
24-29	8	32
30-35	0	0
36-41	1	4
42-47	1	4

[2] In the State in which all the murders took place, First Degree Murder includes specific intent to kill, usually while either committing another felony, or killing a specific type of or more than one person, or for compensation. Second degree murder *might* include specific intent but also may involve killing someone without intent during the commission of another felony or distribution of an illegal or controlled drug which kills its recipient. First degree carries with it the potential for the death penalty. Life imprisonment is mandated for those found guilty of murder not receiving the death penalty. Life imprisonment carries with it, as well, "hard labor without benefit of parole, probation, or suspension of sentence" ([State] Revised Statutes).

ETHNICITY		
African American	17	68
Caucasian	8	32
CONVICTION		
1st degree	5	24
2nd Degree	17	68
Unclear/"Murder"	3^	8
YEARS SERVED ATI* **		
<5	1	4
5 to 10	0	0
11 to 20	7	28
21 to 30	8	32
31 to 40	6	24
41 to 50	2	8
>50	1	4
INDEX CRIME AS 1ST VIOLENT CONVICTION		
Yes (No prior violent criminal record)	12	48
No (Prior violent record)	13	52

Note. *P= participant **ATC= At time of crime ***ATI= At time of interview

^ These homicides took place prior to murder being legally classified as first- or second-degree.

Appendix 3 shows greater detail pertaining to participants individually. (Please see Appendix 3.) Although reflected in Appendix 3 are the degree of murder convictions (1st or 2nd), many participants were initially charged with First-Degree murder and either pled down or were re-charged based on the prosecutors' assessment of the crime (and what they might be able to prove). Of note, the death penalty, which was present in many States in the US, including the one in which the present data was collected, was voided by the federal government (Supreme Court) in 1972. Effectively, States were then allowed to re-write such laws. The State in which these participants are incarcerated eventually went back to implementation of the death penalty. Interestingly, though, this interim of changing laws saved the life of one of these participants, as he was awaiting death when the law shifted in his favor and his sentence was amended to Life in Prison. Several other of these participants faced the death penalty and pled guilty to spare their lives. Also of interest, two of these participants reported wanting to die. One was talked into taking a plea to spare his life by

his attorney. He ultimately agreed to life when he found out he was to become a father. The other eventually pled to save his life but was barred from ever seeking appeal or an amended sentence in the future.

All but two participants were arrested within days of the crime; the others, within months. Thus, the time between Age ATC (at time of crime) and Age at Interview reflects, largely, the number of years they had been incarcerated at the time of the interviews.

The participants' violent criminal histories vary from "none indicated" to rather extensive. I was able to find at least minimal records regarding criminal history for each participant, though records available for some participants were more extensive than for others. Some participants included via self-report their juvenile offenses which were not always available in record. In these cases, their reporting on assigned forms matched their later-elicited narrative. All of those whose criminal histories were labelled as "none indicated" had rather extensive availability of records so this is deemed accurate. Shoplifting, Theft, and Burglary were not counted as violent crimes, nor were DWI (Driving While Intoxicated) or Improper Lane Change, Possession of Marijuana, Disturbing the Peace, Contempt of Court, and the like, as they resulted in no physical harm to a person. Breaking and Entering (B&E), which appeared along with Carry of Concealed/Illegal Weapon was counted as a violent prior offense due to the involvement of a dangerous weapon. What follows "ATC," appearing in the fifth column, indicates charges that were given along with the index offense (i.e. the murder being researched). Each previous charge found was listed but, in some cases, was dismissed, as indicated. They are provided for later comparison to individual narratives given as examples later, as, again, they serve as indicators of thus-far developed constructs regarding criminal behavior.

A brief synopsis of the crime, including the method used, is provided as a context for the sake of the reader and as a quick reference for when specific participant data/narratives are being discussed later. A lengthier synopsis of each is included in Appendix 6.

Design of Methods of Data Collection

Life Narrative

The Life Narrative was formatted after McAdams' (1993) life narrative interview schedule, focusing on key events such as worst or best memories, peak experiences, turning points, and/or key people to provide for some structure but to really leave the topics of significance to the participants to come to the forefront without any specific requirements. A single open-ended question was asked in relation to one of these topics, such as, "What is your earliest memory?" and if, on the rare occasion that did not begin the flow of narrative, a second was asked, such as "Who raised you or who did you grow up with and what were those relationships like?" Others also touching on these topics are

provided as necessary to shift topics yet keep the narrative going throughout the interview. A very general format of this is laid out in Appendix 2.2.

Crime Narrative

This second part of the interview, the elicitation of the crime narrative, utilized Toch's (1969) approach, which is much more detailed, but using the Canter-Youngs (2012) Crime-Emotion-Narrative Role (CENR) interview, which is a questionnaire that asks about one's crime in detail, step-by-step, yet also allows for free text output (in Appendix 2.3). Participants were asked first to tell me what happened in as much detail as they could in regard to the crime. Their Life Narratives naturally led up to this point so the flow into the crime narrative was quite natural. Once they completed telling it all the way through one time, I asked them to go back through it, guiding them through the incident again step-by-step with my questions, seeking clarifications as necessary, and asking about their feelings at various points before, during, and after the commission of the crime. The CENR was referred to throughout to make sure all relevant questions about the crime were asked.

Repertory Grid Interviews

The participants' personal constructs were collected using triadic elicitation, as described above, and then ratings on a 1 to 5 scale, as discussed above, were collected for each element on each construct to give measurable value to each element in relation to each construct.

Many decisions go into the formatting of the grid and are dependent on what information a researcher is looking to collect, what they are relating it back to (in this case, the psychological content and processing behind the action of murder) and possible limitations that may present themselves. *People of significance* were chosen as elements for this research. *People* were the original elements as posed by Kelly and chosen here because murder is an *interpersonal* exchange. Moreover, the *significance* of people in the participants' lives is important for that very reason—because they are deemed significant *by the participant* and, as such, are those after whom the participant would have likely fashioned his role in life—whether in alignment or in opposition to their characteristics.

A predetermined, systematic, elicitation of elements, such as that posed by Kelly (1955) (some examples in his Role Title List of which are "a teacher you liked;" "your wife or present girlfriend;" "a neighbor with whom you get along;" etc.) was purposefully not used. According to Fransella, Bell and Bannister (2004), "What is essential is that the labels are meaningful to the person" (p. 46). I would have had to have been sure such a predetermined list of elements was meaningful to these particular participants and I was not confident in assuming any such role titles as meaningful to them. Additionally, I view such a "raw" approach as necessary in its aim to highlight what is most salient and personally meaningful to these participants themselves, the ultimate focus of this research. This highly

individualized approach allows the unique insights of the participant-- the data *he* freely wishes to provide-- as the subject of inquiry. This is an option supported by Jankowicz (2004), noting that "this will ensure that the topic is represented from his or her point of view" (p.30). Moreover, the 'raw' responses of participants allow for additional areas of investigation that may be telling. Chetwynd (1977) asserts that response bias or response error "are interesting to examine as phenomenon in their own right, and a further advantage of their isolation is their resultant accessibility for investigation" (p. 178). One aim of this research is to allow participants to freely answer as they see fit, with minimal extra prompting by me, so that such phenomena might be noted and examined.

Also it is my feeling that many of the elements offered by Fransella, Bell, and Banister (2004) or the relationships (also the valences, authorities, and values) offered by Kelly, (1955) are presumptuous and I did not want to assume such roles existed in these participants' lives. Kelly (1955) lists the "representativeness of the elements" he suggests as an assumption underlying the repertory grid test and notes that these representative figures are those who people "seem normally to have formed the most crucial personal role constructs" (p. 230). This research does not assume that the participants herein have "normally formed" role constructs, as they are representative of a very extraordinary and particular population and are being studied here for that very reason – that their behaviors (stemming from their construct formation) are not within the realm of normal behavior and thus necessitating exploration of their construing from a point that resembles as closely as possible the origins of how they construe. Adopting pre-ordained element-types could have proven a mistake in not only biasing the data but in trying to build rapport. From personal experience, I can relay that, when an inmate/patient (in another setting) was asked to provide as an element a person whom he admired, more than once the reply has been, essentially, "I don't admire anyone," and the patient appeared offended by such an assumption. Elements were allowed to be chosen primarily by the participants because, not knowing the participants ahead of time, it was not predictable as to what role-types would be most significant for each particular respondent. It could not safely be assumed that such relationships (mother, father, spouse, teacher [many did not have significant roots in ongoing formal education, as they moved around a lot or left school at a very early age], etc. or even that a certain quality in a relationship or person, e.g. someone who cared for you, someone successful, ethical, happy) were prominent or salient or even existed at all for these participants. To assume these could potentially have alienated the interviewer from an already very difficult population to reach.

I asked participants to name 11 people of significance to them, one to be assigned—the victim-- as the victim is clearly an essential element to the analysis of the crime. Also required was that at least two people of significance to the participant at the time of the

crime be included as elements, as I felt that a participant's interpersonal influences around the time of the crime might be a potential factor in construct expression at that time. These two elements were identified as such during the element elicitation phase. Also, participants were asked to include both positively-influential people and negatively-influential people (or people of significance to them in "good" ways and people of significance to them in "bad" ways). This was implemented in hopes that both positive and negative characteristics of elements would be readily represented by the emergent pole, rather than always having one or the other as an afterthought and represented by only the contrasting pole. In this way, it was thought that potential for "faking good" or "faking bad" would be reduced (i.e. always presenting as seeing Elements in a "good" light). Eleven elements were asked for to encourage a comprehensive picture of each participant's constructs. Fewer elements may have limited the diversity of constructs elicited, thus not fully demonstrating their range of convenience. No more than 11 were chosen because four elements (Self-Prior to crime [S-P]; Self-At time of crime [S-ATC]; Self-Currently [S-C]; and Self-Ideally [S-I]) were also provided, for a total of 15 elements. For confidentiality purposes, the use of real names was discouraged, as it is the relationship or role the people of significance played in the participant's life that is important.

Each of these eleven names provided by the participant were written down on separate index cards, shuffled and placed face-down. Triadic elicitation (Fransella, et al., 2004) was performed-- the participant was asked to draw three cards, each card of which contained one person of significance (such as, for example, "Co-defendant A," "Older Brother," "Mom"). Then the participant was asked to say how two of them are alike in some meaningful way and yet different from the third element. (*'Meaningful'* here is meant to rule out 'menial' differences such as gender or very basic affiliation [e.g. red-haired, sisters, etc.]. Such constructs are excessively permeable, allowing for too much generalization to get to the "heart" of their notion or are excessively impermeable and provide too much specificity to be applicable to others.) This process was repeated 11 times (for a total of 12 times), again to gain comprehensiveness of constructs yet to limit the number of constructs to a manageable amount. The participant's responses were recorded in two columns—one for the emergent construct pole and the other for contrasting construct pole -- as in Figure 1 above—forming a Repertory Grid for each participant, putting a verbal label, for the sake of analysis, to the participant's personal constructs. Once the participant's constructs were elicited, the participant was asked to rate *each* element (person) on *each* construct using a rating scale (1 to 5 -- one to indicate likeness more toward the *emergent* pole and five to indicate more likeness toward the contrast pole).

As mentioned earlier, four elements additional to *victim* were supplied: *self prior to crime*, *self at time of crime* (in the moments leading up to and during), *self currently*, and

ideal self. A combination of supplied and elicited elements was used to allow for personal meaningfulness while also providing congruity across grids and to allow for comparison (Blagden, et. al., 2018) of Selves at different points of time or Selves to Victim. Twelve constructs were elicited from each participant. According to Bladgen, et al. (2018), previous research supports that 10 to 12 constructs provide a sufficient understanding of one's construing of a topic. The result, then, for each participant was a 12 (constructs) x 15 (elements) grid with ratings of each element for each construct between 1 and 5. The total number of ratings per grid was 180.

Data Collection

The interview was conducted with a humanitarian approach—i.e. aimed at promoting the social, physiological, and psychological well-being of the person being interviewed (Holmberg, Christianson, & Wexler, 2007), to enhance collaboration and to minimize risk of any negative outcome to participants. Benneworth (2003), as cited by Holmberg, Christianson, and Wexler (2007), states that the such an approach assists the interviewee in recreating and recollecting the incident, helping him to work through what might have been a very stressful event, inviting him to speak about his needs and emotions in regard to the incident and providing the mental space needed for the offender to process the event in a way that promotes his psychological well-being. The humanitarian approach has also been shown to be beneficial in building and maintaining rapport, enhancing more accurate recall of events (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014) and increasing admission to crimes (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002). While this is in comparison to a dominance approach, its benefits are apparent in working with this population. Along with the humanitarian approach came open-ended questioning, which has been found to promote length of narrative, thus, providing more information (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014).

One full day of data collection was allotted to each participant with the option for an additional meeting(s) if desired or necessary to complete all aspects of data collection. The participants were scheduled to meet with me a day in advance so they were aware, as was the prison administration, and on time. They were greeted and thanked for their interest in participation upon arrival into the mental health building, where the interviews were conducted. They were offered water and/or coffee, with the prior approval of the warden, and these were made available for them throughout the day. At this time, details of the research protocol were again reviewed, and any questions had by the participants were answered. Full informed consent packets were given, with the offer to have me read the paperwork to them, and, again, any questions that arose from this were answered. All willing participants provided consent (none declined at this point), and the forms were signed. Upon completion of this and the Participant Demographic Sheet and Questionnaire they began the official interview.

As Athens (1992) did, in-depth, private interviews were conducted with each participant. Privacy was essential for the sake of confidentiality, to allow for openness, and to limit possible distraction. No correctional officers were present in the room, only the participant and myself. However, a window allowed viewing by a correctional officer if desired or if the attention of correctional officers was needed. Permission was given by the prison administration and by each participant to audio record the interviews. The interview started in the morning with the Life Narrative. If participants needed prompting to begin the flow of storytelling, such prompts as the participant's first, best, and/or worst memory were used. If these failed initially to provide much discussion, they were asked to discuss who raised them, whom they lived with, and what these relationships were like. Open-ended questioning, which elicits more complete responses than closed, "Yes/No"-type questions, activated and kept the interviewee talking.

Once their narrative was underway, very few struggled to fill this opportunity with more-than-adequate amounts of relevant information. Incredibly, most were telling intimate details of their lives within five or ten minutes. This is likely because these men *wanted* to tell their story. For several, it was their first chance. One participant who was locked up for more than 4 decades revealed that this was the first time he had shared his story. The opportunity to tell their story is certainly not always beneficial to them legally, nor is it required. Defendants have the right to remain silent at their trial and, if attorneys feel it is a risk to the outcome of the trial or, particularly if the defendant is guilty, they often encourage defendants to not testify. It is, therefore, very probable that some of these participants had not previously shared their story, at least not to anyone they might have seen as a person of legal authority.

As the Life Narrative was a progression through their lives, their stories naturally led to the narrative of their crime. Participants were, however, asked at that time if they were prepared to talk about that. All chose to proceed. The floor was first left open for participants to give their version one time through with minimal interruptions. Then, I guided the participants through the incident again, step-by-step, seeking clarifications as necessary, and asking about feelings they experienced at various points surrounding the crime. Canter-Youngs (2012) CENR interview was used as a guide and reminder as to what facts and details to collect during the course of the interview but much of what is highlighted by that schedule as pertinent was readily answered in the participant's first narration without having to ask. When things, such as sequence of events, were unclear, the step-by-step re-questioning tried to address this. Here, it became more apparent where consistency remained or faltered and, if details became even more convoluted, even more clarification was sought. If, in the end, the retelling of the story, managed by me with intent to clarify, only made the circumstance more unclear, the veracity of the report became

suspect. (The degree to which it became suspect, however, was not really apparent or truly under scrutiny until later, in the transcription, subsequent review of the narration, and finally of course, review of official records when available.) Although participants were at times pressed a bit to clarify, never was the questioning intended to be nor was it confrontational, as maintaining rapport was of utmost importance. Important, too, was the use of non-leading questions to prompt memory. The interviewee was also asked to relate his feelings at various times during the culmination of the violent act and afterward.

Breaks were provided freely, as the participant or I requested. Breaks and the option as to whether or not to proceed were explicitly yet gently offered when a participant appeared to be emotionally processing the events. All chose to proceed through these moments as well. (At the end of the crime narrative, several participants volunteered their files of official documents and returned in the following days to provide them for me to copy. This was helpful in terms of filling in blanks due to loss of memory, perhaps, of details of the event, connecting some of the dots, and providing an enhanced version of what took place.)

In addition to the above-mentioned breaks, just prior to lunch time, the interviewee would have to return to their designated areas (cells or barracks) for formal count, a stringent security procedure that takes place several times during the course of each day and night. As such, the clock was watched so as to be cognizant of the depth of conversation nearing the time they had to leave, a plan could be made as to where to leave off and pick up upon return, and enough time was allotted for them to make it to their designated area. Once they completed count and lunch, they returned to complete any portions yet unaddressed. Oftentimes the interview began again at the clarification of the crime narrative or the RGT, as the RGT was reserved for the final part of the interview, after the crime narrative. (Upon their return, the participants were reminded of confidentiality and, upon initiating the RGT, they were again reminded that the names of their elements were unimportant and use of role titles or pseudonyms was encouraged.) Completion time for the repertory grids developed using this method took between 1 to 2 hours.

After the RGT was complete, a very brief summary of initial indications by the specific participant's RGT were provided to him if he so chose. Participants were debriefed as necessary and/or as they chose and usually some lighter conversation then took place. They were all profusely thanked again for their participation and invited, upon the completion of all 25 interviews, to attend an appreciation day where snacks were provided by the interviewer, again with permission from the warden, and at which time any missed questionnaire items or other final questions could be addressed.

The total hours of interviews recorded were 92.08. The average length of interview was 3.68 hours; the shortest one concluded at 1.75 hours; the longest at 8.5 hours. These

interviews were then transcribed using Express Scribe transcriptions software. Although this was a very detail-oriented and lengthy process, many benefits can be had by the interviewer/researcher transcribing the interviews as opposed to hiring it out or delegating it to others. It gave me the chance to hear every word, again, and to capture their stories again in detail, rewinding if something was missed or misunderstood. Also, in typing it, intended meaning became clearer but, more importantly, highly valuable cues to less intended but exceedingly salient undertones became highlighted. Hesitations, seemingly calculated pauses, repeated phrases, stammering, 'mis-speaks,' and other nuances become glaringly apparent, as did avoidances of topic, self-referencing, agency-switching and other tools of communication that all serve a purpose (O'Connor, 2000). In deeper analysis, these nuances illuminate the crafting involved in presentation of a story and become instrumental in revealing the infrastructure of one's narrative and assessing intentionality of communication, which, in turn, casts important hints toward one's psychological processing.

Ethics

In order to assure anonymity, references to the State from which these interviews were conducted are omitted. Where names appear within, they are pseudonyms chosen by myself. Participants were assured of confidentiality as outlined in the Informed Consent packets in Appendix 1.4, briefly, only anonymized information would be kept at the University of Huddersfield and with myself (save a handwritten 'code breaker'), and appear in the final dissertation. Only qualified research associates within that University psychology department would have access to that information. Additionally, any potential publications from this work would only contain anonymized information. Also, while an abridged copy of this dissertation will be supplied to the State Department which granted access to these participants, it will not contain case studies/summaries/crime specifics, or other potentially identifying markers. Each participant reviewed (with the option of having it read to them) and signed the informed consent packet (again, Appendix 1.4), granting agreement to/permission for the terms therein. They were notified of Duty to Report laws and the exceptions to confidentiality. They were discouraged from using identifying information when and if they were to talk about any crime for which they had not been adjudicated. The only identifying information (i.e. copies of prison files and other official records containing their names) is kept by me, password protected in a computer locked in a room/house. They also were given the option to have identifying material destroyed after 5 years. None opted for this.

To reduce any potential harm to the participants, they were first briefed on what the research would entail through a presentation to all potential research candidates within the institution. Then, all of those who stepped forward in their further consideration of volunteering were fully informed via an information sheet, and the opportunity to discuss

that information and to have any questions clarified regarding what the data collection procedures would be, risks and benefits to them, and what the information would be used for was provided. They were not promised anything nor provided anything but water, coffee, and, on one final day, snacks in thanks for their contribution. Prior to the start of the interview, they were notified that this was not therapy and that, if I had any concerns about their psychological well-being, I would discuss it with them and seek permission to notify the psychological staff at the prison about my concerns. If they had concerns, they were invited to freely discuss them with me and/or seek follow-up and support through the psychological staff on site. Psychological staff were consulted ahead of time and were available to provide services if need be. They were also invited to contact me through the prison's psychological staff if concerns arose at a later date. At the end of each interview, the participants were debriefed, asked how the process was for them and lighter conversation was engaged in order to re-acclimatize them to their usual environment. They were regularly offered breaks and, if discourse became emotional, they were asked if they wanted to take a break, if they wanted to continue or withdraw-- an option available to them at any time throughout. They all chose to proceed.

Chapter 4-- Data analysis

Thematic Analysis of Construct Poles

A thematic analysis approach accepts that truth is subjective, that reality is in the eye of the beholder (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Taylor & Ussher, 2001). Such an approach, quite in line with PCT, depends on the data, rather than theory, to guide the formation of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As such, the current research sought to elicit the most-likely intended meaning of the participants, as a very particular population and with focus toward violent offending, in analysis of their constructs.

With this in mind, I considered, but decided against, existing schemes. Feixas, et al's (2002) classification system was specifically designed for analysis of personal constructs and particularly for the RGT. Theirs is "structured according to homogeneous levels of abstraction, and based solely on the content of the constructs" (p. 2). I did not feel confident that their themes—moral, emotional, relational, personal, intellectual/operational, and values and interests -- while possibly making for easier classification-- were going to openly invite or perhaps reflect the particularities of a murderous population in terms of how *this* population construes. The intent of the current research is to gain an understanding of these participants' construing *as closely as possible to how these participants construe*. Using a priori themes developed for wide-ranging populations is contradictory to the purpose of the research. As such, they were not used and, in order to promote interpretation of their constructs to be as close to what they intended, the context surrounding the elicited constructs (transcribed in full) was taken into consideration. While these participants may think, according to evaluators like Feixas et al. (2002), in terms of whether something is moral, intellectual, personal, or relational or in terms of values/interests, this is only one dimension in which they may see they world.

Landfield's (1971) classification system, which consists of 22 categories and has been typically used in clinical settings, brings with it the same potential for bias as Feixas's, et al. (2002) a-priori themes. So, while Landfield's (1971) classification system was also not employed, his method of categorizing construct poles rather than constructs was. I felt that this would help to manage the complexity of thematizing potentially innumerable, idiosyncratic meanings implied in bipolar constructs. For example, one participant provided the construct "Evilness, secretive V Open;" another provides "*Thought* were loved ones V *Know* is a loved one." Both constructs have notions of surreptitiousness to the elements eliciting the emergent construct pole but to categorize the entire construct under such a theme would lose the other nuances of their intended meanings. In the case of the first construct, the contrast to surreptitiousness is a responsiveness or openness; in the case of the second its contrast is the genuineness of one's love. Each of these contrasts indicates a slightly different meaning that might have been lost had the data items remained constructs

rather than construct poles. Coding them in this way, it is felt, captures these nuances more completely. Of course, when constructs are later examined in individual cases, they are conceptualized in their PCT-congruent, bipolar entirety.

Using the RGT, 600 construct poles were elicited (25 participants x 24 construct poles each). Construct poles elicited by the Repertory Grid Technique consisted of one word to a string of words, often accompanied by a brief example or explanation of what the participant meant. Construct poles were recorded on a Repertory Grid Template as seen in Appendix 2.4. The transcripts of the construct elicitation were also referred to for contextual clarification as needed. In preparation for categorizing, each participant's construct poles were written separately on small pieces of paper. I then broadly followed the process outlined by Jankowicz (2004) that he calls 'Core Categorisation.' Construct poles with similar notions were grouped together, first, into categories (later termed 'sub-themes'). However, being that some elicited construct poles consisted of more than one cohesive construct pole "label," if a participant responded with two or more notions per construct pole, each was categorized separately if describing notably different concepts. For example, one contrasting construct pole consisted of both "Unreliable" and "Promiscuous" (as opposed to "Reliable"). Here the participant was seemingly providing his contrasting view of "Reliable" as "Unreliable" while adding to it a meaning which was more context- and element-specific— "Promiscuous." Thus, "Unreliable" was coded as Dependability (contrast to) and "Promiscuous" was coded as Hedonistic Lifestyle. Dividing the poles in this way resulted in a total of 642 construct poles being categorized.

As noted above, the narrative surrounding elicitation of these construct poles, which was previously transcribed, was referred to as necessary and was very useful in narrowing the participant's likely-intended meaning of the pole. Trustworthiness, for example, was identified as a common theme. Within that, some participants indicated trust to mean to them one's inclination toward honesty. However, for others trust clearly indicated an ability to depend on another. Furthermore, trust to some indicated a responsiveness sought or expected when vulnerability was exposed. While these are similar in meaning, they have slightly different nuances. Thus, thematically, three separate sub-themes were delineated given the distinction in meanings of trust—one simply as Trustworthiness in the sense of honesty and fidelity, another as Dependability, and yet another as Responsivity. A much simpler approach might have been to just identify one single sub-theme called "Trust," and, ultimately, they did all fall under one overall theme. Yet, because construal varied, they were coded differently to start with. This distinction may be important when trying to identify motive. For example, although both may be distressing, a wife's infidelity may cause a much different psychological, thus behavioral, response than betrayal of a friend who was depended upon to not reveal secrets of criminal behavior.

The sub-themes were then grouped, more broadly, into themes. This bottom-up approach was used, however, with the knowledge that authors in the fields of crime and of narrative have addressed both themes of power and intimacy. Additionally, it is commonly argued that violence is a form of power and that intimacy ("love," lust, jealousy) are oft-cited motivators for murder. Thus, it was with some expectation that these themes would emerge within the current analysis as well.

For the purpose of a quality check, 20% of the total number of construct poles along with the 27 sub-themes and a rubric describing each (as in Appendix 4) were provided to another rater to categorize. After her initial coding, we had a 60% agreement. Discussions were carried out until we were able to reach 100% agreement. Disagreement in every instance was resolved by showing/discussing with the other rater the original transcript and the surrounding context, which clarified the probable meaning as intended by the participant to the other rater, reducing potential ambiguity or misinterpretation. Subsequent to this discussion, a review of the remaining constructs was conducted to re-assess appropriateness of fit.

Analysis of grids

A wide variety of analyses of structures of grids can be obtained from the use of computer software. I was looking at, specifically, overarching differences in terms of tightness and looseness in construing and in terms of how participants saw Self at different points in time (at the time of their crime [ATC] and ideally) and how they saw their victim, primarily in relation to Self. Being that murder is an interpersonal dynamic, consisting of a murderer-murdered relationship, it is thought that differences in the construals of Self-Victim between committers of Instrumental murder and Expressive murder, possibly identifiable in their grids' structure, may exist. RepIV (original reference no longer available; upgraded version [RepV] is by Gaines & Shaw, 2009) and Idiogrid (Grice, 2002) were both available as free software online initially. RepIV computer software is, however, no longer accessible online; yet prior to its expiry, I was able to elicit the Percent of Variation Accounted for by First Factor, or PVAFF, a measure of tightness/looseness, on each grid.

Chetwynd (1977, p. 176) states, "The explanation power of the first component is given by the percentage of total variation accounted for by the first component." The percentage of total variance spread across different dimensions of one's construing is indicative of one's cognitive complexity and, while not one and the same, the intensity of construing, and how tightly or loosely one construes. If the percentage of total variance in one's construing is accounted for primarily by one, singular dimension, one's thinking is rather unvarying, or unidimensional. That person may be said to be a tight construer. Alternatively, if the percentage of total variance is accounted for by several, varying dimensions, i.e. is multidimensional, one is said to have cognitively complex construing

and/or to be a loose construer, i.e. one's construing has more differentiation. One indicator of this is, in principal component analysis, PVAFF-- the Percent of Variance Accounted for by First Factor (PVAFF), "with higher scores indicating greater unidimensionality in the individual's construing" (Hardison & Neimeyer, 2012, p. 9) and lower percentages indicating greater dimensionality or greater differentiation. If one's PVAFF is 82, 82% (a rather high degree) of the total variance in construing is accounted for by a single dimension. The higher the PVAFF, the indication is the tighter is one's construing and the lesser is one's permeability. Level of permeability can indicate how willing the person might be to look at life in varying terms and, thus, may be indicative of one's sensitivity to change or provocation. One with a high PVAFF may not be highly amenable to change or even alternative viewpoints. If one construes loosely, indicated by a lower PVAFF, one single component of thinking makes up a smaller part of one's construing, thus, many dimensions are involved in the construal process.

Idiogrid (Grice, 2000) provides a multitude of quantitative analyses and, while other outputs would have arguably been enlightening, the focus was on differences between committers of Instrumental homicide and Expressive homicide in their perceptions of various selves and their selves in relation to their victim. Idiogrid was used to determine angles between the Selves (at the time of the crime [ATC] and ideally) and Self-ATC and victim in comparison with his ideal. A larger degree between Self-ATC (at time or crime) and Self (Self-ideally) would tell us that the construer sees his self at the time of his crime as more unlike his ideal self—possibly indicative of the Kellian form of guilt— the "perception of one's apparent dislodgment from one's core role structure" (Kelly, 1955, p. 502). Such an aspect of psychology might, in turn, speak to likeliness of remorse or recidivism or how imbedded criminalistic or violent behavior is in that individual. The difference between the angle between Self-I/S-ATC and S-I/Victim will tell us whether he saw Self as closer to Ideal or the Victim as closer to Ideal, perhaps shedding light on the participant group's (Instrumental or Expressive) construction of their victims as 'better' or 'worse' than themselves. Below is a sample grid outputted by Idiogrid Software (2002). Text output, as in Figure 3, was utilized for the analyses of 2) degrees between S-I and S-ATC and 2) differences in degrees between S-I/S-ATC and S-I/Victim for both the committers of Instrumental and Expressive murder and each group's degrees (for the first inquiry) and differences (for the second inquiry) were averaged.

Figure 3. Sample Idiogrid (2002) text output showing degrees of angles between elements

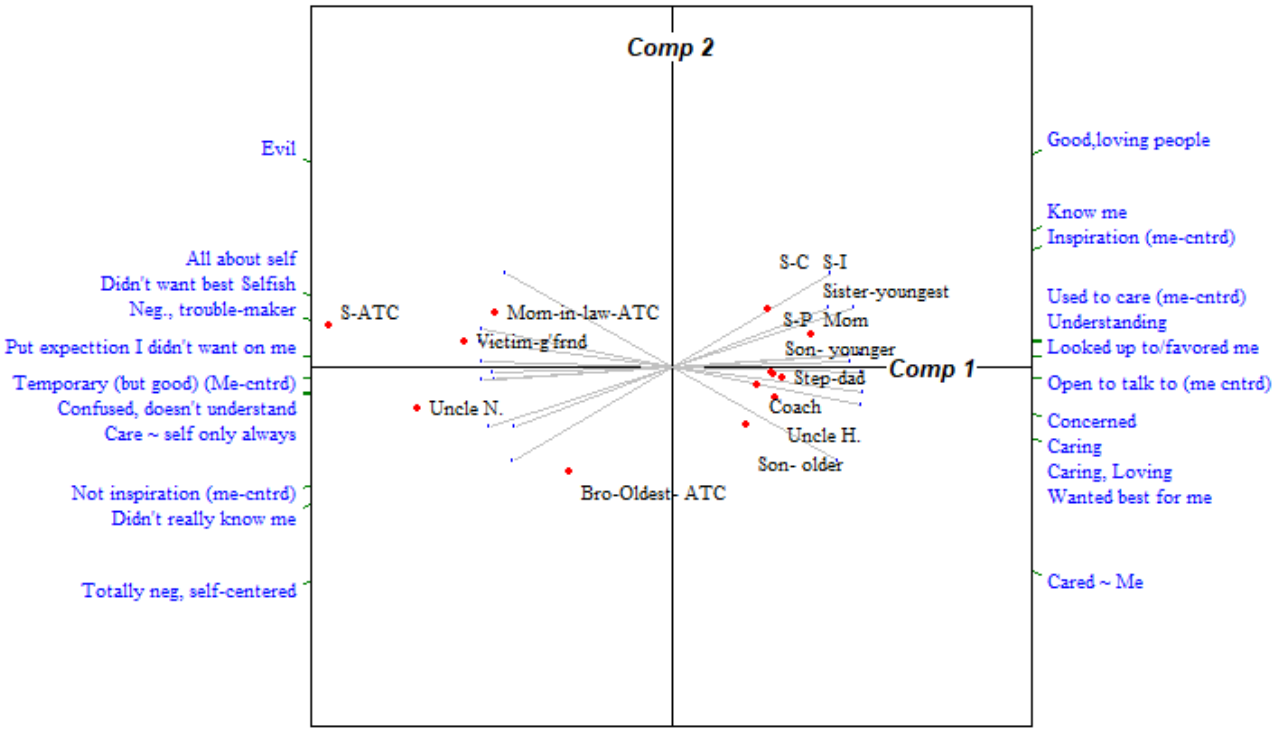
Element Angles (Degrees)

	Bro-Oldest- ATC	Mom	Mom-in-law-ATC	Son- younger	Son- older	Uncle H.	Uncle N.	Coach	Step-dad	Sister-youngest	Victim-g'frnd	S-P	S-ATC	S-C	S-I
Bro-Oldest- ATC	0.00														
Mom	80.97	0.00													
Mom-in-law-ATC	100.97	130.75	0.00												
Son- younger	61.91	36.87	117.79	0.00											
Son- older	42.37	47.74	119.52	30.15	0.00										
Uncle H.	61.39	27.44	132.26	39.05	28.44	0.00									
Uncle N.	81.89	120.53	58.11	101.27	88.92	104.43	0.00								
Coach	66.67	23.05	137.18	30.59	32.72	21.52	110.01	0.00							
Step-dad	66.94	18.79	133.01	33.70	32.79	11.85	108.63	16.66	0.00						
Sister-youngest	80.97	0.00	130.75	36.87	47.74	27.44	120.53	23.05	18.79	0.00					
Victim-g'frnd	87.54	131.62	38.43	120.53	106.35	117.77	59.24	131.83	126.05	131.62	0.00				
S-P	67.58	24.29	129.60	44.85	43.13	22.04	118.35	31.05	23.76	24.29	118.35	0.00			
S-ATC	101.47	163.12	44.65	138.59	133.10	153.72	61.31	156.55	157.48	163.12	50.08	160.55	0.00		
S-C	83.18	21.32	122.88	45.68	57.90	40.63	127.07	34.83	34.23	21.32	128.73	32.83	148.30	0.00	
S-I	80.97	0.00	130.75	36.87	47.74	27.44	120.53	23.05	18.79	0.00	131.62	24.29	163.12	21.32	0.00

In Figure 3, the degree between the participant's S-I (left) and S-ATC (top) is 163.12 (range is from 0 to 180 degrees), indicating his self at the time of the crime was very much not how he wants to be ideally. The degrees between S-I and Victim are 131.62. (He also does not see the victim as anywhere near his ideal.) The difference in these degrees (163.12-131.62) is 31.5. This was figured for each participant and averaged for both the committers of Instrumental and Expressive homicide.

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was run on each participant's RGT data for an outputted graph as in Figure 4. This is a process by which the elements and constructs elicited using the Repertory Grid Technique are able to be plotted in a visual space based on the numbers elicited by the ratings on the RGT. A PCA plot provides a visual representation of data items based on their similarity, with items that are spatially closer to each other reflecting more similarity than items that are further apart.

Figure 4. Sample output of grid (same grid as above) in graph form (Idiogrid, 2002)



Looking at the outputted graph, one can surmise, amongst other things, that this participant's ideal, in terms of the elicited constructs, is in terms of good loving people who know him and are inspiring. His victim is far from this and seen more as evil, selfish and as not wanting the best [for him]. The closer an element is to that, the more "ideal" he construes that element.

Tightness/Looseness in construing was also outputted for each grid in terms of PVAFF (Percent of Variance Accounted for by First Factor) using RepIV computer software. Results of this were also compared, collectively, for those participants who committed either Instrumental or Expressive homicide to identify if there was, perhaps, a difference in tightness/looseness of construing. We might expect to see that one group is more black-and-white in their thinking, i.e. less open to another's (e.g. the victim's?) perspective.

I drew on these analyses to enrich my understanding of individual cases and the potential differences between those who committed Instrumental murder and those who committed Expressive murder.

Analysis of the narrative interviews

The narrative interview data was intended to contextualize and elaborate on the grid data. I did not systematically analyze each narrative as a data set in its own right. Instead, I examined each narrative thoroughly, reading and re-reading the transcripts, with a focus

on a number of issues, such as (in the case of the crime narratives) establishing how and under what circumstances the crime took place and the chronology of events and (in the case of the life narratives) noting potentially significant events or experiences in childhood or youth (such as abuse, abandonment by a parent, death of a family member, loss of a relationship, family members going to prison, fights with peers or others, etc.), highlighting phrases, expressions, or possible linguistic strategies that may give insight into their construing, and noting who and what seemed to be of importance to the participant.

Life narratives were read and re-read numerous times to get a feel for important events and common ways of construing throughout each individual's narrative and common threads between participants. These were not, however subject to methodical coding, thematic analysis, or the like.

The crime narratives were looked at with more scrutiny-- while participants may have had reason to be non-transparent, particularly here, it was necessary to determine as accurately as possible what actually took place, as this would aid in categorizing them most appropriately as Instrumental or Expressive. A thorough examination of these narratives was made (keeping in mind Bruner's [1997] self-indicators and O'Conner's [2000] narrative nuances, discussed below), as well as examination of official records, and, in some cases, media reports and online appeals records.

Bruner (1997) suggests paying attention to a number of key features of narratives, such as the narrator's agency and commitment to a course of action, their need for validation, their mood, feelings and reflections on self. Pertinent, too, is the point he makes that, even if only one or two of these are present, the others can be inferred. As such, the listener is able to not only ascertain an autobiographer's overall character, but to unveil his fundamentals – his values and principles, commitments, conflicts, feelings, relationships and their significance, what roles the autobiographer presents for whom, in what types of situations, and more. O'Conner (2000) too says that an offender's narrative of his crime(s) is indispensable in determining his agentive positioning and that much can be inferred by other techniques she identified that offenders use to speak about their crimes, including forms of speech along with the content spoken, active and passive use of verbs (for example, "I shot and killed…" as opposed to "I caught me a murder charge"), pauses in narration, shifts in tense, shifts in topic, attitude or tone, content or lack of, and excessive or lack of detail. Although I did not specifically code the narratives for the presence of these key features, I held them in mind as I read and re-read the transcripts taking note of subtle, potential inferences.

Bit by bit, crime narratives were examined for specificity of crime scene detail, such as chronological order of events (as some participants gave events non-sequentially at times, omitted things leaving gaps in their story, confused the details, etc.) and agency, as

this was not always apparent due to omission of or confusion of pronouns, particularly trying to assess who took what action. Each participant's version of events was laid out chronologically (in a Word document) in as much detail as possible to get the clearest picture of what took place. Areas which highlighted discrepancies, confusion of sequence, questionable details, omissions, contradictions, and the like were highlighted by comments in the margins. Then, any official records (police reports; arrest reports; trial records; appeal and other court records; offender, witness, co-defendant statements; autopsy and medical reports; etc.) and/or media reports that were obtained were compared, detail by detail, with what the participant narrated. Any discrepancies or things that needed further clarification or detail-enhancement were noted as "comments" in the margins, alongside the participant's version, which had been summarized and 'reformatted' by me for clarity (as above). In this way, a much clearer picture of what took place (and what did not and what did not make sense) became apparent.

Categorizing the homicides as Instrumental or Expressive

Once as much detail as could be established for each crime was organized and put into chronological order and clearer sense could be made surrounding points that interviewees had left vague or convoluted, crimes were categorized as Instrumental or Expressive. In order to do this, each crime was analyzed primarily in regard to motive, in simplest terms, threat or desire to obtain a goal secondary to killing. Homicides are often classified in terms of motive (Meithe & Drass, 1999) and threat and desire are oft-cited motives in the literature (Salfati, 2000; Santtila, et al., 2003). Categorizing murders as Instrumental or Expressive, while it has its issues, as addressed, was simply a starting point from which to then step back, re-examine, and hopefully better understand what has already been established in the literature as a potentially fruitful distinction of crime. To reduce the complexity of distinguishing a murder as Instrumental or Expressive, crime scene behaviors were only taken into account in as much as they pointed toward motive. They were not used as stand-alone factors in assessing categorization. For example, the presence of a firearm or relationship to offender, already identified in the literature review as problematic identifiers, were not used as determining factors in assessment of crimes as either Instrumental or Expressive. However, if a wife, for example, was the victim and noted to be a prompting source of emotional arousal (i.e. pointing to motive), this was considered in categorization (as Expressive). As noted earlier, however, determining categorization or an ultimate motivation is not easily assessed, either by surface observation or even by the participants' understanding or narration. Moreover, considering that multiple layers of construing may be involved (e.g. need for power as well as need for intimacy), and how much a participant's construing of various themes went into his crime,

deciphering his motive was further complicated. As such, the categorization of each crime as either Instrumental or Expressive was rather challenging.

The addition of official detail, using court and police records, added a great deal to the assessment of most cases as either instrumental or expressive, though. Some crimes were even highlighted as being presented by the participant as expressive but further analysis revealed they were much more appropriately categorized as instrumental. Or, others, which the police likely assumed to be instrumental were, after this detailed analysis, judged to be more likely to be expressive.

Any crime that contained features of both Instrumental and Expressive and weighed more heavily toward one particular category was assigned to that category to which it more heavily leaned. For example, one crime was certainly planned (leaning toward Instrumental) but it was committed out of long-standing emotional dysregulation, done to seek relief from this, and the circumstance was considered a threat to the committer's sense of self-security and self-esteem. As such, it weighed much more heavily on the Expressive side and was deemed as such. As indicated from Chapter 1, categorizing murder as Instrumental or Expressive is not without its challenges. Another rater, who has her Master's Degree in Forensic Psychology and is a licensed counselor working within the prison system was provided crime vignettes and a rubric, as seen in Figure 5. She was asked to assess each crime, using the rubric and vignettes, as either Instrumental or Expressive. I was present for her assessment of these so as to be available if she felt that additional information was needed or would be helpful. Of the 25, she was able to categorize 22 of them with very little if any additional input. These were in alignment with my categorizations of them. She struggled, however, with categorizing three of the cases, two of which were the same ones I had difficulty categorizing. Once I provided additional background for these, she incorporated this information and was able to categorize two more of them, also in alignment with my categorization. We agreed that the third had elements that could potentially be Instrumental or Expressive and were ultimately not able to make a determination of this last one. As such, this case was omitted from calculations of percentages and mean scores. Of those remaining, eleven were deemed Instrumental homicides and 13 were deemed Expressive.

Figure 5. Rubric for categorizing homicides as Expressive or Instrumental

Expressive

- Motive is to harm or get relief from emotional pressure (Feshbach, 1964)
- anger-hostile impulse elicited by frustration caused by verbal and physical attack, and threats to self-esteem (Feshback, 1964)
- Impulsive (Adjorlolo & Chan, 2017)
- Impulsive, uncontrolled, during emotional arousal (Santtila, et al, 2001 reporting from Berkowitz, 1993)
- Reaction to provocation or anger (Salfati & Bateman, 2005) or threat (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Strong emotional arousal without evidence of instrumental goal (Santtila, et al., 2001, p. 368)
- Loss of temper of reaction to real or perceived provocation (Santtila, et al., 2001 reporting from Cornell, et al. 1996 and d'Orban, 1979)
- Response to ego threats (Santtila, et al, 2001)
- Defending attacks on resources or status (e.g. bar fights) (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Male sexual jealousy (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Arguments, brawls, romantic triangles and youth gang killings because the primary motive is violence itself (Meith & Drass 1999 again citing several sources)
- Response to physical attack (Feshbach, 1964)
- Response to personal failures

Instrumental

- Wants to gain possession of something that offender does not have but another person does- (Adjorlolo & Chan, 2017) and this attempt is interfered with (e.g. victim resistance)
- To complete some other goal e.g. robbery (Santtila, et al., 2001 reporting from James & Carcach, 1997) or illegal business
- Absence of strong emotional arousal (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Co-opting resources from others (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Conducted for future, explicit goal (like to acquire money or improve one's social position/status or for future freedom) [Meithe & Drass, 1999 citing several resources]
- Killing committed in commission of another felony or as side effect of another act (Meith & Drass, 1999
- To avoid later detection of another crime or to silence the victim (Santtila, et al., 2001)
- Primary crime is often planned

Comparing the construing of those committing Instrumental vs Expressive murders

In order to compare the construing of these two groups, I calculated the percent of total construct poles supplied by each group that were coded under each theme and sub-theme. This provided a 'profile' of each group, Instrumental and Expressive, showing how their construct poles were distributed across the themes and sub-themes.

Reflexivity in analysis

Analyzing the phenomenon of murder psychologically started here with gathering the descriptions of events from those who experienced it and proceeded very quickly to the acknowledgement that the very nature of researching behavior from a psychological perspective calls for a degree of interpretation on my part. As such, examination of my construing as a factor and necessary step in the process of analysis was to be considered. It is recognized that the analysis of data only really matures from that first step of collection of the description of event(s) from the experiencer through and by way of me and all my predilections. This being the case, I realize it is pertinent to remain open-minded and malleable to what the data is saying and remain open to alternative constructions. Faithful effort must be made to understand the situation/story from the perspective of each participant, taking into consideration where he came from, how he got to certain points, and acknowledging his broader story. At the same time, I needed to explore each story for subtle inferences (those perhaps not even noticed as relevant by the participant) and be aware of the potentially greater significance of these subtleties on the event(s), on the interviewee, and, thus, the research. In order to do this, in addition to transcribing personally all of the interviews, which in itself presented a plethora of nuances to be explored, I read and re-read numerous times each narrative, seeking new insights and alternative interpretations, triangulating bits and pieces of information they offered at varying points in the interview to see how this might add to and/or clarify other bits of information.

Albeit rare, there were admittedly times in which I wondered if I was serving as a potential means for participants' personal agenda. They may have been hopeful that telling their stories might provide an opportunity for later change in their legal status. I may have been viewed as someone to whom they could justify their behavior and as someone who, in listening, might reinforce the "rightness" of their actions. Or, I may have even served as an audience for their amusement or someone in front of whom they could perform. These all point to a possible motive for them to present themselves as socially acceptable and even 'massage' their stories to be more legally accepted. I am aware of the possibility of them "using me" for a possible personal agenda and, yet, I remained professional, accepting this as a possibility and yet not concerning myself with it on a personal level. I believe any such presentation of themselves in a positive light cannot be held against them, as they have little other hope. I remind myself that *they*, regardless of any suspicion on my part that they are trying to "fake good" or use me for their amusement, are, in all actuality, helping me, the research, and ultimately, the field, and whatever they have to share or how they present it is valuable. I did not feel this was difficult, as I deem myself to be a rather non-judgmental person and rather accepting and open to them, regardless of how they chose to

offer or present themselves or how they construe me. So, at worst, I was able to see the situation as a fairly equal give-and-take; realistically though, I did see them as quite gracious with what they offered and was very much appreciative of their offerings. Considering their potential perspective of me—possibly as having more power than them, as I am an outsider, a professional, doing "god-knows-what" with their story—and, in the face of that, still opening up to share their intimate thoughts and histories, well, this just underscores the appreciation that is deserved of people in this situation.

The individuality of each person and his circumstances are so very revered and considered exceptional—each case could be a research project in its own right and even deserves that. This, however, poses another issue for me. For the sake of applicability of the research, I must ultimately make generalizations from what is so sacredly unique. Each story is so powerful, and each has its abundance of fascinating nuances that deserve limitless exploration. Sacrificing the sacredness of each of their stories—watering them down, perhaps-- for the sake of generalizability is difficult. I will, though, attempt to highlight idiographic elements throughout and, in doing so, honor their lives and stories as individuals. I do consider my interviewing experience and the days I had with these participants as some of my best, to be cherished personally and professionally, which can never be fully or properly reflected in one writing or, perhaps, even volumes.

Chapter 5—Convicted Murderers' Constructs of Self and Others

Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the thematic analysis of construct poles will be presented. Nine themes and 27 sub-themes were derived from the analysis and are presented in Table 2, below. Some of these themes appeared to have more potential relevance to motive for the crimes, bearing in mind issues deemed significant in the existing literature (e.g. power, intimacy), but, more significantly, as demonstrated by their frequency of elicitation and/or their relevance within participants' narratives. The themes demonstrated to have had direct relevance to participants' crimes are discussed, as are some of the subthemes within power and intimacy which were seemingly contributory to motive and noted with greater frequency. Toughness and abuse—subthemes of power—are addressed as well as they, while perhaps less acutely involved in motive to murder, seem to be powerful, chronic influences in shaping men's constructs, whether it be societally (as with 'toughness') or individually (as with cases in which there is a history of abuse). I will begin by addressing the two most prominent themes, power and intimacy-- selfishness, surreptitiousness, assertion over others, deceit, toughness, and abuse belonging to the power theme; and steadfastness, responsiveness and relationship/role, love/care for 'me', and obliging of 'me' belonging to the intimacy theme. I then address active shaping, chaos, pleasure, and achievement/status. The themes are supported by and illustrated with quotes and/or summaries from participants' life narratives and crime narratives.

Table 2. Frequency of Construct Poles by Category

Themes	Subthemes	# of Construct Poles	% of total	# of P's	% of P's
Power					
	Toughness	7	1.1	5	20
	Abuse	6	0.9	3	12
	Exploitation	13	2	9	36
	Surreptitiousness	22	3.4	12	48
	Judgment	9	1.4	6	24
	Assertion over others	22	3.4	8	32
	Sordid	13	2	9	36
	Selfishness	29	4.5	13	52
	Enemy	18	2.8	4	16
	Deceit	27	4.2	8	32
	TOTAL FREQUENCY	166	25.9		
Intimacy					
	Dependability	13	2	7	28

	Steadfastness	22	3.4	8	32
	Role Model	12	1.8	7	28
	Responsiveness	20	3.1	9	36
	Love/Care for 'me'	52	8.1	15	60
	Obliging of 'me'	29	4.5	10	40
	Benevolence	57	8.9	20	80
	Relation/Role	55	8.5	17	68
	P's active feelings toward	4	0.6	3	12
	TOTAL FREQUENCY	264	41.12		
Chaos					
	Chaotic Lifestyle	10	1.6	6	24
	Demeanor	10	1.6	6	24
	Mentality/Mindfulness	21	3.3	10	40
	TOTAL FREQUENCY	41	6.4		
Pleasure/Hedonism					
	Drink/drugs/party	19	2.9	8	32
	Street/criminal life	6	1	4	16
	Other	14	2.2	6	24
	TOTAL FREQUENCY	39	6.1	14	56
Achievm't/Status		24	3.7	10	40
Persona		16	2.5	8	32
Spiritual/religion		11	1.7	5	20
Active Shaping					
	Influence/impact	38	5.9	15	60
	Encouragement/advice	37	5.8	13	52
	TOTAL FREQUENCY	74	11.5		
Anger		6	1	5	20
TOTAL		642			

Table 2 shows both the number and percentage of construct poles that were assigned to each subtheme/theme. The last two columns refer to the number then percentage of participants who contributed construct poles to the respective sub-theme/theme. Approximately half, for instance, contributed to themes of selfishness and surreptitiousness.

Power

In the present sample, the notion of power over another/others was the most predominant theme. This is the idea that there is an imbalance in interpersonal dynamics and that, within this, one has greater capability in terms of another, has more control over another, is dominant over another, or in some way *against* another. It is important to note the notion of one person being *against* another. The construal of an imbalance between people necessarily involves, in the eyes of the participant, people (self and another) in a sort of contrast/comparison with each other and this comparison was most typically perceived as malignant, i.e. the Other is coming, intentionally, from a place of enmity. The perception is that the Other asserts him/herself over another in an unjust or unfair manner. This could be actively such as in violence or abuse to exercise physical control over another, or more passively and subtle, such as when one negatively judges another, deceives, exploits, or otherwise engages in surreptitious behavior in order to finesse him/herself into a position advantageous to the other or to gain psychological influence over him/her. The sub-themes making up the power theme are: selfishness, surreptitiousness, assertion over others, enemy, deceit, exploitation, sordid, judgment, toughness, and abuse.

Selfishness

Selfishness contains the greatest number of construct poles assigned to a sub-theme under Power. More than half of the participants provided construct poles falling within it. Here, a level of primary concern as with oneself is implied or, most often, the element was outright termed "selfish" (12 times). Others included "selfishness," "self-centered," "out for self," "self-concerning," "doesn't think about others," "all about self," and the like. Contrasts within this subtheme were not surprisingly, and simply put, "not self-centered" or "not selfish." More generally, "selfish" applied to the various elemental roles and was not just reserved for victims. Selfishness indicates a more subtle form of power-- an imbalance of value between individuals by one of the people involved.

Surreptitiousness

Here, people are perceived as though they are presenting as something they are not and/or with the active intent to deceive. This theme consists of, for example, "pretended to care but didn't," "incognito, masked," "They're false; strings attached," "con-artists," "wolf in sheep's clothing," "corrupt way of doing things," "snake" and more.

> It was so many sneaks, so many devils in the whole mixture. And ah they had their ulterior motives for wantin' me to do [kill the victim]. The other guy [co-defendant] had his ulterior motive for wantin' me outta the way. […] I was a kid in the middle of a snake pit.

This quote was from Prentiss, a 15-year-old at the time of his crime. Prentiss was involved in drug sales and guns. According to him, two attempts had been made on his life,

he believes, by a "friend" of his, the eventual victim. What Prentiss did not share in the research interview but what official records revealed was that his victim had, days before, arranged a "date" for another mutual friend with the girl that he knew Prentiss wanted. Prentiss's elicited construct poles refer to snakes in the grass, being incognito, masked, violent, and pretending to care but not in reality caring.

Prentiss went to this "friend's" house, 'hung out,' relaxed, and did drugs with him. Prentiss waited until his friend passed out. After his friend was sleeping, Prentiss went into his bedroom, shot him in the back, and robbed him.

Assertion over others

The construct sub-theme of assertion over others was also quite common; 48% of participants supplied construct poles that were allocated to this sub-theme. This sub-theme implies a level of (more passive) forcefulness an element is perceived to have over others that does not overtly indicate abuse. The idea the participants seemed to be relaying here is that they felt "under one's thumb" and that some control had been lost to them and was, instead, in the hands of another. For example, some of the elicited construct poles from this sub-theme include construct poles of the element as "smothering," "controlling," "domineering," "put unwanted expectation on me," "firm," "stern, non-sense," "henpeck," "no-good, bully-type." Some of the contrasts include "easy-going," "complacent," "passive," and "no strings attached." In these instances, too, it seems the offender is under someone else's control and feels the need to balance out or escape their control.

In one case, Gary's, he felt his wife was interfering with his self-identity as a party guy and life of the party. He described himself, at that time, as "the One—life of the party, somebody everybody wants to come see…" Gary construed his wife, who was not aware of the extent of his "playing," as "controlling" and "smothering," as elicited in the RGT. He was only 22 years old and already married with three kids. He grew to resent his lack of freedom and he wanted to be free to immerse himself in the "running" lifestyle. They split up, and then they got back together. Although he tried to stop doing drugs for a couple weeks, the abstinence left him agitated and on edge. He still wanted to be partying, to be "free," and to marry his mistress. He told his mistress he was going to kill his wife. Shortly after that, while he was "cleaning [a] gun" in their living room, he shot his wife in the face. Although he claims it to be an accident, Gary was convicted of Second-Degree Murder.

Moses also killed his wife. His construct poles under this sub-theme, however, were not elicited about her but about some of the inmates with whom he was in prison after killing his wife. Moses construed several inmates as wanting to take too much control over him and, apparently, felt they needed 'neutralizing.' He ended up killing two and stabbing another. As these were not his index crimes, not much narrative was gathered on them.

One inmate he 'simply' beat up, however, and, as an element in his grid, was described as such:

> He's no good. Got some time over him in [a State prison]. I beat him up. He don't know how to talk to nobody. One of them bully types. I stayed in camp 5 years behind him. I beat him up. I'd like to kill him. I put a good one on him.

Assertion over others reflects, again, an imbalance of power. Here, too, this is perhaps more subtle than some forms of power, particularly in the case of Gary's wife.

Deceit

Nearly a third of participants offered a construct or more allocated to this sub-theme, which implies a lack of trustworthiness, honesty, or fidelity; it does not necessarily contain active (as opposed to passive) intent to deceive/manipulate as in other sub-themes (e.g. surreptitiousness). Some of the construct poles demonstrating this sub-theme include "not trustworthy," "like to tell lies," "lied on me," "can't trust," "deceitful," "totally deceiving," and "cheaters." Some of the contrasts include "honest with me," "more trustworthy," "don't like to tell lies," and "won't deceive you."

Again, we turn to the case of Moses, this time in regard to his wife, whom he construed at the time of the interview as "no good," "cheater," and "not really trustworthy." He was told by his sister-in-law (his wife's sister) that his wife was cheating on him, but he didn't believe it. Until, according to Moses, he came home one night and there was a man's car outside their house. He recalled what his sister-in-law told him. He cut off his lights, walked to the house, "and what do I see? (indecipherable) I couldn't help me. I went back to my car and got my gun and I shot 'em."

Toughness

This sub-theme regards the element's perceived competence or 'effectiveness' in gaining or taking power over others or 'resilience' in having it taken from them. Construct poles making up this theme consisted of terms such as "unnecessary toughness," "tough, protective," and "predator." Contrasts consisted of "weaker," "insecurity," and "victims." One aspect of this included being either the victim or the perpetrator. It seemed preferable to be the perpetrator, as being a victim was seen as weak, incompetent, and insecure.

Joseph thought very much in terms of "predator or victim." It may be reasonably argued that this came out of his experiences as a severely abused child (indicating the highest level of victimization on the Participant Demographic Sheet and Questionnaire [see Appendix 2.1]—being a victim of violence "more than 100 times") and witnessing the same of his mother, who was tortured by his father. Yet, at some point in his life, no longer wanting to be the victim, he became the contrast, the predator. Joseph reports what his stepfather said of him, "I would fight at the drop of a hat… but I'd loan ya the hat and drop it for you." Resolved to never again be a victim, when he caught his 'one-night-stand' rifling

through his pants and pulling his pocket knife out, Joseph, in an instant, grabbed the knife from her, flicked it open, and turned it on her, stabbing and killing her.

A subtly different manifestation of this notion of toughness surrounded the idea that one has to present as "tough," again, the contrast being viewed as not only a negative but shameful. One participant, Harold, grew up in juvenile institutions and, once he was an adult, spent many years in what was in those days called "the bloodiest prison in America." He saw a lot of fights, was in a lot of fights, participated in "yard riots," and saw some prison killings. Being "tough" was not only a badge of honor, it was a necessity. In his years to reflect upon his crime, Harold saw his victim as tough, but unnecessarily so. Harold saw his victim's "toughness" in the form of resistance to giving up his money as the reason he got killed. Harold recalls one of his crimes, committed with a co-defendant who actually shot the man,

> And I asked him about the money. 'Give us the money.' And he made a statement in regards to 'You're not gettin' the money.' Ya know. And ah I had my hands on him. I told him, I said, 'We gonna get the money and if you don't give us the money somebody gonna get hurt.' And, that's just talk, ya know, that wasn't the intent…. And he told me, 'I said get out. You're not getting any money.' Or something in that regards. And then I heard the shot. And when I heard the shot, he grabbed, he reached for his stomach.
>
> Harold was upset with his co-defendant for shooting the man.
>
> 'Why'd ya shoot him?' ya know. That's when he turned on the lady [presumably the victim's wife] and he cocked the gun and that's when I cocked my gun on him, ya know, I said, "Oh no. It's not gonna happen."

So, while this example was given to demonstrate that Harold saw his victim's (the element who prompted this elicited construct) unnecessary toughness as getting him killed, even amongst co-defendants and seeming friends, "toughness" is simply a part of their culture.

Toughness, it seems, is needed for the sake of survival in some environments, whether it be prison life, street life, and most devastatingly perhaps, homelife. We will read more about Joseph's homelife, which arguably contributed to this need for toughness and perhaps his role reversal from victim to predator, below.

Abuse/Violence

While it might have been one of the least frequently sub-themes elicited, abuse/violence quite likely had a significant impact on several participants. Abuse speaks to a level of assertion the element was perceived to take/have over others in the form of physical abuse or verbal assault. In most cases it referred to abuse by an intimate (significant other or parent). For others, and even some of those who experienced abuse in the home, the violence was prominent in their neighborhoods. Examples of construct poles making up this theme include "abusers," "abusive," and "tell out of abuse instead of love,"

and "violent." Contrasts within this included "not an abuser" and "not physically violent." Two of the four participants who offered construct poles allocated to this sub-theme reported being physically abused, one more than 50 times and the other more than 100 times. The former, Alex, had a hard time talking about it and simply implied, though several times, that his father sexually abused him repeatedly. He was more open about the abuse and neglect from his mother. According to Alex, she knew what her husband was doing and not only failed to protect her child but blamed him for it. She often struck at him with various objects and neglected him, not even coming to his aid when he called to tell her he had taken an overdose to kill himself and was becoming very, very sick. His parents were *his* eventual victims, as he could take no more.

The other participant, Joseph, shared his first memory of his father:

> Ah, probably one of my oldest memories of him was in, I believe we were in California and I was younger than 2 and he was in the back seat of the car—drunk of course—started hollering at my mom and punching her in the back of the head. And I was a toddler but I was upfront and I turned around and told him to leave her alone. He snatched me over the seat and held me out the window on the interstate by my feet.

This was the beginning of a childhood wrought with abuse. He also saw his mother brutally beaten and tortured by this man, who Joseph later killed. This, however, was not the victim of his index crime, as this killing was found to be justified. Joseph later killed a woman whom he perceived, it seems, to be victimizing him by stealing from him.

Another participant's, Seth's, notion of abuse was demonstrated in his construal of his relationship with his girlfriend, who became, along with his and her unborn son, his eventual victims.

> It started to be a [sic] abusive relationship, and ah, I really want to educate people in a [sic] abusive relationship to get out. That's my, that would be my lesson to anyone. If ya in a [sic] abusive relationship, but even if it's female or male, get out of it because it will lead to danger. It will lead physical. Sometime we don't think it will lead to physical, but it will lead to physical.

It is important to note that Seth is speaking of his girlfriend as the abusive one, as his narrative underscores himself as the victim at nearly every turn. Never, though, did he imply or claim that she was physically abusive to him until the time of the crime. At this point, he claimed that she stabbed him with a knife. An official investigation later verified that he stabbed himself with the knife, seemingly with the intention of blaming it on her.

Intimacy

This "me" versus "others" mentality constitutes a perceived disparity or disjunction between self and others. Constructs of intimacy, on the other hand, reflect an acknowledgement of the connectedness with others, as demonstrated by sub-themes of dependability; steadfastness; seeing others as or serving to others as a role model;

responsiveness; the love/care, and obligingness that others have for the participants; others' benevolence; relationships with others and the role they play in the participants' lives; and the participants' active feelings of dear-ness, friendship, honor, and care toward others.

Steadfastness

Steadfastness implies a longevity of enduring support or, contrarily, an unwillingness or inability to remain in the relationship. The construct poles sub-themed under this category were most often referring to those people who remained in the lives of the participants in spite of their long sentence to prison. Some include "kept contact, supportive," "still here to support," "never turned on me" "stuck with me," "there for me, never turned their back on me," "still shows love." Examples of their contrasts include, "gone," "turned their back on me," "didn't seem to care in the end," "used to care," and "only good for the moment." Two participants, who both had long-term relationships and children with their significant others, found themselves lost when these relationships were threatened. Darius became acutely aware of not only his girlfriend's unwillingness to be steadfast but her willingness to flaunt that she was not steadfast or engaged in fidelity to him. Theodore's wife cheated on him and left him for another. He could not understand why. He became obsessed with finding out why and with whom. (His case will be discussed in Chapter 7, where case illustrations are provided.)

Darius became serious with a girl he dated. He fell in love with her and, ultimately, became obsessed with her. They lived together and, according to him, he found her in bed with another man. He does not remember beating her, but he was charged at that time with Aggravated Battery. Their relationship was on-and-off for months and, although she oftentimes laughed at him and repeatedly belittled him, he remained obsessed with her. She became pregnant and, all the while, "she making me think it's mine;" but when she told Darius the baby's name, it was Junior to the man she had been having an affair with. Darius felt taunted, 'played,' and betrayed. He admittedly thought about killing her for about a month. One night, Darius and she were talking on the phone; she got another call; and he fell asleep awaiting her return to the conversation. When he awoke without having heard back from her, he went to her house. He reports that they "went to messing around," during which time she asked him for money. "She must've told me something like, 'If you don't give me no money, ah, *somebody* gonna.' […] I just kicked out and I wind up stabbing her." Darius's elicited construct poles revolving around Steadfastness included: "used to care," "temporary, good but temporary." Some of his other construct poles highlight the idea of intimacy as significant to him: "good, loving people," "caring, loving," "Didn't really know me," "Know me." His constructs regarding his girlfriend were "all about self," "Didn't

want what was best for me; selfish," "negative trouble-maker," "care about self only, always," and other contrasts to his ideal.

Responsiveness and Relationship/Role

The sub-theme of Responsiveness implies a level of openness/amenability/effort in nourishing interpersonal relationships. It is a bit different than Steadfastness in that it refers more to the receptivity of a person in the moment rather than the longevity of the relationship. It implies there is a "safe zone" between people in which one is responsive to the needs and expression of the other. It also implies a closeness in relationships and a significance of the role that one plays in another's life. Thus, it is discussed alongside the sub-theme of relationship/role, which implies a dynamic quite specific to the relationship between the participant and that particular person or what role the other person played/plays in the participant's life. Providing such a construct in the RGT highlights this role as significant to them, oftentimes, as a major part of their identity, such as being a father or a husband.

Some construct poles assigned under the sub-theme of responsiveness included: "understanding," "patient," "empathic," "feel open to talk to;" and contrasts included "don't act like cares," "cold, distant," "not putting effort to help" and "not too patient." Examples of construct poles in the relationship/role subtheme include "father-figure," "me, my flesh and blood," "close as friends," "queens, my heart," etc. Contrasting poles usually simply implied a differing role or relationship between the participant and another, such as in the construct poles of "best friend v stranger," "Blood v Crip," "friend v brothers to me," "nurturer v provider."

Calvin's relationship with and role within his family were highlighted as quite valuable to him.

> I met my, the wife of my two sons [sic], with two sons. Life just seemed to be so much pleasant and we were both working and we had things of our own and it was just, just so amazing… We had good house. We were doing well. I was so blessed. Seem like I was just too blessed to fall….. I wanted my family to have *best* [sic]…. I'd get up early on Saturday mornings to go to the yard. I had a barbeque pit and the smoke fired up. Sometime the wife and the boys still be in bed and when they would wake up, ya know, come in the yard. I'd wash both of the cars. And I was a family man…. I believe family is one of the most important things in life and I believe in taking care of mine.

He spoke just as highly of his mother-in-law, his eventual victim.

> I used to take her to stores, shopping.… She'd call us down cuz she wanted me to watch the barbeque.… I'd cut her yard…. And ah,ah, we had a beautiful relationship… she treated me like one of her sons. Well, maybe not exactly but to me it was so close, how could you tell? And she trusted me, at least I thought she trusted me…. we had a wonderful relationship.

Calvin and his wife argued one day, though and she left, taking their boys with her. She did not come back the next day either. This likely began to threaten his sense of family, and his role as her husband and their children's father was presumably invalidated. The next day he had been drinking and watching sports on TV. His wife had not yet returned so he went looking for her. He ended up at her mother's house, wanting to know where his wife was, as she was not responding to him or his 'needs' or putting the effort into the relationship at the time he demanded it. When his mother-in-law, too, would not respond by willingly giving up her daughter's whereabouts, a fight quickly ensued. He stabbed his mother-in-law, killing her. His construct poles, reflecting responsiveness, include: "understanding," "open," "more down to earth," and "all-trusting." Those reflecting significance of his relationships/role include: "strongest link in family," and "husband/wife relationship, better than friend."

Love/care for 'me' and Obliging of 'me'

Elicited construct poles supported the notion that others were viewed in terms of the love, care or obligingness they had for the participant. Examples include "my best interest, cared about me, love me," "caring, my best interest at heart," "wanted best for me," "love on my behalf," "concerned about my wellbeing," "look out for me," and "can provide more [for me]." Their contrasts reflect a lack of this: "wasn't about my best interest," "my best interest not at heart," "didn't want what was best for me," "love not on my behalf," "cared about self, not me succeeding," "don't look out for me," "can't provide for me, other obligations."

Active Shaping

Given the prominence and impact of the need for intimacy/belongingness, it is perhaps not surprising that another prominent theme regarded the influence others had on (active shaping of) these participants. The influence of others could be considered a manifestation of intimacy—others serving to help encourage positive aspects in the participants—or, inversely, the manifestation of power—another's power over the participant to encourage them into a life or state of mind that did not ultimately serve the well-being of the participant. Influence/Impact refers to the presence of positive or negative influence or impact people had on the participant, usually more passively than in the sub-theme of Encourage/Advise (below). Examples of construct poles of Influence/Impact included "equipped me with positive life experience," "taught me lessons, cherishable [sic]," "show me it's ok to love," "better me as a man," etc. Contrasts often reflected the opposite type of impact a person had on the participant— "negative influence on my life," "taught me based on negative things," "no good came from knowing," "showed me what a man is not," etc. The sub-theme of Encourage/Advise implies more active involvement than

Influence/Impact, actually imparting one's self upon the participant to impact him. Examples include: "advised shouldn't be drinking, partying," "helped me build confidence," "give me proper advice, "Push me to do better," etc. Contrasts include "definitely not encouraging, tear-down type," "drive me to drugs," "kept spirits down," "bring everyone down with him," etc.

In most cases, the negative shaping from others was in regard to the effect it had on participants' criminality and/or murder. Tremayne said of his friend with whom he participated in a burglary, he

> had a negative impact on my life…. We was friends but he was like everything that we engaged in was from a negative perspective—use of drugs, drinking, always negative like sense, our behavior, always engaged in the negative. Encouraging me on to take part in this stuff.

Prentiss said of his victim, whom he used to be friends and deal drugs with, "[He] taught me, based on negative things." Of his girlfriend, her uncle, and his co-defendant who introduced him to drugs and his victims, another participant, Nolan, said:

> No good came from knowin' them. They're negative influences, basically. They ah, how can I put it…[they] smoke weed, entertain the… the…. harmful aspects of life as far as street life…. [Her uncle] just tries to bring everyone down with him.

In many cases, it was the family who had a negative impact on the participant. Alex said of his parents, whom he killed after years of suffering abuse from them:

> Neither one of them was very encouraging towards me as far as doing better, helping me to overcome obstacles or believe more in myself…. (Of his mother in particular) Definitely not very encouraging. She's more of a tear-downer type of person.

In one case, however, the influence of/active shaping by others appeared to be a superordinate way of construing the world, leaving his own self-identity to flounder. Blair's constructs were highly reflective of how others affected him: "Giving a wakeup call v Not putting in effort to help;" "Negative influence v Positive Influence;" "Did what supposed to do, be a friend v Not doing what I think they should be doing;" "Say I shouldn't be drinking, partying v Drinking, running, partying;" "No altercations between us V Not doing what called to do (in regard to helping him the way he felt necessary);" "Looked up to, admired, wanted to be like V Wanted to act like;" "Trigger of transformation, woke me up V Try to help me, steer me, took it cluelessly." *Others* were trying to give him a wakeup call, saying he shouldn't be drinking, etc.; he looked up to *others*, wanting to act or be like them; *others* were doing for him or not doing for him what they are supposed to; *others* served as a positive or negative influence on him—all seem to indicate that he hands agency over to them. His narrative suggested that this may have developed from feeling unwanted or out

of place to taking his father on as his only role model, then, when his parents urged him to move on as he was entering adulthood, falling under the influence of others.

Chaos

This theme implies a level of turbulence, instability, disorder, disarray, or its contrast, in lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, and/or personal presentation. Most participants construed others in terms of calmness or chaos by recognizing others' lifestyle, demeanor or presentation in social settings, or in terms of people's mental organization or mindfulness. Construct poles reflecting a chaotic lifestyle include "on fast track," "wild," "fast-n-loose," "chaotic," "live wires," "chaos buddy." Contrasts to these included construct poles such as "easy, slow," "country," and "easy-going, down-to-earth." In terms of demeanor or social presentation, examples include "outspoken," "flamboyant," "loud, loud, loud," etc. with contrasts of "quiet," and "shy." Construct poles reflecting chaos in terms of mentality/mindfulness include "lacked maturity," "bad judgment," "ditzy," "impulsive, impetuous," "hot-headed," etc. Contrasts to these included "mature," "deep thinker," "extremely intelligent," etc.

One participant's constructs and narrative demonstrated an environment of chaos. Dion's construction of life was so in tune to a chaotic environment, he was constantly assessing if *others'* constructs posed a threat to him. His narrative demonstrates the development of constructs applicable to the theme of chaos and threat in a very real way. As a young boy, he recalls having to play on the floor for fear of getting hit by stray bullets. He begins by underscoring why assessment of threat is so important to him:

> Bein' a former gang banger, I done been shot 7 different times, so I'm not about anybody hurtin' me anymore, especially if you a threat. It's somethin' else playin' on your belly, ya know, when you can't go outside and play. It's a lot of shootin', a lot of drive-by shootin'. It's a lot of chaos and I guess they had a big influence up on my life. […] The streets, they are like vultures, turn to the streets for love and when they grab you, they turn you into a monster. They turn you into a killin' machine. […] To live a child, a regular child life, I don't' know what that is because at the age of 13, I had to go out there and I had to hustle. I had to pay bills. And it was ah, it all mean about survival…. In my own home, I'm a father-figure and I'm a brother, and I'm a supporter… ya know, so…. I got involved in this. I'm thinkin' this is the way to go because your pockets stay fat…and a lot of people wouldn't understand it because they ain't never lived that life. They don't know what it is to play on your belly in the house. You can't play outside like a normal child. You can't go play in the park. Ya know. You can't ride your bicycle, skateboard or none of that. You can't do none of that cuz bullets don't have no name. They don't' care about who they hit. But, um, a lot of people don't know what it is to… when you leave home, it's just like, when you leave home, you got to have some form of ID, your credit card and your driver license. Well, a weapon, like that, was the same way with me. A weapon, I can't leave home without it, ya know. It's the way it was.

He goes on to share stories of his adolescence, also demonstrating the chaos surrounding him:

> "I can remember, at a home boy house. We sittin' there, we talkin', ya know, we havin' a good time and… you wasn't hearin' the shots. You just feelin' 'em. Fragments of brick wall jumpin' off, ya know what I'm sayin? And you tryin' to pinpoint where it's comin' from. And your best friend sittin' next to you and his brain was on you. You don't know where the shootin' comin from, you just feel 'em. And, to sit there and look at him. He had gone. Ya know, that was, that was pretty rough for me. And ah another incident where we were just ridin' up to a gas station and certain gas station you have two sides…. Well when we come in, we come in on this side and when we come around [the other] side, we see the enemy…. As he seen us, he felt like we was a threat. […] He come up with assault rifle. Them things don't take no prisoners—whatsoever. And ah ya see a homey layin' on the ground, and… picture this now… when the paramedics get there, they put a sheet over him. Assume he's dead. But he's conscious enough to pull the sheet off his face. They will put it back over him. The guy knock it off *again*. But, to them, he's dead. Oh, that's…. I always remember that. So he laid there like, I say about, about 25 minutes. Now he done knocked the sheet off his face three times. And I felt like, if they'd'a gave him medical treatment that he need, he would'a lived. So. And I never forget that. I never forget that. That incident there, it made me regret a whole lot, ya know. It made me regret a whole lot. At that time, I really wanted out. But there ain't no such thing as out."

A primary construct of chaos abounds in the construing of Dion. It developed starting from the time he 'played on his belly' and continued throughout his life. His perception of chaos was seemingly necessary, as it served to develop constant and keen threat assessment for the sake of his daily survival. One night, Dion and his cousins, one of whom had a "beef" with another guy, were approached by a group of males joined in force with this cousin's 'enemy.' According to Dion, reactionary reserve and very keen assessment of the situation led him to feel that, even though verbal exchanges and body language indicated the threat was escalating, it was mostly due to male egos, and Dion felt it was still manageable. The point at which one street rival raised above his head a large glass bottle in attempt to strike Dion, however, the threat became very real. Dion shot and killed him. Dion's elicited constructs included: "Live wires v Easy-going;" "Influenced the positive V Chaotic;" "Live-wire, cause pain V Joy;" "Hot-headed V Patient;" "Mindset of secretary V Not dependable;" and others.

Hedonism

Another theme of participants' construct poles is hedonism. This theme implies a level of desire/drive for physical or 'worldly' pleasure and/or tendency toward vice. It oftentimes consists of a lifestyle which began as pleasure-seeking—drinking, partying, running, and living the street life with friends. Unfortunately, though, this sometimes results in unwanted consequences, such as addiction, murder and a life of incarceration. While three sub-themes made up this theme, they will be discussed together, as behavior and construct poles making up one sub-theme often overlapped with construct poles and behavior making up another sub-theme here. Construct poles in this theme included "party

animal," "ready to play," "dope buddy, party," "hedonistic," "gamblers," "live a street life," "participate in criminal activity," "playboys," "like nice things," etc. Contrasts included "do not party," "not into hard drugs lifestyle," "don't gamble," "never in the streets," "live a family life," etc.

Returning to the case of Gary, addressed above under the sub-theme of "assertion over others," provides an example of how the search for pleasure evolved into displeasure. Gary's narrative told of him progressing from wanting to have fun and be the life of the party into a crystal meth addict in which his parents, wife, and others around him saw "the change" in him. He was a top athlete in his school. He was considered "the man" by all, in his perception. In attempt to make "my game much better," he

> started shooting drugs. […] You were the best at everything. That was the other thing—there was nothing you can't do and everything was great. […] The girls were there and the parties were there and that, that's what I wanted.

Meanwhile, though, he got married at 17 years old.

> I got married too young, had a family too young and that got me. I wasn't ready. […] I just couldn't cope with settling down with one person. […] It was just a party thing then.

He was also working, earning 'good money' and had the material things he wanted. "I had a good life. It was, it was nice for a while." He started "binge[ing]on speed," though, to keep it all going and got "strung out." Needing to get high to overcome his depths, he spiraled into a lifestyle of drug-seeking and -doing. His drug habit cost money; the partying seized his time; and he began to neglect his family. He started seeing another woman, someone he could party with and be "wild" and "that's what I was looking for at the time." Yet, he knew his "life was in shambles" and he recognized:

> you put yourself into this and you [can't get] out of it. […] It's like everybody's against me, the world is against me. […] Mentally it just drove, drive ya crazy. And you just start thinking crazy thoughts.

These thoughts, which he shared with his mistress, were of killing his wife. His construct poles demonstrated notions of others, primarily his wife, being smothering and controlling. These contrasted construct poles of wanting to party, drink, do 'dope,' run and play, for example, "Motherly, smother, protect, encourage right V Dope buddy, party, chaos buddy;" "Caring, strict V Party animal;" "Running partners V Caring, strict;" etc. It seems Gary honored intimacy, given all of his constructs of love and caring, however, at that time of his life when the murder occurred, he admittedly wanted the 'pleasurable' lifestyle of "partying," "running," and "play" to continue.

Pleasure, too, can be sought in the form of violence itself. Turning to the case of Blair, a development of the pleasure of violence can be identified. His father, whom he,

again, admired more than anyone encouraged Blair to fight back when his brothers abused him:

> I just swung, closed my eyes and just swung and I busted [my brother's] nose. And I kinda felt good about that. Of course, my dad was there laughing ya know so that really made me feel good. And I guess then is the time where I got over the fear of fighting. I knew that I could fight someone and not get hurt or whatever.

This seems all the reinforcement he needed to establish a foundation for finding satisfaction in being violent, much like Athens' (1992) violently socialized men. As he grew older, Blair would go looking for fights. At the rodeo,

> there's two guys propped up on the hood of [my] truck. Got their beer cans and stuff sitting on the hood. Like I mean, now I know there was nothing wrong with it, but then, that was my reason to fight. […] So we got in a fight. And then after that it's kinda like it, I felt good then, like it was all over with. And I don't think I ever understood why…. It's like nothing else would bother me after that. Like, like they could set their beer cans on the hood and it wouldn't bother me.

His constructs, too, indicated a somewhat hedonistic lifestyle-- Drinking, running, partying V Shouldn't be drinking, partying.

In summary, construct poles in the theme of hedonism reflect behaviors which often start out as pleasurable and desired, but culminate in misery and life and death consequences, literally. The drive to feel pleasure, here, is not referring to the sadistic enjoyment some might take in inflicting pain on others but, in addition to simply seeking pleasure, refers to displeasure avoidance and/or the relief one feels in the release of anger, frustration, etc., as in Blair's case.

Achievement/Status

This theme implies level of ability/desire in reaching/meeting one's goals, usually related to vocation or status in life. It does not necessarily contain the 'comparison to another' factor that was demonstrated in the theme of power. Achievement *may* be dependent on one's status in relation to others, but it is not necessarily. For example, one may strive to be well-educated. This may, for the individual, depend competitively on his ranking in relation to his peers educationally, but it does not have to. Achievement could simply refer to one doing his best, meeting a goal, gaining a particular status, etc. regardless of what others around him accomplish. It is based more intrinsically upon one's measure of success or lack of and is a means by which one finds meaning for and within one's self which is not necessarily dependent on others.

The motive to achieve, as Miner (2015) points out, includes "not only hope for success but also fear of failure and even fear of success" (p. 36). Because achievement helps one to feel accomplished and fulfilled, it is argued here that the contrast to achievement may not simply be notions of failure but unfulfillment and, thus, is included in

this theme of achievement. *Potential* for success, or the lack of it, are also included as indicative of constructs of achievement. Construct poles making up his theme included "professional," "hard-working," "successful," "potential," "firm idea of where going," etc. Contrasts included "didn't make professional status," "didn't want success," "got lazy," and "underachievers."

The importance of achievement is demonstrated in the case of Wilson. He was set on succeeding—getting some education, making money, and making his way out of the 'ghetto.' He was resentful that his wife, however, 'did not want him to succeed.' In spite of this, Wilson went to school. He proudly passed some tests for a well-paying welding job. While he awaited the job offer, however, he and his wife had separated due to drinking and violence in the home between the two, much of which he blamed on his wife. The job offer for which he was waiting came to the house phone, where his wife lived and from where he had moved. Wilson came to the house to ask about the potential job offer. His wife notified him that the call he was waiting for to offer him the job came in a week ago. He was infuriated that she did not tell him sooner; he claims his wife was drunk; and a fight ensued between Wilson and his wife. Wilson went to get his gun and his wife went to get their son. The fight continued and Wilson shot his wife, first in the foot, then in the back. She died later at the hospital. In his narrative he blamed her (and her drinking) heavily for his missed opportunity to be successful. His construct poles also reflect a theme of achievement, or lack: "Potential" (x2), "Successful," and, in reference specifically to his wife: "Didn't want success," "Wants to be drinking," and "Went against everything positive that I come up with."

Summary

The sub-themes within the power theme suggest a notion of dominance over others, either subtle or extreme, indicating that many of the participants construe their world in terms of one having power over another or having the upper hand. Moreover, the malignancy, demonstrated by exploitation, surreptitiousness, deceit, etc., with which they construe this imbalance of power seems to prime them to see others as "enemies," producing a "me"-versus-"others"-type mentality and other constructs of opposition. This often played out as either the participant seeing himself, as demonstrated in his crime narrative, as the victim of others' exploits-- the one being lied on, cheated on, bullied, etc.--resulting in violence to equalize this imbalance, or, at other times, in the life narrative, the participant as "The man," admired or desired by others, in control of his family, a hero, wiser, tougher, righteous, "seer" of God's will, or otherwise superior to others. From such a perspective, it is not difficult to see how conflict arises and how either having power, maintaining power, or lacking power and striving for it serve as motivators for murder.

All participants provided at least some construct poles which were allocated to the theme of intimacy. Such intimate bonds are clearly important to many within this population. Removal of an intimate connection or the role one plays in the participant's life; betrayal of trust within that connection; humiliation by another whose love, admiration, or respect is sought—any of these may constitute a threat to one who is dependent on another or another's view of them or who identifies himself in terms of his role within a bond. The invalidation felt when these bonds break down may be so devastating to one's perception of his core self, there is threat to his entire construct system. Such a devastating event might prompt one to do what he can, including be violent, to try to control the situation. This culminating need to control made separating the power from intimacy dynamic a challenge at times.

Construct poles themed as influence of others were provided by 19 of the 25 participants and are therefore deemed salient. Elicited constructs and narratives alike spoke to the participants' perceptions of others as influential on, particularly, their introduction to and subsequent engagement in criminal behavior and even in their index crime. Construct poles assigned to the theme of chaos were provided by over half of the participants. This was demonstrated in the way they perceived others as living their lives, more simply or as wild and 'fast-n-loose,' and how they perceived others' demeanor and mental framework. In the case of at least one participant, his alertness to chaos appeared to serve as a gauge in his assessment of threat from others and was necessary to keep himself alive. For some, constructs of chaos seemed to have a relationship to constructs of hedonism (eight participants had constructs poles in both categories). These were also often demonstrated in the lifestyle in which some of the participants and others engaged—usually of drinking, "drugging," partying, running, and gang/street life-- which arguably pose their own risks for violence.

While only a small percentage of construct poles were themed as achievement, ten participants did have construct poles which contributed to this theme. Such constructs may manifest as a need to expand and enhance oneself (Kellian aggression, perhaps) in terms of status, wealth, education, etc. or as a fear of failure, which might be triggered particularly if success is thwarted.

In this chapter, key features of the construing of convicted murderers have been explored. Examples from life and crime narratives were provided to illustrate how these themes/sub-themes might manifest in one's life, particularly in regard to violence, and may have even contributed to participants' motivation to murder. In the next chapter, I will examine the extent to which this construing is different in cases where the offender engaged in Instrumental murder or Expressive murder.

Chapter 6 – Differences in Construing between Those Committing Instrumental and Expressive Murders

This chapter presents findings regarding the differences in construing between those committing instrumental as opposed to expressive murder. It will discuss the emergence, in the course of the research, of a number of concepts which might be important in aiding our understanding of instrumental and expressive murder and describe how the data were further analyzed in relation to these concepts. While results presented herein are only meant to show possible trends between the two groups and the small sample sizes would not effectually support serious statistical analysis, actual differences in frequencies, percentages and the like are demonstrated rather than differences that might have resulted from true statistical analyses.

Below, I begin by explaining the development of this additional analysis and describing how it was undertaken. A presentation of the findings follows in two parts, firstly, a comparison of construct themes between those who committed instrumental murder and those who committed expressive murder and, secondly, a comparison of these in relation to the additional concepts which emerged during the research process. Finally, I provide a discussion of how Personal Construct Theory might be applied to murder by using the concept of the Experience Cycle. This discussion is based on an exploration of the data provided by the current sample, and it is presented here both as a prospective extension to the use of PCT in understanding homicide and as a foundation for some of the case summaries presented in Chapter 7.

Development of the analysis

The exploration of differences in content of construing between those who commit instrumental murders and those who commit expressive murders was always an aim of this research. Additionally, though, in the process of the analysis itself and of in-depth familiarization with the data sets-- from the data collection to the transcription to the reading and repeated re-reading of narratives as well as in the elicitation and subsequent analysis of construct pole from the RGT—other concepts began to emerge which might be helpful in furthering our understanding of committers of instrumental or expressive homicide.

Even in the interview process, a similar tendency amongst some of the participants began to emerge which was not as apparent in other participants. This tendency, which was later found to overlap primarily with those who committed instrumental murder, was to construe Self as of primary concern in circumstances even outside of the murders and to perceive others in terms of the others' relationship to or what they could do for the participant himself. In short, the Self appeared to be the nucleus from which others and

their environment seemed to be perceived. This seemed a potentially valuable avenue for further exploration. One way in which the Self stood out differently amongst some participants was the frequency with which they referenced themselves during the RGT— in relaying how they construed others, they often referenced what that other person did to or for *them* (the participant). This is termed here "self-referencing." Self-referencing was seen as a potential key marker of different types of construing. As such, a frequency of self-referencing in elicited construct poles was obtained on each participant.

As analysis progressed, there were three other concepts that I felt may also play a part in distinguishing between types of construing, particularly in regard to Self. Time constraints limited the extent to which I could explore these. As such I took only a randomly chosen sample of the data (cases were categorized as Instrumental or Expressive; numbered and written on separate pieces of paper; written numbers were separated according to category and each grouping tossed into a bowl separately; five of each category were chosen blindly) and analyzed it in the case of each of these three concepts and performed quality checks on all but one of these analyses. These concepts, in which some stood out differently than others were, firstly, how they presented themselves within their narratives as superior to others. Secondly, in some narratives, it seemed that the narrator presented himself with a victim mentality, meaning they presented themselves as the victim of circumstances and/or put forth another person or something else upon which to place the blame for their circumstances. Finally, this same group of participants, again, later found to overlap with those who committed instrumental homicide, seemed to be less transparent in the relaying of their crimes. When, for example, their sequence of events did not seem to make sense and were, thus, questioned about it, their 'attempts' at clarification seemed to actually avoid clarification of their account and even, at times, to intentionally confuse the situation more. Others, however, were willing to even provide their copies of official records to clarify for themselves and/or me as the interviewer what they may not have been remembering accurately.

In order to explore these ideas further, it was decided that another level of analysis should take place. To assure that my judgment of the participants as self-referencing, presenting as superior, with victim stance/blame and/or non-transparency was not influenced by my knowledge of what type of crime they committed, an another rater who was not aware of the crime status (I/E) was employed to examine all but the non-transparency.

Self-Referencing

The analysis of self-referencing was applied to elicited construct poles. It was defined, simply, as the characterization or construal of Other through reference to Self. In other words, Self was the reference point from which Others were construed. For example,

rather than saying "generous" as a characteristic attributed purely to the element, autonomous to Self, "generous to me" might be said, reflecting that the way in which the element was construed was in terms of what that element did *for the participant*. Self-referencing was identified by 1) overt usage of "I," "me," "mine," or "my" within the construct pole or 2) the notion that the nature of the Other did not stand alone without that person's relationship to the participant. Examples of the former would include construct poles such as "*I* didn't possess," "showed *me* what a man is not," "love on *my* behalf," "against *me*," etc. An example of the latter would be the construct pole "Love relationship," as it highlights the *relationship to* or type of relationship to the participant ("love relationship") as significant-- the Other was not characterized by their stand-alone qualities but, instead, as what they were *in relation to the participant*. Another example of the latter is the construct pole "Inside Prison, supportive"—here the participant is indicating the venue in which *he* met the element, not that the element himself is in prison, and whether or not that person is supportive of him-- the participant-- while the participant is in prison.

For the purpose of a quality check, a sample of 20% of the total number of construct poles were randomly chosen and provided to a psychology doctoral candidate for inter-rating. PCT was explained to her. She was then asked to assess which construct poles were self-referencing according to the above definition and examples were provided and discussed with her. In regard to the construct poles which contained the overt self-reference (me, mine, my, I) there was 100% agreement with the other rater. She questioned 2 items that were considered by me to be self-referencing. Again, once additional supportive context was provided to her, including the contrasting pole and/or the transcribed narrative surrounding the elicitation of the construct, she felt that they were appropriately deemed to be self-referencing. Here too, then, 100% agreement was reached.

Each of the 24 poles from each participant was assessed to be self-referencing or not. As above, each participant's percentage of construct poles which were considered self-referencing was determined. The average number of self-referencing construct poles was compared for those committing Instrumental murder and those committing Expressive murder.

Superiority

Superiority was defined as a reflection of egotism, specifically, "the feeling or belief that you are better, more important, more talented, etc. than other people" (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, [n.d.]). These participants tended to not only value others in terms of themselves (i.e. what others could do for or be to the participant himself) but also aggrandized themselves as essential to their surroundings and others. Indicators of superiority from the life narratives were specifically identified as:

- Notation or exaggeration of one's morality, goodness or positive characteristics, presenting self in a positive light
- Notation of how loved, popular, liked, by others or important to or known by others or loving and kind he is to others
- Idealization of those around him, meaning those around him are exceptional and, as such, this is an indication of his exceptionality
- Notation of his skills, the amount of money he made, work he could handle, position of supervisor/boss/manager etc., often at an unusually young age
- Notation of his positive effect on others or others as impressed by him
- Notation of special privileges or favors he receives/received
- Putting others, especially those not well known to him, in a negative light
- Presenting self as above or better than others
- Presenting self as favored by others or God
- Presenting self as having connections to powerful, rich, beautiful, famous or otherwise important people
- Giving a dramatized presentation of a circumstance they were associated with or the part they played in that (e.g. the part they played was indispensable and/or the event was extraordinary)
- Presenting self as a martyr, hero, helper to, and/or sensitive to others/others' feelings
- Presenting self as having special knowledge or insight or knowing more than most
- Notation of his own life as "interesting," or in some other way as special, etc.
- Presentation/notation of greatness/goodness (in spite of faults)
- Notation of self as non-violent, in spite of having murdered someone (e.g. "never an aggressive person")
- Presentation of self as excessively self-sufficient
- (Proud) notation of self as getting away with things
- (Proud) notation of extra attention being drawn to him (by police, media, others, etc.)
- Notation of self as having a special association with God or higher power or having a special "sense"
- Notation of self trying to be seen or known by others
- Putting emphasis on his name or making his name known
- Notation of his accomplishments, good deeds, status, etc.
- Purveyor of advice; telling others what's up or how to live
- Making self a participant of study/research (for an educational project)

- Presenting self as enlightened or exalting their engagement in activities reflecting an enlightened Self—e.g. doing mission work; reading the bible; praying for others
- Presenting self as tough or withstanding pain, suffering, or difficult circumstances

For analysis, a sample of 10 life narratives, 5 randomly chosen from committers of instrumental murder and 5 randomly chosen from committers of expressive murder, were analyzed sentence by sentence to identify occurrences of indications of superiority. If a sentence contained more than one indicator, each one it contained was counted as a separate occurrence. Each occurrence was counted and totaled for each of the 10 narratives. Each of the narratives were spaced and formatted identically in respective Word documents so that page lengths and, in turn, occurrences per page, were comparable. Then, the occurrences of superiority indicators were totaled for each of the sample participants and divided by the number of pages making up the narrative. The result was a "frequency per page." These frequencies-per-page for each of the groups-- instrumental or expressive— then, were averaged (across each of the 5 participant samples).

For a quality check, three to four pages of four of the sample narratives, two from the Instrumental group and two from the Expressive group (i.e. a sample of the sample) were sent to another rater (a second psychology doctoral candidate quite familiar with PCT). She was not aware that two were from the Instrumental Group and two were from the Expressive Group. Using the above indicators and without any prior discussion, she too identified occurrences of superiority in one 'pilot' sample. I counted all instances I identified and counted all instances she identified, giving me a total of identified instances. I then counted the number of instances we agreed upon. At this point, we were in 43% agreement. We then met to discuss results. After discussing each instance on the "pilot" sample amongst the two of us, employing the rubric and the context of narrative, this gave her a better feel for coding. We were then, essentially, in agreement, as she reported, "I didn't disagree with anything you said you had coded." She then did the other samples. Prior to our second discussion, we were in 72.5% agreement. However, we again discussed each item; occurrences were re-assessed and viewpoints exchanged. This process resulted in changing one single item. Again, this put us in agreement for each item. As such, after this process, I was confident in these indicators, how they were applied to the data, and that my coding was reasonable in that someone else agreed with how items were coded.

Victim Stance/Blame

A participant's victim mentality might, as in the case of superiority above, also be interpreted from the constructs he provides. Victim stance/blame is the idea that the narrator is passing off blame to another force or person or taking the victim stance or both—that the participant is at the mercy of the person or thing he is blaming-- usually

when something bad has happened. In this way, the participant is not taking responsibility for the negative event that has happened and may even be stressing that it happened *to* them when they, themselves played a part in creating it. Indicators of victim stance/blame from the life narratives were specifically identified as:

- Giving the idea that if someone/something had not been present or not taken place or, alternatively, had been present or had taken place, the situation (the crime, most usually) would not have turned out the way it did (i.e. badly—harm to or death of another, getting caught, etc.). This could be another person but also fate, bad luck, etc.
    - In the cases where participants spoke of the severe abuse they endured as children, an occurrence of "victim stance/blame" was not counted, as they were not taking a "stance" to portray themselves as a victim for the purpose of justifying their actions, as others had. For example, one participant who was physically and sexually abused and neglected by his parents killed his parents but he did not cast blame on them nor present his victimization with a sense of "poor me" or "they deserved what they got;" in fact, he stated the opposite-- that they did not deserve what he did to them.
- Self as ill-fated or projecting something bad is going to happen (just because it's *him* involved) (e.g. "it was *meant to be*," "I just *knew* [I would be blamed, be the scapegoat; they would turn on me, etc.]")
- Staging self as the follower (this serves to put the onus on the "leader" and take responsibility off the participant)
- Presenting the weapon or other major contributing factor or item involved in the crime as someone else's
    - E.g. "It was *my co-defendant's* gun" or "The victim pulled out a gun"
- Presenting the scenario as if it were a to-the-death battle, like "it was him or me," "kill or be killed" (when the participant was the initial aggressor)
- Presenting as needing to take or to have possession of a weapon or be aggressive to protect self/others just prior to, leading up to, or at the time of committing crime (it is acknowledged that some may live in a neighborhood where a gun is perceived as "needed" at all times—this type of situation was not counted and the participant was given the benefit of the doubt)
- Positions other(s) as initiator(s), planner(s) of crime, and/or leader(s)
- Superficially "presenting" self as in danger as a reason for his aggression
- Blaming others outrightly or by implication
- Notation of how messed up his own life is or how he missed out (on freedom, etc.) or suffered his own losses, particularly due to his crime

- Notation of world or others as against him
- Putting agency on or blaming environment, circumstance, victim, witness for anything that contributed or led up to a crime or participant's harming of another or getting caught
- Self as "victim" of the victim (e.g. "He shouldn't have disrespected me" or "he shouldn't have come at me like that. He knew better."); presenting self as victim of the co-defendant, hard times, poverty, suffering, etc.
- (Those statements in which the participant actually pointed out their casting of blame in retrospect—i.e. that he recognized it as such—usually using the word "blamed" as in "I blamed…"—were *not* counted. Recognition of this indicates a reflection over time and a possible acknowledgement of wrong-doing on the part of Self or empathy on the part of the one who was being blamed at the time, which I perceive as a different psychological perspective not appropriate to be counted here).

The identification and analysis of items was carried out using exactly the same method and the same text (transcription of interviews) as was used for indicators of superiority. The quality check was also carried out in the same way as for Superiority, using the same sample pages. The rubric, as above, was provided to the other rater. Prior to discussion, we were in 77.7% agreement. Again, after addressing and re-assessing each occurrence using the rubric and surrounding narrative, she felt comfortable with my assessment of items. Being this is a constructivist approach, the expectation that we be in exact agreement seems unfitting. The importance is on the believability and credibility of the examiner's conclusions based on the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The other rater later reported, "It was obvious that your rubrics put across what you intended i.e. I was able to code your transcripts in a very close way to how you'd have done it after seeing them, suggesting you had managed to communicate your construal of superiority and VEB [victim essence/blame] to me so that I shared it."

Non-transparency

Narration of an event is perhaps as telling as the facts and is investigatively useful. Even if an offender's story is not factual, researchers/investigators are still able to identify possibly intentional non-transparency and benefit from one's story by examining the psychology behind the *reported* behavior, the *avoidance* of report of certain behavior, and the *way* in which the story is told, linguistically speaking (O'Conner, 2000). In conjunction with analysis of constructs, the potential benefits are presumably enhanced.

Non-transparency/transparency was a concept which stood out as a tendency for some participants and not others. Here, I am referring to the inclination for some

participants to be open, candid, and forthright about what took place in the commission of their crimes, in spite of how it may have reflected upon them, while others were much less revealing of the details of their crime, either omitting details, confusing the details, convoluting the sequence of events, and/or providing details which were in stark contrast to other, official versions of the events. Moreover, upon my attempts to gain clarification, there were times when the participants' explanations further convoluted the details.

Non-transparency was discussed as a potential area of concern in a previous chapter, as was analysis of it (methodology). There it was noted that participants' versions may have varied a little or greatly from the official version of events and that these were compared in detail, recreating summaries and laying out details of each crime specifically from both the participants' versions and details found elsewhere in the record. Differing details between the two were, of course, one way in which non-transparency was indicated. It must be noted that it would be nearly impossible to tell if variations in the crime narrative constituted intentional non-transparency or, perhaps, just a simple misremembering. As such, deeper consideration of the potential reason(s) for these discrepancies had to be contemplated. Noted were which details/parts of a story differed, whether they were significant (were they considerable variations, and would they likely alter the listener's perception of the crime and the perpetrator, hearing the participant's version versus the official version?), and whether there may have been other reasons for altering these particular details— i.e. there may have been secondary gain for the participant by relaying facts distinctly different from what the official record stated, for example mitigation of responsibility for legal reasons, improved social acceptance, justification of crime, etc. In a constructivist project such as this, where the emphasis is on exploration of the participants' perspectives and, yet, understandable reasons to mask the truth may increase the chance of misrepresenting details, the concept of 'truth telling' becomes problematic. As such, I am not attempting to establish 'what really happened.' Nevertheless, it is plausible to believe that participants may have provided accounts to me which do not align with their own, private version of events-- this is what is meant here by lack of transparency.

In addition to what were deemed significant variations in the participant's crime narrative to the official version of the crime, I, from repeated reviews of their narratives, discerned a number of other techniques used by participants which seemed to indicate overt attempts at non-transparency. The identification of these as indicators of non-transparency was supported in that they often coincided with areas within the story which contrasted official versions, which would have reduced culpability, or which would have bolstered mitigating factors):

- Overstating a 'fact' or detail—a tendency to make salient through repetition a 'fact' or aspect of the participant's case which was often found out to be used in their defense as a mitigating factor.
- Excessive use of mitigating factors—providing multiple reasons for one's behavior, sometimes including placing blame on the victim and their negative qualities; or concentrating on multiple 'facts' of the circumstance which would bolster their defense.
- Understating 'facts' or details—skimming over salient matters which likely aggravated their culpability. When asked to clarify or expand upon details, incoherence, vagueness or avoidance was used. This also manifested as minimizing the facts or outcome.
- Incoherence or vagueness—not 'making sense,' convoluting the matters of circumstance, usually by presenting specific events in the crime non-linearly (jumping around of narrative), or muddying matters by adding irrelevant details. When asked for clarification, avoidance was typically used.
- Avoidance—Evading matters that would, if not omitted, likely have added culpability/aggravating details to the story. This was usually subtle and done by changing focus or addressing matters incoherently or vaguely.
- Change of focus—skipping ahead or back to another place in their story, again, seemingly to avoid matters that would aggravate culpability.
- Providing several explanations—Here, multiple versions were given, not necessarily to mitigate the crime, but the participant did appear to be offering or testing out the various versions to see which was most plausible to me, the audience.
- Agency shifting or avoiding—Here, the narrator removed himself from an act or confused who committed what act by stating "you," "one," "we," or omitting the agent altogether and beginning his sentence with the verb. The use of "you" might be an example of Kelly's *non-discriminating universals*; here, "an attempt is made to express universal similarity" (1955, p. 114), in this way he uses language to make his actions more socially acceptable.
- Stressing sincerity or truthfulness—explicitly stating that one is sincere, being honest or telling the truth.
- Pauses—These indicate a narrator "catching" himself and stopping or redirecting his story before he is about to reveal something which is, again, likely to increase culpability.
- Use of "filler"—Providing an excessive amount of words which do not add meaningfully to the story, either to avoid providing deeper meaning or to demonstrate more extensive vocabulary (and its usage may be incorrect).

The occurrences of these indicators were then counted within the narratives of the sample (the same five Expressive and five Instrumental committers of homicide) in the same way as for Superiority and Victim stance/Blame, as discussed above.

A quality check was not performed on the frequency of indicators of non-transparency as it would be unreasonable to ask another rater to go to the depths involved in analyzing both the participants' version of their crimes, the various sources of other versions of their crimes, compare them for discrepancies, and comb through their narratives repeatedly for the techniques they used to be non-transparent and how they coincided with verifiable discrepancies in data (the participant's version versus the official record) as I did. However, a brief illustration of my processing of such information will be provided in a case example (Malcolm's) in Chapter 7.

Differences in constructs of Self/Victim relationship

Whereas the *content* of construct pole provides insight into the nature of how the two groups of participants construe, the *structure* of grids was also considered in determining potential differences. Firstly, the Self in relation to the victim, both at the time of the crime and ideally was assessed for both groups. Secondly, the Self at the time of the crime was compared to the Self ideally for both groups—perpetrators of Instrumental and Expressive murders. The two inquiries here are 1) whether general differences existed in the way the two groups saw themselves at the time of their crime in relation to their victim—if one was more or less ideal than the other 2) whether there is a difference in the way the two groups perceive themselves at the time of the crime in comparison to themselves ideally. As described in Chapter 4, Idiogrid (Grice, 2002) personal construct software was used to run bivariate analysis on each participant's Repertory Grid. Degrees of angle were determined between Self at the time of the crime (S-ATC), Victim (V), and Self-Ideal (S-I). To answer the first inquiry, angles between a) S-I and S-ATC, and b) S-I and V were determined. The differences between S-I/S-ATC and S-I/V were then calculated. For the second inquiry, the angle between S-I and S-ATC was determined for each participant and averaged for the groups and compared – Instrumental compared to Expressive.

Findings

Differences in construing between those committing Instrumental and Expressive murder

Construct Themes

Table 3 below shows the percentage of poles belonging to the Instrumental group and the percentage belonging to the Expressive group that fall in each theme.

Table 3. Percent of total construct poles supplied by Instrumental or Expressive allotted to each theme.

	Power	Intimacy	Chaos	Hedonism	Achvmt	Persona	Spiritual	Active shaping	Anger	Total
Instrum'l	26.47	41.08	2.00	9.43	1.44	0.72	1.78	16.03	1.04	100
Expres.	25.35	42.41	10.27	4.29	3.70	2.98	1.52	8.55	0.91	100

A marked difference can be seen between the groups' construing in terms of Chaos and of Influence of Others. Between both themes is roughly an 8% difference in total number of construct poles contributed by the Expressive group and Instrumental group. In the Chaos theme, more than 10% of the total number of construct poles were provided by the Expressive group, whereas the Instrumental group provided only 2% of total construct poles to this theme. In the Influence of Others theme, 16% of all construct poles were provided by the Instrumental group, whereas the Expressive group provided 8.55% of all construct poles to this theme.

It might be speculated that the Expressive group is more 'in tune' to the notion of chaos, as the emergence of chaos or chaotic behavior often springs forth as an affective reaction to some sort of acute disturbance—behavior thought to exemplify Expressive murder. As seen by the sub-themes, however (Table 4), Chaos is referring more to the Lifestyle, Demeanor, Mindfulness or Mentality of Others-- how others carry themselves, engage with others and their environment, present their personality, and the like. This indicates an awareness and recognition of the expression of Others— an attunement to how others feel, potentially, or at least present respond to their environment.

Active shaping, or influence of others is a construction more common to the Instrumental group. They are more aware, it seems, of Others' effect on them, whether it be positive or negative—if Others provided "good" or "bad" encouragement or advice, how others influenced or impacted them and their growth or behavior, etc. A next step in progression from such construing is arguably to either give credit to or cast blame upon Others. In the extreme, it might indicate a deeper inclination to give over responsibility to Others or a framework of construing which primes one for exclusion of self-agency. In any regard, it does seem to reflect a sense of recognizing people for what they were or were not for the participant or what they did or did not do for the participant.

Hedonism suggests a notion of self-satisfaction through material or physical pleasures. Although the number of construct poles involved is relatively low, the percentage of Hedonism construct poles elicited from the Instrumental group is more than twice that elicited from the Expressive group, an even greater difference than that seen in the Active Shaping category. Serving these needs is not necessarily done intentionally at the expense of Others, but it oftentimes plays out that way. Such construal reflects the desires of Self as the focus.

Given the low percentage of construct poles overall in themes of Achievement and Persona, a 2% difference in them may be of interest. Construct poles allocated to these themes were provided more by the Expressive group than the Instrumental group. Here, again, in Persona a recognition of Others, in terms of their social presentation, is reflected. Again, this may indicate a greater sensitivity or awareness of Others in these terms.

Achievement, as mentioned earlier, was not a theme necessarily of Self doing *better than* Others but of simply achieving for the sake of achieving—living up to one's own potential, regardless of Others' position in life.

There was virtually no difference in construing in terms of Power and Intimacy prior to being examined on the level of sub-themes. However, exploring the themes on a level of sub-themes, some interesting differences were noted.

Sub-themes

Examining the themes of power and intimacy on a level of sub-themes did suggest some differences in the psychology of participants. Table 4 below shows the percentage of poles belonging to Instrumental group and the percentage belonging to the Expressive group that fall in each sub-theme.

The Instrumental group showed notably higher frequencies in the sub-themes of exploitation, surreptitiousness, enemy, love/care for 'me,' obliging of 'me,' and, again, the sub-themes associated with active shaping by others—influence/impact and encourage/advise.

Table 4. Percent of total construct poles supplied by Instrumental or Expressive allotted to each theme.

		Instrumental	Expressive
Power	Toughness	1.41	0.91
	Abuse	0.71	1.21
	Exploitation	2.47	1.21
	Surreptitiousness	5.3	1.51
	Judgment	0.35	2.42
	Assertion over others	3.53	3.33
	Sordid	1.06	3.03
	Selfishness	4.24	4.55
	Enemy	6	0.03
	Deceit/Trustworthiness	1.41	6.97
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	26.48	25.17
Intimacy	Dependability	0.35	3.63
	Steadfastness	2.47	4.55
	Role Model	0	3.64

	Responsiveness	0.35	5.45
	Love/Care for 'me'	13.07	3.94
	Obliging of 'me'	8.48	1.52
	Benevolence	9.19	8.79
	Relation/Role	6.71	10
	P's active feelings toward	0.71	0.61
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	41.33	42.13
Chaos	Chaotic lifestyle	0.71	2.42
	Demeanor	0.35	2.73
	Mentality/Mindfulness	1.06	5.45
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	2.12	10.6
Influence	Influence/impact	8.12	4.55
	Encouragement/advice	8.12	3.94
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	16.24	8.49
Hedonism	Drink/drugs/party	4.59	1.81
	Street/criminal life	1.06	0.91
	Other	3.18	1.52
	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	8.83	4.24
Achievement	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	1.41	3.64
Persona	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	0.71	3.33
Spirit'l/Relgn	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	1.77	1.52
Anger	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	1.06	0.91
TOTAL		100	100

Exploring power sub-themes, we see those who committed Instrumental murder with construct poles which coded more frequently in sub-themes of exploitation, surreptitiousness and enemy. These notions might be interpreted to have a common thread of seeing others as having an *intended*, purposeful, and targeted antagonism toward people —using others to exploit, misrepresent one's self to obtain a goal, and/or, in the case of enemy, be outright *against* another. There seems to be a connotation of others having an objective which is in some way intended to not just impede but to swindle, con, or go against the participant, as all but one participant contributing to these sub-themes construed the exploitive, surreptitious or antagonistic action of the other as against the

participant himself. While the Expressive group also saw others with aversive qualities—such as passing judgment upon, being sordid, or deceitful-- these characteristics were not so often presented as targeted specifically at the participant himself. Instead, they were presented more simply as qualities of Others, autonomous to Self. For example, the element was, regarding the theme of judgment, "arrogant" or "uppity" in general, not necessarily to the participant; or, regarding the theme of sordid, "bad, bad, bad" or "not respectful" or "psychopath" in general terms, not just to the participant. While deceit, too, can indicate a purposefulness, it still resonates as less extreme, perhaps slightly more passive, than exploitation and surreptitiousness—more of a misleading than an outright victimizing. The construct poles, here, too, indicate a quality of the element in-and-of-him/herself rather than targeted to self—"like to tell lies," "can't trust" "not trustworthy"—and, within this theme are represented all construct poles revolving around deceit's opposite, as well—"Honest," "more trustworthy," "don't like to tell lies," etc.—which made up nearly half of the construct poles in this theme. In other words, positive aspects of others were also represented in the theme.

The distillation of the theme of intimacy showed the more frequent coding of construct poles of those who committed Instrumental murder in the sub-themes of love/care for 'me,' obliging of 'me,' and to a much lesser extent, the subthemes of participant's active feeling toward and benevolence. The subthemes of love/care for 'me' and obliging of 'me' make up 21.5% of the *total* construct poles supplied by the Instrumental group. Additionally, these two sub-themes make up over half of those supplied by the Instrumental group which were categorized as intimacy. So, while these construct poles do indicate a sort of intimacy, what becomes apparent is that their intimate constructs of others manifest quite prominently in 'me'-centered terms, i.e. what the *other* has been, done, or has provided for the *participant.* Even though they appear to speak in terms of others 'intimately,' closer examination shows that they seem to do so in a way that reflects egotism and a limited view of others—as serving the self.

Taking this limited view the Instrumental group has of others, even intimately, into consideration, alongside the Expressive groups' construct poles which show up more frequently across the rest of the subthemes, it might be concluded that the Expressive group more elaborately construes others than does the Instrumental group. The committers of Expressive murder tend to see others as dependable (or not), responsive (or not), steadfast (or not), role models, etc. And, while the "or not" indicates a recognition of others' capability of not being what self wants them to be or of hurting self, these do not carry the implications of purposeful, malicious intent of others or as purveyors of conflict, with themselves the target. Going back to the theme of power, too, we see that the Expressive group shows greater variance in their constructs of others.

The context of construing in regard to the delineated themes, then, differs between the two groups primarily in that the committers of Instrumental murder tend to see others as acting with more malicious and self-serving intent, themselves as victims of these others' malevolence; selves as the recipient of others' benevolence or influence; and/or as seeking pleasure for self. The committers of Expressive murder seem to recognize the qualities of others, independent of self; construe others in more elaborately; and place more value on intimacy and relationships with others or the role they play in others' lives than the committers of Instrumental murder.

Self-referencing

The percentage of construct poles coded as self-referencing was also determined for each individual and then averaged for each group—Instrumental and Expressive (see Appendix 5 for list of participants categorized as I/E and self-referencing percentages). This was done the same way as for the themes and sub-themes. Table 5 shows that 62% of all the construct poles provided by Instrumental group were self-referencing and 33% of all construct poles provided by the Expressive group were self-referencing. The percentage of self-referencing construct poles provided by the committers of Instrumental homicide was nearly double that of those provided by the committers of Expressive homicide.

Table 5. Percent of total construct poles supplied by Instrumental or Expressive allotted as self-referencing

	Self-referencing %
Instrumental	62.22
Expressive	33.44

Here, too, then, as in the differences in themes and sub-themes, there is indication of self being the nucleus from which the committers of Instrumental homicide construe. While this arguably could be said of everyone, as self is the one doing the construing in everyone's case, the difference here is the egotism involved—that self is the target of others' harm or that self is the recipient of others' beneficence—either way, the self is the nucleus of others' doing/perceiving/thinking-- construing. 'Others' are much less likely, for this group, to be seen as having stand-alone qualities about them than in the case of the Expressive group.

Differences between those committing Instrumental and Expressive murders in Superiority, Victim stance/Blame, and Non-transparency

Table 6, below, shows the average number of occurrences of superiority, victim stance/blame, and non-transparency per comparable page of narrative for the sample of 5

committers of Instrumental homicide and 5 committers of Expressive homicide. There is a notable difference in each of these concepts of superiority, victim stance/blame, and non-transparency. For each, the Instrumental group weighed more heavily.

Table 6. Occurrences per page from 5 random committers of Instrumental and 5 of Expressive homicide

	Superiority	Victim Stance/ Blame	Non-transparency
Instrumental	2.03	.882	1.298
Expressive	0.134	.318	0.144

It appears, then, that the Instrumental group are considerably higher on all three measures. These differences, too, seem to highlight for the Instrumental group the importance of and presiding sense of self. Both superiority and victim stance/blame presented as ways by which the narrator could elevate or promote self, either by aggrandizing self, putting down others, or presenting self as a casualty of circumstance and thereby justifying or prompting his listener to be empathetic to their position or behavior. The elevated measure in regard to non-transparency could indicate a greater perceived need (than the other group) to guard one's knowing, perhaps as a way to protect themselves from others who may, perceivably, use this against them.

Differences in structure of construing

Self and Victim in relation to Ideal

The first inquiry was meant to address whether general differences exist in the way committers of Instrumental homicide and Expressive homicide see their victim when compared to themselves—i.e. does one group (Instrumental or Expressive) see their victim as less ideal in comparison to Self than the other group? This is relevant in that it may speak to motive in terms of perceived 'antagonism' from or aversion to the victim. It must be noted here, however, that this distance in degrees between Victim and Ideal does not reflect a construal of the victim at the time of the crime necessarily, as S-ATC does (or at least in retrospect, back to that moment in time). Table 7 below shows us the difference in the mean of angle degrees each group saw themselves at the time of their crime in relation to their victim.

Table 7. Average of Differences of Degrees between Ideal/S-ATC and Ideal/Victim

Instrumental	2.13
Expressive	-7.82

This means that the committers of Instrumental murder construed their victims as 2.13 degrees closer to ideal than themselves at the time of the crime and that the committers of Expressive murder saw their victims further from ideal than themselves by 7.82 degrees. In short, the Expressive group saw their victims as further from ideal than themselves than did the Instrumental group. This was not expected, as the notion of superiority and victim stance was more prominent in the Instrumental group. That the Expressive group saw their victim less ideal than Self-ATC than the Instrumental group may reflect, simply, a greater sensitivity to the victim (as a threat or an antagonist) by the Expressive group at the time of the crime than by the Instrumental group. This is a very tentative interpretation. However, it appears to coincide with my other findings in that the victim is construed on a more personal, rather than objective, level by the Expressive group, thus reflecting an affective response to the victim (Expressive) rather than a goal-oriented approach (Instrumental) to the victim.

Self at time of crime (S-ATC) and Self ideally (S-I)

The second inquiry was meant to address whether committers of Instrumental homicide and Expressive homicide see themselves at the time of the crime differently when compared to how they see themselves ideally, as this might indicate if one group, more than the other, was further from their ideal self when they committed the crime. The question might be, did one group feel they were more 'themselves-as-they-want-to-be' when committing their crime? Table 8 below shows that the committers of Instrumental murder perceive themselves as closer to their ideal at the time of their crime than committers of Expressive murder are.

Table 8. Average Distance in degrees between S-Ideally and Self-ATC

Instrumental	102.48
Expressive	111.80

This indicates that the Expressive group was further from their ideal than the Instrumental group. This difference, however, does not appear to be substantial and any interpretation of such data is highly tentative. Such information (distance between S-ATC and Ideal Self) is likely more informative when looking at each participant individually, as it might be an indication of amenability to change.

PVAFF

The third inquiry into differences in structure was consideration of differences of tightness and looseness in construing between those who committed Instrumental murder and those who committed Expressive murder. Other authors of PCT literature and murder have inquired into various measure relating to tightness and looseness of construing (Houston, 1998; Howells, 1978; Topcu, 1976; Widom, 1976), as it is indicative of how dualistic (i.e. black-and-white) or extreme one's thinking is, how flexible or perhaps brittle one's thinking is, how 'attached to' one's way of thinking one is, and how permeable one's system is when it comes to the introduction of others' constructs and potential absorption of those into one's construct system. One indication of tightness/looseness is the Percent of Variance Accounted for by First Factor (PVAFF). Table 9 shows that those who committed Instrumental murder construe more tightly (a difference of 10 percent accounted for by their first factor, or component, of construing). Houston (1998), in reference to a violent offender, stated that his construing, with a PVAFF of 80.36, was "highly correlated."

Table 9. Mean PVAFF of those who committed Instrumental and Expressive murder

Instrumental	78.25
Expressive	68.85

This indicates that committers of Instrumental homicide are, perhaps, more dualistic and/or extreme in their thinking and that they are perhaps less permeable when it comes to incorporating others' perspectives into their system. (See Appendix 5 for full list of participants' PVAFF's.) As such, it might also indicate that a construct outside of this tight system is considered a challenge to them— what does not fit into one's system could be seen as threatening. This, in turn, might indicate that those who commit Instrumental homicide are more prone to experience invalidation of their construing, which may, in turn, be perceived as conflict from the other, who is the source of the invalidation and, thus, perceive conflict (externally, or from an external source) more often (i.e. again, what doesn't fit into this tight construing is a challenge to them).

Summary of difference in construing

Considering these differences— in construct sub-themes, frequency of self-referencing, use of superiority, victim stance/blame, non-transparency, and tightness/looseness—all collectively seem to indicate a general difference in the way these Instrumental and Expressive murderers construe self, others, and self in relation to others.

It appears there is a tendency for the committers of Expressive murder to characterize others with qualities autonomous from the participant himself and with greater

elaboration of qualities being recognized in others, particularly in the sub-themes of intimacy—as dependable, responsive, steadfast. Even in regard to role model, their emergent and contrasting poles were not indicative of the other being a positive versus a negative role model but were, instead, reflective of the direction of the relationship (i.e. who was role model to whom). This seemed to reflect a greater sensitivity to and awareness of others. Their overall lower PVAFF supports this notion of greater elaboration as well. The theme of achievement also reflects this in that the participants recognized the successes of others, admired them, and even saw them as qualities to strive for themselves. The relationship between self and others seemed to be viewed as commingling and mutually enhancing relationships overall. Oftentimes, though, their role and even their self-identity seemed to be reliant on their relationships to others.

Alternatively, for the committers of Instrumental homicide, others were more often perceived to have power over them that was seemingly intentional and targeted at the participant himself; intimacy tended to be defined in terms of what others did or could do for them; self tended to be the nucleus of events and others' actions. The perceived dynamic between self and others seemed to be more often one of competition. This was reflected in the more frequent construct poles in sub-themes of exploitation, surreptitiousness, and enemy and the positioning of self as either superior or, when "bad" behavior needed justification, as a victim and/or placing blame on others. The significance of this is accentuated when we take into consideration the greater tightness of this group's construing, as tightness implies "deficiencies in anticipating the construing of other people, integrating conflicting information about others, and communicational ability," (Winter, 2006, p. 161). If a person's foundational perception of life is such, it seems that they, as likely constant purveyors of competition or conflict, are primed to try to pose themselves in an advantageous position-- as superior when it aggrandizes them, as a victim when it mitigates bad behavior, and/or to take opportunities or even create their own to outmaneuver others.

The notion of self (whether that be in co-habitation to others or in opposition to others), then, was salient in committers of both Instrumental and Expressive murder, yet it appeared to manifest differently psychologically between the two groups generally. One type of construing mapped on more closely to the committers of Instrumental murder. They tended to self-promote—again, seeing self as the nucleus of their environment; ever portraying self as the protagonist in their narrative; positioning self as superior or, when it served, as the victim; and seeing others as either against them or to be used as a resource to their own advantage. Their acts of murder often took place due to another person, the would-be victim, getting in the way of a self-promoting goal (to a successful robbery, to a money-making criminal venture, for example). Another type of construing mapped on more

closely to the committers of Expressive murder. In these narratives, the salient factor was most often the relationships the participant had with others and his role within those. The breaking down of this bond and the threat it posed to his role within that bond was most often what led to murder in these cases. In other such cases, it was a threat to some other aspect by which he identified himself. In both cases, the participant seemed to be driven by a need to preserve this self-identity or role.

In the cases of murder studied herein, then, it seems that two different types of construing contributed to the act of murder. The Instrumental group tended to map on to one type of construing—a "self-promoting" type-- indicated by tendencies to see others as intentionally "against" them, tendencies to self-reference more, to present self more often as superior and/or as a victim stance or with blame upon others in narrative, etc. The Expressive group tended to map on to the other type of construing.

This type of construing tends to see self less in terms of the nucleus of his environment and more in terms of an attachment to his identity or role within a reciprocal relationship. The identification of self, with this type of construer, seems often hard won and/or was often dependent on his relationship with another. They tended to be highly attached to that self-identity, as they went to extremes to "preserve" it when threatened. Despite the attachment to their self-identity, theirs still tends to be looser construing than that of the other type. Also, this type of construing seems to consist of a greater elaboration of others and their world, recognizing others for others' own values and establishing more reciprocal relationships. I will refer to the former type of construing as "self-promoting" and the latter as "self-preserving." While the committers of Instrumental and Expressive murder map on, respectively, to these two types of construing, I do not consider them concretely distinct types, as some committers of Expressive murder showed tendencies toward self-promotion and some committers of Instrumental murder showed a lack of factors considered "self-promoting"—i.e. maybe with a tendency to blame and to self-reference but not to present self as superior. Moreover, because several analyses were done on only a sample of participants, they cannot all be clearly defined as one type of construer or the other.

The Development of Construing through Experience: The Experience Cycle in Self-Promoters and Self-Preservers

Kelly began the construction of his theory with the notion that the understanding of humans is improved if viewed over the course of centuries rather than as a flicker in time. As such, he focused on that which seemed to account for humans' progress, rather than those factors which highlighted human's errors. So, although the current research attempts to explain a single incident—a "flicker in time" -- it will, in a very Kellian approach, consider the development of the participants' construct systems, in terms of self-promoting or self-

preserving, which led to this moment. Thus, Kelly's Experience Cycle (Kelly, 1970) will be applied, in this section, to these two types of construing – that of self-promoting and that of self-preserving—to examine differences in how these fatal "flickers in time" potentially developed. How people's experiences might, over the course of a lifetime, progress through the Experience Cycle could not possibly be empirically studied; therefore, I present what I think is a plausible progression through it to better understand murder as a process.

Personal Construct Theory states that humans seek to anticipate and, to do so, develop hypotheses regarding themselves, others, and events. If the hypothesis is confirmed, the Man-As-Scientist then uses this to bolster and perhaps further advance his hypothesis. If the hypothesis is disconfirmed, he can accept that the hypothesis was disconfirmed by either adjusting his construct system-- allowing his constructs to shift so as to make room for his interpretation of the event-- or by giving an alternate interpretation to the event itself which will allow it to fit within his existing construct system (Kelly, 1955).

This research anticipated that criminal behavior, even that resulting in homicide, does not fall outside of this theory. While, authors of PCT have written that completion of the Experience Cycle is what characterizes the "optimally functioning person" (Winter, 2003b, p. 201), PCT would regard murder not as the act of an 'evil' person but as an act that, like any other, has 'psycho-logic'—i.e. it makes sense from the perspective of the individual, given the choices (s)he perceives to be available. Murder is an extreme act, but perhaps, for those who commit it, their construing has boxed them into a corner and this seems the only choice available. The nature of construing as either self-promoting or self-preserving may mean that they, perhaps, take different routes through the cycle. Consideration of their progression through the Experience Cycle (EC) may help us to understand their acts in relation to committing Instrumental or Expressive murder.

My findings suggest that two psychological processes in relation to murder are going on with these participants. Some participants, self-promoting construers, tended to be high self-referencers, and/or tended to present self as superior and/or with a victim mentality/blame of others, and often saw others in terms of the others' benefit to or functionality for themselves. They seem to view a dynamic of competition and even conflict between self and others. When others get in the way of their self-promoting pursuits, violence may erupt. The other participants, self-preserving construers, seem to view self as a part of others' lives, as socially connected to them and dependent upon each other for their positions in life. They often tend to see their own value in terms of how they co-exist with others. Their bonds with others tend to be more significant to them. The self is not the nucleus of their environment, as with the self-promoting construers, but their identity—how they have come to define themselves—seems to be of great significance and they seem to be highly attached to that. Oftentimes that self-identity is heavily invested in the role they

play in others' lives. When that role or, thus, identity, is threatened, they have been triggered to violence in attempts to preserve this role or identity.

The notion of self appears, in both groups, to be a salient factor in their engagement in murderous behavior, one as the 'nucleus' of his environment and the other as heavily attached to his self-identity/role. These notions of self seem to develop and manifest differently for the different groups of participants. The difference seemed to lie in the notion of either being driven to *promote* one's self for advancement from their status quo, which might manifest in terms of finances, power, status, or the like, or to *preserve* their self-identity as it was. The motivating impetus was either, then, respectively, 1) *desire* to impel his self (i.e. to push himself, as he wants to be, forward; to self-promote), in which case his purpose is to *advance* himself (again, perhaps in terms of finances, power, independence, status) or become, in some way, *more* than he is currently or 2) *threat* (Kelly's definition of threat) to his self-identity, in which case his purpose was to *preserve* his self-identity. In the former cases, the *desire* to impel self was enacted when a participant had already, based on his experiences, seemingly identified, generally, that others are 'against' him. In the latter case, the *threat* to self was a result of invalidation or disconfirmation of his, usually hard-won, self-identity—hard-won because of the many obstacles in life he had to overcome to become what he is and how he came to define himself. While I do not want to suggest that these constitute clearly defined 'personality types,' I will for convenience refer to them as 'self promoters' and 'self-preservers.'

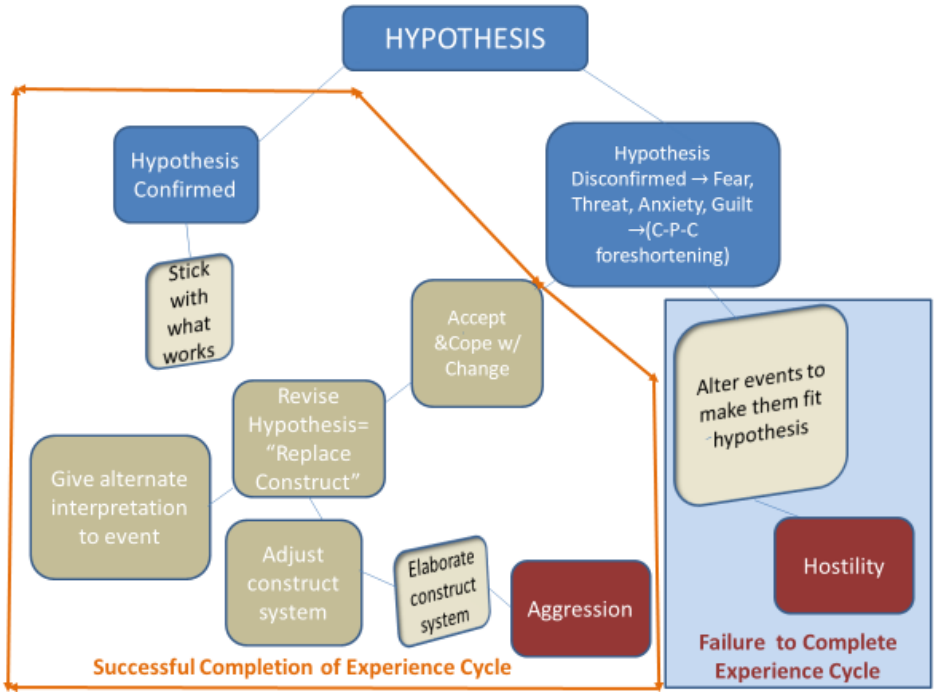
The Experience Cycle in relation to murder

As outlined in Chapter 2, people's experiences shape their constructs and assist in forming hypotheses. According to Kelly's Experience Corollary, experience catalyzes development and modifies our constructs: "A person's construct system varies as he successively construes the replications of events" (Kelly, 1955, p. 72). In other words, when a person recognizes something as resembling something (s)he has previously experienced, (s)he is able to anticipate what will happen next. This replicative aspect of the Experience Corollary is responsible for the enrichment of and significance of a series of events, as it provides patterns, themes, ties between, and relevancy to other events. Hypotheses are formed from these and shape what one comes to anticipate in a given situation. Thus, meaning and an orderliness of one's construct system emerges. If, however, something a bit different or unexpected happens, changes to one's construction process will typically take place. However, this may have different consequences for different people, depending upon how they move through the EC.

The EC is the process one goes through, using experience, to predict and control (Fransella, et al., 2003) and consists of 5 stages: 1) *anticipation, 2) investment,* 3) an *encounter with an event,* which 4) *confirms or disconfirms the hypothesis,* and, in successful

completion of the EC, 5) a *revision of hypothesis based on outcome*. However, for some people this revision is too challenging, and they are unable to complete the EC by revising their construing. These two different outcomes are represented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Step Four of Experience Cycle as applied to murder



In the self-preserving cases, it seems there was an attempt to reject the disconfirmation of hypothesis and to extort validational evidence in favor of the self-preserver's hypothesis despite already being proved wrong. They became hostile. In the case of self-promoting, it seems there is a 'successful' rotation through the EC and that their hypothesis, which appears to be that Others are against them, is often confirmed.

Drawing on the construct themes, the life and crime narratives, and the differences in construing that I have proposed between self-promoters and self-preservers, I tentatively outline here the possible differences in psychological processes in terms of how they progress through the Experience Cycle. It is proposed that these differences can help us understand why some commit Expressive and others commit Instrumental murders.

Psychological processing of self-promoters

Drawing on the construct themes and the life narratives of those who seem to fit the profile of the 'self-promoter', it is suggested that their progression through the EC may take the following form. Their hypothesis includes their *anticipation* (EC Step 1) of this notion of others as malicious or as having malintent toward them. This leads to a need to remedy this

imbalance of power. (The perception of this imbalance in power and status can take two forms—to actually feel as the powerful, high status one or to feel inferior and need to compensate. This tentatively posed progression would progress slightly differently for each. For the sake of clarity, I will address primarily the latter.) The participant, often in insecurity, *presents* as superior, deserving, and/or justified in taking from others (another hypothesis). This serves to counterbalance the perceived power imbalance. Such constructs have in all likelihood been established and nurtured by their surroundings and circumstances. Often, others in their environments (e.g. older siblings, parents, social circles) have adapted and encouraged such modes of interaction with the world and, from what the participant sees, such thinking is normal and/or necessary. In the lives of these participants, societal oppression over generations, poverty, violence in communities, and the like often contributed to such construct development (see Commonality Corollary[3]), as these types of environments would be threatening and, over time, would likely result in a perception of omnipresent threat or imbalance of power.

This leads to an investment in their construing (EC-Step 2) which served to, as they may perceive it, keep them safe from oppressors or oppressive situations. Perceiving others as malicious, or at least, unfair is a part of their construing. As such, it is constant, and others, then, appear a constant threat. Therefore, they themselves engage in behavior (EC-Step 3—Encounter with event) to redress the power imbalance-- lying, surreptitiousness, exploitation, and other self-promoting-related themes identified—which serves to put the participant at an advantage, in their eyes, over others. Others then see them as aggressive and act in kind, thus creating a self-fulfilling prophecy and re-confirming their hypothesis (EC-Step 4), perpetuating the participants' psychological process. The above, then, become the foundational hypotheses from which these participants engage with their world (EC-Step 5). No revision of their hypotheses is necessary, then, as, to them, they are confirmed. The perception of the existence of threat is so imbedded in their core construction that an *external* provocation is likely not seen by the outsider and, as such, the offender's behavior appears to be instigated out of desire—a cold, callous want to overpower others. However, given this progression through the EC and the re-confirmation again and again of the construer's hypotheses, murder is understandable as a consequence of this progression.

Through repeated confirmation of others/world as threatening and needing to position Self as superior, one's self-as-superior and perhaps a sense of entitlement becomes a repeatedly confirmed construct. Regardless, one might quite easily expect the sense of

[3] Kelly's Commonality Corollary states, ""To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his psychological processes are similar to those of the other person" (1955, p. 93).

threat from others results in a mindset that says, "take what you need, before others take from you."

The self-promoter's crimes are instigated in attempts to promote himself (obtain a future goal) and, although money was most often the object sought, it served as representative of something more—usually power, as in Harold's cases, or, as in Walter's case, a means to intimacy (and perhaps power too). In essence, money was secondary to the gains illustrated in construct themes. And, although he may be planning only to rob, he is also armed and prepared to kill. The objective, either way, is gain. Prentiss, whose experiences led to self-promotion, indicated this poignantly when he stated he knows what triggers killers, and it's what they've been *missing*, not what they *have*. In one case (Angelo), the secondary gain sought was freedom from either incarceration, as the victim had damaging information on Angelo and Angelo thought he was going to go to the police with it, and/or debt, as the Angelo owed the victim money. The victims were most often seen by the 'self-promoters' as instruments to use or obstacles to overcome in their attempts at gain. In short, the planned attempt at secondary gain via people as objects (Salfati, 2000), then, relates to instrumental crime.

For the self-promoters, then, the need to overpower others is borne out of a constantly perceived threat from others and/or a desire to obtain what one 'deserves' (e.g. material goods). This is to be gained from overpowering others and, essentially, overpowering others is what will maintain their hypothesis that they are superior.

What I have interpreted from my findings about these participants is that, in relation to the Experience Cycle, acting in self-interest has worked historically for them and for others they know and, because of this, they are perhaps actively replicating events (e.g. acting surreptitiously, exploiting others, etc.), which serves to bolster the accuracy of their anticipation. While it could be argued, quite logically, that they are incarcerated and, thus, such construing *has not* worked for them, it seems either 1) incarceration and its ancillary situations are less obstructive/threatening than admitting non-superiority or 2) they 'thrive' in the environment incarceration provides (which is quite likely, as it is an environment which perpetuates "me v others" thinking), or both. The former, in and of itself, speaks to the petrification of the hypotheses of these participants; the latter to their resilience.

Over time, promoting themselves likely becomes more readily done at the expense of others. The 'desire' to harm others may flourish because harming others increases the chance at self-promotion by ridding Self of the competition. The ultimate 'desire' is for Self to get more, have more, be more. Others are only an obstruction to eliminate or an instrument to use.

Again, regardless of the stage, the reinforcing orientation of self-versus-others, which prompts them to continuously either 'battle for,' promote, or delight in their superior

position in the world, is demonstrated by and continues to manifest as construct sub-themes which reflect, more-so than in the self-preservers, exploitation, surreptitiousness, enemy, and love/care and 'obliging-ness' of 'me.'

Psychological processing of self-preservers

Although extreme violence may not be felt by these participants as consistent with their character (Houston, 1998) their *attachment* to their self-identity or role (investment) and *threat to this* makes violence in them quite possible. The participants in this group often experienced a childhood in which their self-identity was uncertain and finally establishing it was of great worth to them. For some, their identity was otherwise challenged repeatedly and they, over time, overcame that. This served to, again, cement the salience of their identity to them.

In these cases, such obstacles to achieving a valid identity were made evident through factors such as abuse, rejection, street violence, a domineering parent, separation/abandonment, instability of location, and loss through death experienced by these participants. Joseph, Grady, and Alex were extremely abused by parents; Lenny was the outcast of his family; Dion grew up in streets of violence, thus his actual safety was often at risk; Theodore was separated from his father and siblings and, later, foster families; Nelson's family moved from place to place often and he eventually went to reform school…. Each has their story which seems to have resulted in a hard-won identity.

While I am aware that these factors are also at times present for at least some of the self-promoters, the self-preservers seemed to draw particular meaning from these things, making role and identity key issues for them. Surviving these invalidations constituted hard-won battles and seemed to have prompted attachment to their 'battle-scars'—who they had become despite (and because of) these obstacles. Constructs that would normally speak against an act as serious as murder are muted and the ego, in which the immensely heavy investment lies, kicks into "survival mode." Those constructs that normally prevent and even perhaps repulse these participants to murder seem to be lost in the chaos.

This group, then, seemed very attached to their self-identity as it was at the time of the crime. It had less to do with self as being the nucleus from which all other events and people were perceived, as with the self-promoters group, as it had to do with a particular aspect or aspects of Self to which they are so attached—something which defined them. As with the self-promoters group, this construing becomes a depended-upon hypothesis and, through the Cycle of Experience, arguably becomes reinforced. In Step 1 of the EC, a hypothesis of self (identity or role) has been formed and anticipations of others and events in relation to that exist. This, then, is the point from which most other construing comes; in Step 2 of the EC, there a significant investment in identity and the role of the self in relation to others takes place. However, in EC-Step 3 events takes place which potentially represent

a threat to this cherished identity. In EC-Step 4 their self-identity/role (and thus their hypothesis or anticipation) is ultimately invalidated or disconfirmed, for example infidelity in partner, or a partner who abandons them. Given the likely centrality of this role relationship to their sense of self, it is understandable that they may not be able to face the prospect of integrating the circumstance(s) facing them into the system from which they viewed the world.

It is at this point, it seems, a foreshortening of what Kelly called the Circumspection-Preemption-Control (C-P-C) cycle takes place. Kelly uses his C-P-C cycle to explain the decision-making process of an individual when self is involved. This consists of "a sequence of construction involving, in succession, circumspection, pre-emption, and control, and leading to a choice which precipitates the person into a particular situation" (1955, p. 515). Usually, one engages circumspection to make a decision—(s)he considers various possible constructions of a situation. However, when one is engaged in the EC-- anticipating a certain outcome or validation of the way their system has developed-- and this confirmation does not take place, they may experience anxiety, fear, threat or guilt.

Depending on the degree to which the disconfirmed construct makes up his core (as seemed to be the case for these participants), and, thus, the degree to which, in the face of threat to his system, he feels powerless or not in control of the events, he may seek to regain control. And, "control requires decision" (Kelly, 1955, p. 522). When a person seeks to regain control under the pressure of such threat, they often seek to do it with rapidity. They skip the circumspection phase and move right into the pre-emption phase so that control is maximized. That is, "he consolidates all the possible perspectives in terms of one dichotomous issue and then makes his choice between the only two alternatives he allows himself to perceive" (Kelly, 1955, p.516). Now, when he 1) is under pressure to regain control because of the threat, anxiety, etc. the disconfirmation instilled and 2) he has, as is the case with so many of our participants, constructs amenable to violence and/or lacks alternative solutions to effectively dealing with the anxiety/threat, etc. and the situation that is causing it, his dichotomous issue becomes a) to process through the EC the threat, anxiety, fear, etc. caused by disconfirmation to a core, superordinate construct and subsequent 'destruction' to his system as he knows it or b) to regain control. "Control is made feasible by treating one's regnant construct preemptively" (Kelly, 1955, p. 521). According to Kelly's Choice Corollary, he "chooses for himself that alternative … through which he anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his system" (1955, p. 64). This does *not* imply he makes the most optimum choice, just the one which better predicts. The dissolution of one's construct system is not the best avenue to prediction. The choice which best predicts is, he may feel in that moment, the one in which he can regain control and make the source of the disconfirmation stop. His regnant

constructs are pre-emptively engaged, and "the man of action" takes over. A decision based on limited consideration of constructs or choices is made and action taken.

In summary, a choice is made between complete dissolution of his construct system (or a very foundational part of it) or gaining control and removing the threat to the cherished sense of Self. The way in which control is gained depends on one's pre-existing construct system. One nurtured with violence is likely to become violent. Violence was a construct-developer for many of our participants, as many were abused and/or lived in violent neighborhoods. In addition to that, quite likely, as was the case with many of our participants, is the lack of knowledge of alternative coping methods. Youth/immaturity, lack of education, inconsistencies in parenting and/or living arrangements were all recognized, case-specific contributors to this.

Summary of EC for the self-preserver and the self-promoter

Each step is addressed as it applies to the progression to murder for the self-preserver and the self-promoter:

Step 1- Anticipation: A participant's past experiences have led him to a particular hypothesis or set of hypotheses. The self-promoter seems to have developed a sense of Self as the nucleus of his environment and that others are 'against' him in some way, if not overtly 'for' him. The self-preserver is attached to a hard-won self-identity.

Step 2—Investment for the self-preserver: According to Kelly, "Hostility is… an extortional undertaking designed by the person to protect a heavy investment in his own construction of life" (Kelly, 1964, n.p.). For the self-preserver, self-identity is deemed to be the heavy investment. It seems the self-promoter has learned he needs to 'out-do' others due to a perceived imbalance of power. This may proceed, and in the case of many in this group of participants, has proceeded further into development of criminal pursuits and, further yet, into refinement of them.

Step 3—Encounter with an event: For the self-preserver, the event, usually immediately preceding the incitement of violence, is likely an invalidating utterance or action by another person. For the self-promoter, the event may be an opportunity which poses itself. Alternatively, the event may be planned, even set up, by the participant.

Step 4-- The event, then, either confirms or disconfirms the participant's hypothesis. In the self-preserver, the invalidation constitutes a disconfirmation of the participant's core hypothesis(es). In the case of the self-promoter, his hypotheses are often confirmed in the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Step 5—The self-promoter moves on to Step 5 of the EC. In the case of the self-preserver, however, the process, it is proposed, becomes impeded for a time, as the disconfirmation of hypothesis is rejected and hostility results.

Summary

In development of this research, expressive and instrumental murders, along with their motivators of threat and 'desire,' respectively, were recognized as possible determinants of differences in psychological processes. While this was valuable in terms of establishing a potential framework, following in line with PCT terms, what might be more aptly applied in this research are the Kellian notions of hostility and aggression. Pertinent to these participants' psychological processing was the attachment to their hypotheses-- the enormity of their investment in their hypotheses-- which was demonstrated in one of two ways—either by 1) the degree of *threat*, perceived as insurmountable, when that investment was challenged, as with self-preservers, or 2) the need (desire?) to self-promote, learned through experience of self and others that eventually manifested into the seeming absence of imminent, cardinal, or immediate threat, at least as observed by the outsider.

For self-preservers, whose disconfirmation of hypotheses was so fundamental it threatened their very core of construction, they acted hostilely-- extorting their hypotheses, in attempt to control the situation, despite evidence disconfirming them.

For the self-promoters, with their perceptual field being that others are against them and they, thus, need to position themselves advantageously— they acted aggressively-- actively elaborating their perceptual field (Kelly, 1955, p. 508). As such, they quite purposefully engaged in certain behavior and planned, albeit perhaps did not plan well.

With this understanding of the psychological processing of these offenders as outlined above, it becomes more apparent, perhaps, the need for a credulous approach and a restraint on forming conclusions of these offenders as evil, cold and callous. It is the evolution of their experiences and psychological hypotheses, which, in the case of self-promoters are self-perpetuating, which leads them to behave as they do. It is a process, which, applying PCT, seems to follow lines of logic and does not appear to be a sudden 'seduction' into badness.

In the next chapter, I will bring together various concepts explored here in a series of case studies that explore the construing of four participants in relation to their life histories and their crimes.

Chapter 7—Case Illustrations

In this chapter, I will present 4 case studies, each one illustrating one of the main construct themes and a different aspect of four key findings. In each case, I will 1) suggest how the participant's history, as discerned from their life narrative, may have contributed to their current construing, 2) draw on the structure of the participant's construing to illustrate issues of key concern to them, 3) explore how an understanding of the participant's construing can be applied to his crime, and 4) comment on how we might understand their movement through the experience cycle as either self-preserving or self-promoting. To be clear, these case illustrations are interpretive accounts- particularly suggestions about the experience cycle. My intent is to suggest how, taking all of the data examined into consideration, participants' construing may be linked to their history and their crime and how they may have proceeded through the experience cycle. The first case exemplifies a self-preserving participant committing an Expressive murder. The second case demonstrates two possibilities; while the participant appeared to be self-preserving much of his life, his crime could have been either Expressive or Instrumental, as, given all of the data I examined, I was not as confident in regard to his motive as I was others. The third and fourth cases exemplify self-promoting participants whose crimes were Instrumental. The fourth one also demonstrates the usage of non-transparency and provides insight as to how I identified incidences of this.

Intimacy and Relationships

I will illustrate this theme through the case of Theodore, who shot at his wife several times, murdered her mother, and took his children hostage. This was judged to be an expressive murder, and Theodore's life narrative did not show the features associated with instrumental murders, such as superiority and lack of transparency; instead, his construing revolved around intimacy issues. I will first look at Theodore's history and suggest how this may have contributed to the development of his current construing. Secondly, I will examine the structure of his construing and explore how this contributes to understanding the importance of intimacy and steadfastness in his relationships. Thirdly, I will explore how an understanding of Theodore's construing can be applied to his crime, and, lastly, I will comment on how we might understand Theodore's movement through the experience cycle.

Theodore's history

Theodore experienced a great deal of separation from his intimate bonds. His sister died when he was very young; he was taken from his father and sent to foster care; and he was separated from his siblings. In foster care, he formed a bond with a neighborhood boy but was subsequently found to be sexually active with a neighborhood girl much older than him, and was removed from that home, losing contact with his best friend and foster family.

Abuse also appeared to be a potentially contributing factor in his development of constructs. He was taken from his father who primarily raised him until the age of 11, due to the abuse his father was inflicting upon Theodore's siblings and him. In spite of this, "I kinda worshiped him." He also recalls seeing his father abuse his mother, once holding his mother down and choking her, "sayin', 'Daddy quit. Quit. Daddy, Daddy, you gonna kill her.'"

Theodore also harbored a lot of blame for his mother, his primary female figure as a young boy, as he felt she was the one responsible for taking him from his father.

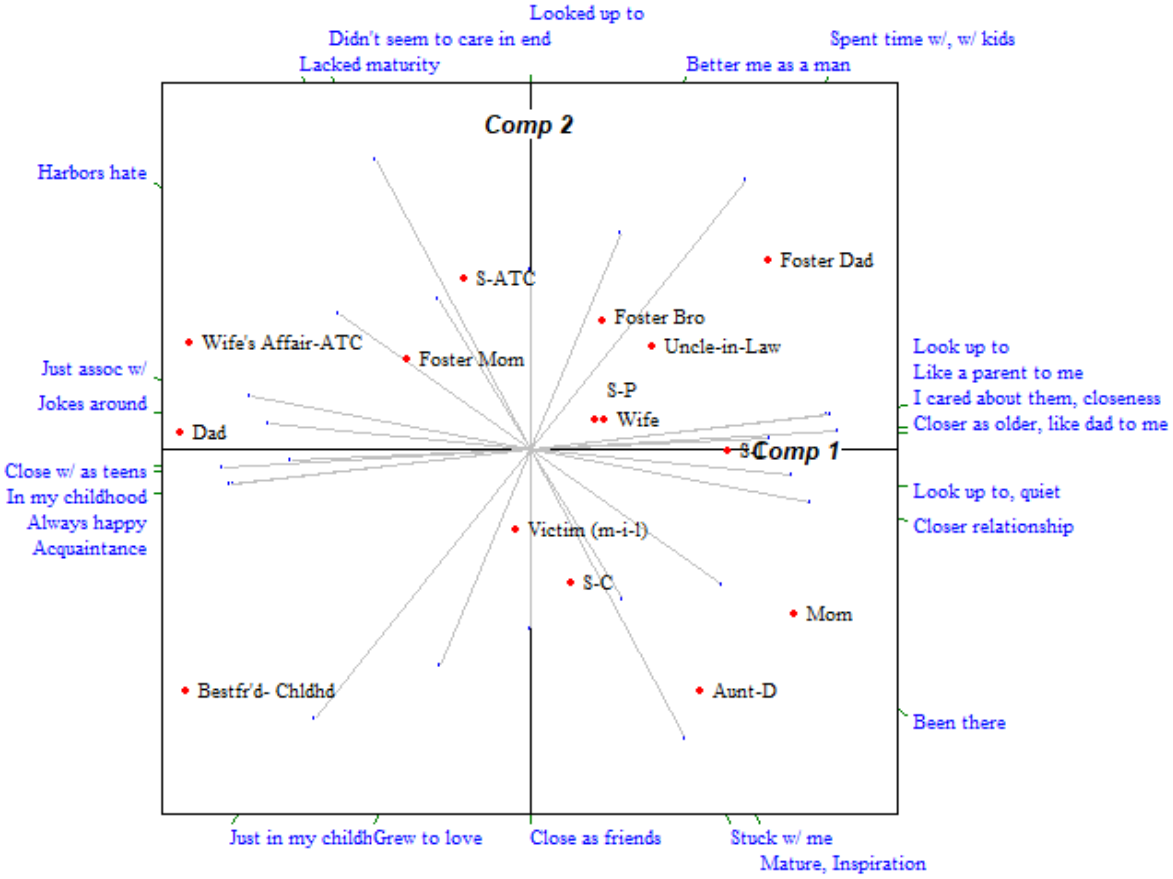
> "I had feeling that it was my Momma's fault…. When we got took away, I was crying. I remember and mom takin' me out of his arms. […] Crying—I was hurt. […] I mean that somebody I been with. This is my Daddy, ya know…. I did harbor hate against her […] I felt it was her fault that we was took away from him."

His father continued to model blame for Theodore's mother. "He always blamed her, […] he couldn't never… he just always blames her, right to the end…." This blame, as described by Theodore, became "harbored hate." Also, Theodore "blamed [her]," the 17-year-old girl (another female figure) he had sexual relations with, for getting him removed from the foster home.

He finally went to a more permanent foster home and considered this family his own. He eventually got married and had his own children, yet, was abusive to them.

The structure of Theodore's construing

Figure 7. Theodore's Pingrid (Grice, 2002)



As can be seen in Figure 7, Theodore's PVAFF, Percent of Variance Accounted for by the First Factor, is quite low at approximately 36%, meaning the variance in his construing is relatively high (i.e. he is a loose construer). This is also demonstrated by the evenly-spread span of his construct vectors. The primary component contains his construct poles indicating significance in terms of his closeness with others— "closeness," "acquaintance," closer to me," "like a parent to me," etc.-- and when in his life he knew them—"in my childhood," "as teens," "as got older." The significance of his level of connectedness with others (i.e. intimacy) stands out in his construing, the closer the connection, the closer to his ideal self (S-I). Self-Ideal is located on the x-axis and those nearest to that are in the upper right quadrant -- his wife, and his wife's uncle (uncle-in-law) and foster brother, the latter two of whom he spoke quite highly.

His second component of construing, making up 20% of the variance in the grid, reflects similar values related to his relationships with perhaps a greater emphasis on their influence on him— "look up to," "better me as a man." Still, the significance of their closeness to him is apparent— "close as friends," and "grew to love"—as is their steadfastness— "stuck with me V didn't seem to care in end."

Given his history, closeness to others and his notation of the time in his life these relationships occurred is not surprising, as a major focal point from which he told his story was when he was taken from his father, at age 11, referencing "age 11" seven times in his narrative.

That a majority of his elements (8 of them) are those whom he considers family also speaks to the significance of intimacy. The perception of remaining close to and steadfast in relationships, then, is of great significance to him.

"Harbors hate V Been there" was elicited in regard to his father as an element. Blaming women and hatred of them was likely modeled to him and something he took part in to an extent, according to his narrative and as reflected in Theodore's S-ATC placement on his grid. More recently, he may have let go of some of this hate, as his Self-Currently (S-C) is rated further from "harbors hate"—S-C is in the lower right quadrant and "harbors hate is in the upper left quadrant." He also indicated this in his narrative. In reflecting on his wife, he stated, "And I still love her. I don't harbor no hate against her." This construct of harboring hate contrasts this notion of 'being there.' His wife was the other element involved in elicitation of "harbors hate v been there," she being one who "harbors hate" against him, he stated, and had left him (not 'been there'). It seems there is, to him, a relation between hate or harboring hate and one no longer being there. While it seems he has released some of that hate he admittedly had, it is possible that an element of hate brewed for his wife due to her leaving him (and likely the man she had an affair with, which is an element near to "harbors hate" as well). It seems that one who does not remain with him could very well be the focus of his hate.

Understanding Theodore's Crime

Theodore had a history of abusing his wife and, at times, their children (See Appendix 3). He suspected his wife, who had separated recently from him, was cheating on him. He was stalking her and perceiving more and more 'proof' of this. He wanted to see his kids, who were staying with his wife who wasn't allowing visitation. Thus, he went to the skate rink where he saw his wife's car. Theodore saw a hickey on his wife's neck. He confronted her, and she refused to tell him who she was having an affair with. He became enraged at this time and beat her. "That's the first time I ever used my fist on her… but I… I'm not so sure I hit her. I think I might'a hit her a few times and the floor a bunch of times.[…] It just all came up into me. I didn't know what to feel…. She could'a at least been honest." (He received Aggravated Assault for this.) Circumstances developed over the course of several weeks and, as he sought more and more to find out who it was she was cheating on him with, he became increasingly engrossed in this fixation. He was drinking heavily and was "real mixed up, emotional about it," "hurt," and "couldn't make sense of nothin'." He tried calling his wife every day, but her mother wouldn't let him talk to her. The

more he called, the more upset he got--always talking to the mother, not his wife. He repeatedly stated all he wanted was to get her on the phone and for her to tell him who it was that she had an affair with. She "lied to me all the way through the whole deal and everything we talked about and agreed upon," not 'being there.' He obtained a gun and went to his mother-in-law's house to find out who the affair was with. It was early-morning hours and he lay outside, hiding on the property. When they awoke, he went into the house. His wife saw him and ran, as, according to his wife, Theodore had made threats to her earlier. (A month before the murder, he had called his wife and told her that if he wanted to hurt her, he would hurt someone close to her and that would be her mother.) When Theodore's wife ran, she escaped in a car

> and I opened up – I shot every round in that rifle on the car…. All the concentration was to catch her. I wanted to know why, why, why she done everything, why she told those lies.

After his wife was gone, he went to the trailer very nearby, where his kids were located, and held them hostage for several hours. His mother-in-law tried to intervene. Theodore claims to have shot his mother-in-law because she shot at the trailer. She died at the scene. (Theodore's daughter reported to police that she never heard any shot come toward the trailer.) It seems his actions were aimed at those who interfered with the 'closeness' or intimacy between him and his wife. Additionally, by his repeated claims, his intent was not to hurt his wife or mother-in-law but, instead, to take his wife to confront the man she was having an affair with. "I didn't have no intent on hurtin' her that day… My intention was, me and her … fixin' to go see this man. I didn't know who it was at the time[….]" And, "The intent of the gun was for the man. That's why I kept callin,' tryin' to get her to tell me who it was." Theodore likely saw his mother-in-law as a threat to his identity, staked on his role as his wife's husband and as a father. The mother-in-law had intervened between him and his wife both at the time of the crime and prior to when he was trying to access his wife. His former best friend (another source of betrayal of intimacy), who was the ultimate interference between him and his wife, was his intended victim.

Another of Theodore's constructs, "Lacked Maturity V Mature, Inspiration," reflects his thought about the crime afterward, noting his and his wife's immaturity as critical in the development of circumstances. "I know that it was just maturity, both of us lack…growing up…. I'm not tryin' to blame (indecipherable) but I guess you grow up, you get mature. I wasn't about all that when I was growin' up." The positioning of S-P (Self-Prior) and S-ACT nearer to "Lacked Maturity" and, contrastingly, of S-C and S-I nearer to "Mature" in Figure 7 demonstrates this perceived growth in maturity.

Other potential constructs, although not elicited in his RGT, may have revolved around violence and drinking, which he too had been doing a lot of near the time of his

crime. Theodore and his sisters first experienced abuse as victims by their father, who for a time lost custody of his children but re-established contact and relationships, which continued to be unhealthy, with them. As a younger man, Theodore had been charged with stabbing a man, but this was found to justified. Arguably, these may have formed his perception of violence as an acceptable way to 'solve' his problems. Then Theodore engaged in abuse of his wife and children. Although some of these incidents were reported to police and he was convicted of them, his violence continued to escalate. Constructs regarding drinking, too, were arguably similarly ingrained—he saw his father drinking often, becoming violent under the influence. His father also took him to the bars with him when Theodore was very young and impressionable— "At 5 years old, […] I spent quite a few times in [the bar]. […] I was real close to my daddy." Theodore had been drinking the first time he hit his wife and had been drinking heavily near the time of the crime and the day/night prior to the crime.

Theodore and the Experience Cycle

Finally, I relate Theodore's situation back to the Experience Cycle and my proposed understanding of the process of expressive homicide. Theodore's construing centered on connectedness and steadfastness of those with whom he spent time and grew to love. He was highly invested in these notions, as he identified himself and others in terms of their shared bond. He expected steadfastness of his wife, mother-in-law, and his former best friend, who had an affair with Theodore's wife and was, in his mind, ultimately responsible for these breakdowns. When these relationships, constituting his self-identity, crumbled, fear, *threat* to his foundational construct system, anxiety, etc. arguably took hold. He could not accept that his family, reminiscent of his past, abandoned him. He had 'overcome' the dissolution of his childhood family and formed his own and, now, his family, once again, was dissolving. It seems he could not accept this. After shooting at his wife, he continued to demonstrate hostility, extorting his hypotheses in spite of evidence disconfirming them. Instead, he gathered up his children and held them hostage, killed his mother-in-law, and refused to surrender to police for several hours, all of which distanced himself from his foundational constructs-- connectedness with loved ones.)

Achievement

I will illustrate this theme through the case of Lenny, who spent a single day with a woman he met in his travels and killed her when they were ending the day at a secluded lakeside. This case also illustrates the difficulty in classifying a murder as either instrumental or expressive. Lenny's life narrative did not show the features associated with self-promoting and, in turn, more instrumentality in construing and thus, perhaps, the murder. Instead, his construing revolved around notions of achievement. I will first look at

Lenny's history and suggest how this may relate to his current construing. Secondly, I will examine the structure of his construing and explore how this contributes to understanding the importance of achievement and fulfilment for him. Thirdly, I will explore how an understanding of Lenny's construing might be applied to his crime and possible motives, and, lastly, I will comment on how we might understand Lenny's movement through the Experience Cycle.

Lenny's history

Lenny began his interview by describing his family in terms of achievement and unfulfillment. Of his family, he states they were "blue-collar or just average, run-of-the-mill type, middle class;" of his father, "He was a hard-working man. […] He still works hard…. He's a smart guy. He's got a lot of wisdom. He's very intelligent…. Ah, sometimes I think that ah he had some unfulfilled dreams;" Of his mother, "Mom's blue-collar. […] but she's got an aristocratic spin to her life. […] she carries herself kinda regally. She's been a waitress for as long as I can remember but her waitressing really wasn't a job to help support the family." His siblings, too, are thought of in terms of their potential.

> _____(my brother) was the golden child though. […] He was the one that […] was supposed to be the big success. […] [My sister], nothing came easy. […] She was the baby but things didn't come easy to [her] […] but everything that she got, she earned.

He then goes on to speak of his sister's current successes—marrying an engineer who treats her "like a queen," "raised four spectacular kid[s]," -- and speaks of their potential too. He describes himself as "[his siblings'] babysitter" and moves quickly on, not speaking much of his own qualities. Soon thereafter, he speaks of his 'position' within the family, "As far as place in the family, I didn't have a real significant place," perhaps indicative of a significant self-construct.

Lenny's 'achievements' played out in a less conventional way, one in which a secret deviance developed and, with each new deviant gesture he got away with, it is possible the more accomplished (i.e. achievement) he felt. He turned to wandering, exploration, and crime, and, as the opportunities presented, he took bigger and bigger risks, beginning at age 14. He describes an incident wherein he sees a truck, and the keys were in it. Initially, he walked by it and kept going. "A couple of weeks later," he saw "that same pickup truck and went over by the truck and got in and started it. I kinda got scared and I shut it off. I […] And then a couple weeks later, it was there again and I went from just climbing in and starting in and I drove off with it. I kept that thing for a couple days (Laughs)."

He adds that he was well known in his small town, driving the stolen truck past a police car, driving it all over town, and parking it a mile from his house-- either not caring about the risk or snubbing his nose at it. The next day, he saw it as he awaited the bus to

school and "I said, 'Well.' And I went and got in the truck and took it to school," parking it only a couple hundred yards away," again, not caring or perhaps testing what he could get away with.

His inability to ultimately get away with it became apparent later in his narrative, as he eventually got caught with the truck and mentions "there wasn't a whole lot of bragging about that one," possibly hinting at intent involving pride. Soon after, he took further risk and got caught shoplifting. Lack of successful completion of this crime left him embarrassed:

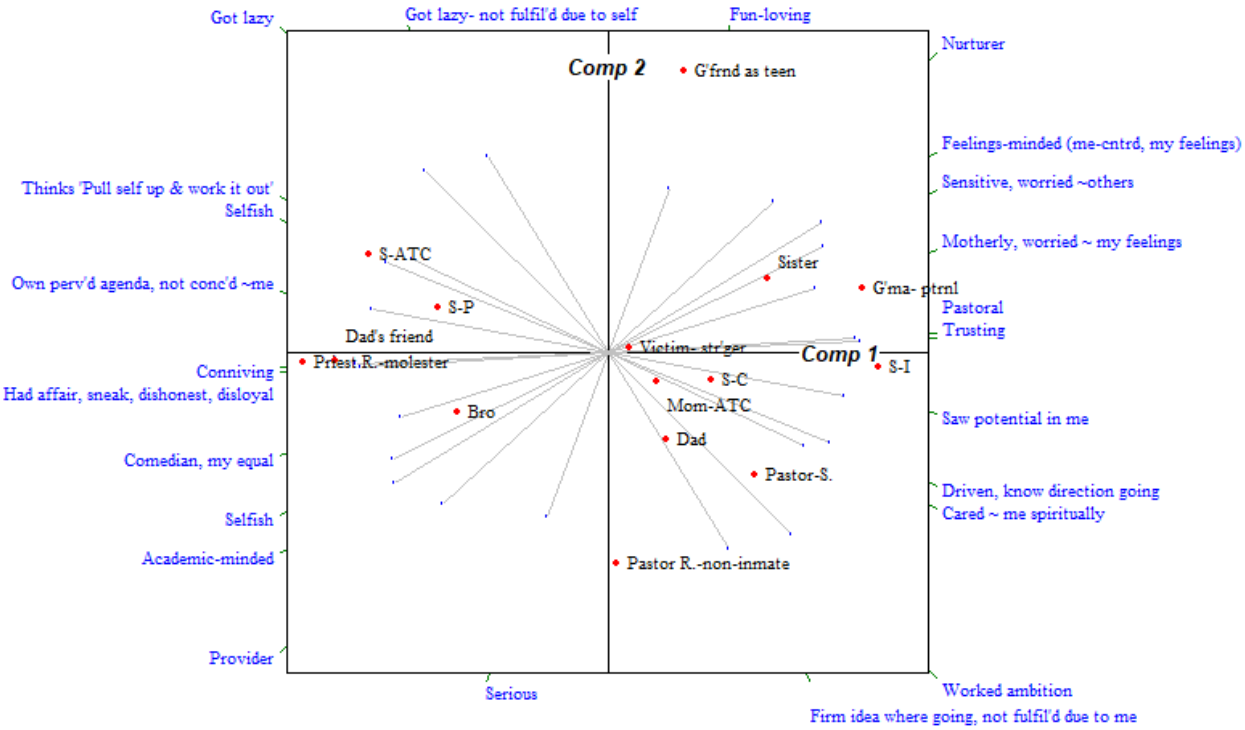
> [It] was embarrassing because a lot of people were standing around watching to see it go down. That was pretty embarrassing. I got sent down to the police station for that. I had to call mom and dad. […] That was embarrassing. They didn't prosecute me but that was embarrassing.

As he grew, yet still in adolescence, he would leave home for hours, then days, exploring his hometown, then further away to bigger cities—Boston, New York, "eventually I got as far as Florida." He started stealing cash from his parents and forging their signatures on checks to finance his trips. The "active elaboration of [his] perceptual field" (Kelly, 1955, p. 508)—i.e. Kellian aggression— resulted in buying a plane ticket to Hawaii. However, the attendant recognized he was too young and his parents were again called.

During his highway exploits, he met others who used cunning to get what they wanted, for example, "freeway freaks," as he called them, who wanted to sexually exploit young travelers such as himself.

The structure of Lenny's construing

Figure 8. Lenny's Pingrid (Grice, 2002)



Lenny's elicited constructs contain several aspects which may have developed in his time on the road, where there were times in which he had to fend for himself against sexual exploiters and had to fend for himself to gain his necessary resources. In such situations, it may be difficult to know who to trust and, as he alluded, likely prompted Lenny to use illegitimate means to meet his needs. Several constructs he provided concerned trustworthiness (or lack) and surreptitiousness—"Conniving V Trusting," "Took advantage, Sneaky," "Agenda to do right V Own perverted agenda," etc.

Others had to do with "achievement—saw potential in me," "driven, know direction going," "got lazy V Worked ambition," "pull self up and work it out," etc. It appeared that achievement was very significant to him, as accomplishments are the terms in which he spoke about his family (and even his victim). He steered away from discussing his own accomplishments or lack of when talking about his family's. However, later in his narrative, he seemed quite willing to share the deviant actions he engaged in, with seeming joviality when discussing all he had gotten away with.

Interestingly, some of his constructs indicated within his narrative, were seemingly applied to deviant sexual relationships. He spoke of his mother having an affair with his dad's friend, who is near to "conniving," "had affair, sneak, dishonest, disloyal," and "own

perverted agenda. Lenny was, as an adolescent, molested by a priest, who also appears near to these same construct poles. His S-ATC (self at time of crime) is in roughly the same vicinity and also near to "selfish" and "pull self up and work it out" (the latter themed a construct of achievement).

Lenny's PVAFF is 59.5%, tighter than Theodore's but, as will be seen later, not nearly as tight as the next two cases discussed. The "fanning out" of his construct placements on the grin, signified by the spindle shape of its vectors, also indicates elaboration, or relative looseness, in his thinking.

On his grid, Figure 8, Lenny's perception of S-P (Self Prior) is further from his ideal self in regard to ambition than his sister, mom, and dad and indicates that they knew the direction they were going, whereas he did not. Although his brother is situated further away from these ideal characteristics and much closer to S-P, even indicating his brother is his 'equal,' his narrative speaks of his brother being the "golden child," and that "I was kind a jealous of [my brother] cuz everything came easy to [him]. […] I was kind of a social misfit." However, the discrepancy between his RGT and narrative is possibly because the RGT was not elicited at the time he was feeling jealous of his brother, but decades later, during which time Lenny may have come to terms with their differing positions in life. Yet, the status with which he saw his brother as a child, Lenny's jealousy of him, and Lenny's self-perception as not having a significant place in the family, as being a social misfit, are deemed pertinent.

It seems that Lenny's constructs pertaining to surreptitiousness, exploitation, achievement, along with his self-constructs of being a social misfit and not having a place within even his family, contributed to a snowball effect on his wandering, deviant ways. Lenny explored what he could get away with and, like his highway journeys, progressed by taking greater risk. Although he started shoplifting to support himself, it eventually, he admitted, was not done out of necessity.

> It was more of a thrill because a lot of times the breaking into people's houses to the stealing or whatnot wasn't done while I was on the run. It was just… something to do. […] The first thing that I was thinking about was, 'Can I get away? Can I do this?' ya know, when I stole that first truck, even when I did the first burglary. I remember going in and breaking into a person's house, not taking anything out of it, just roaming around looking.

Of interest, too, is his construct "Provider v Nurturer," as his narrative often referred to gender and gender roles. As indicated, Lenny's crime is debatable as either expressive or instrumental. However, particularly if his crime was expressive, the apparent significance to him of gender roles may play a part.

Understanding Lenny's Crime

Lenny was caught burglarizing a home while he was in the military and was sentenced to three years in a federal prison. It was a minimum-security facility and he escaped. He went to the State in which he would eventually commit his index crime and, to get out of the cold, he crawled into a car where he found a high school diploma, birth certificate, and social security card. "First thing I thought of was, 'A new me!' Instant identification." He roamed to another State and eventually walked by an Army recruiting office. "I said, 'I can do that,' so I walked into the recruiter and I told him I wanted to join up. I'd already been in the service so I knew what I was facing." While he was in the Army under this stolen identity, the authorities came looking for him by his real name. So, he went "AWOL" as an illegitimate cadet. His illegitimate use of the uniform (a surreptitious self-representation as 'achieved,' perhaps) is what eventually led to the murder of his victim. He chose to wear the uniform, impersonating a cadet, and 'AWOL,' again, testing authorities it seems. He was in a brewery and met a young woman who was in the Reserve Officer's Training Corps. He felt that she was enticed by this uniform. He presented as though he felt that her interest in the uniform, "sexual innuendos" between the two and "the fact that I was willing to spend an extensive amount of time with her"—they spent the day together sight-seeing—all played a role in a lead up to potential sex. "She… ah, even the invitation back to where she was staying was like, ya know, 'Why-don't-ya-spend-the-night' type thing."

They went back to her campground and walked to the near-by lake. His narrative goes quickly from explaining that they were talking and standing and cuddling by the lake to him putting his arms around the neck and squeezing. She fought, and he dragged her into the lake and drowned her.

> We went out by the lake. […] And ah, I really don't know why, ah, I was standing behind her. Had my arms around her. We was just kinda talking. She was talking about different things and she was just, ya know, just talking. It wasn't nothing major, it was just… she kinda eased back and leaned up against me and ah, (pause) I don't know if I thought about it.[…] I pulled my arms up around her, up around her shoulder and then ah, put my arms around behind her neck and and went to squeezing. It was, and, and, ah, choked her out.

Lenny rated S-ATC near to "Got Lazy," "Selfish," "Pull self up and work it out," "Own perverted agenda," "Conniving," and "Took advantage, sneaky." "Got lazy" is opposed to "Worked ambition." There is indication in his narrative ("sexual innuendos," "a lot of flirting" and more below) and in the grid ("Own perverted agenda," specifically in regard to elements portraying sexual deviance) that his plan was to obtain sex from his victim. Perhaps he "Got lazy," when he abandoned the slow process of 'courting,' which he had been doing all day and, at this point, when the day was nearing an end and they were

alone, he advanced physically. He was no longer "working it" but going straight in for his objective. On the opposing side of the other "Got lazy" is "Firm idea of where going," which he outright stated was not the case-- "I don't know if I thought about it. I don't know what happened. I don't know what was going through my mind at the time." He just suddenly went to choking her. He had been standing, cuddling with her "five minutes maybe, 10 at the most…. Seems like forever." It is possible that he got lazy, impatient, and was no longer working his ambition; he advanced sexually upon her, and she resisted or rejected him.

He also rates, after years of growth and self-reflection, S-ATC near to "Selfish." His S-C and S-I reflect that his agenda is to now do what is right, be pastoral, and care about himself spiritually. Thus, it would make sense that his new-found morality construes his S-ATC, in retrospect, as selfishly taking his victim's potential away from her. Interestingly, his victim is the polar opposite— "driven, know direction going." This highlights again his assessment of people in terms of potential or achievement. Perhaps he looked up to her; he denied, when asked, being jealous of her. He recognizes he selfishly took from the victim her potential, causing her unfulfillment-- "I'm certainly the reason why [she] wasn't able to fulfill her dreams."

"Pull self up and work it out" might speak directly to the crime. Once Lenny started to "choke her out," he did not know how to come back from this so he "pulled himself up and worked it out" by engaging in further violence, enough to kill her and to seemingly "conceal" or "un-do" this abrupt and un-thought-out action of choking her out:

> …. put my arms around behind her neck and went to squeezing. Choked her out. Ah, once I started choking her out, … I got to a point where I realized there's no stopping now. Ah, couldn't play it off as being a joke cuz it wasn't. It was serious. An' I couldn't stop and then say… (he fades) … cuz she was fighting me. I remember her scratching me and trying to pull my arms from a…from… and ah, and I just remember thinking in my mind, "What the hell are you doing?" but then I remember another part of me saying, 'Well you've done gone this far. There's no turning back now. You done got past the point of no return.'

They struggled. He overpowered her, dragged her to the water, shoved her head underwater, sat on her, and, after a good deal of effort due to her resistance, eventually drowned her. One might say he "pulled himself up and worked it out."

Lenny had told the police later that he fought with the victim during a bout of 'rough sex' and things got out of hand. Lenny, more than any other participant, talked about sex in his narrative. These together indicate a motive of wanting sex. His narrative indicates this too, but did not provide much further insight on the ultimate motive: "I went from having a nice quiet moment with this girl and thinking about, 'Am I gonna get lucky' to, within a split second, goin' from that to, [beginning to choke her out], 'What the hell is going on? How, what am I doing?'" (Nothing in the official record indicates she was sexually assaulted internally pre- or post-mortem.) Yet, was he seeking a goal of increased deviance, perhaps

just to see if he could get away with it—one that included murder, indicating a more instrumental motive—or was he reacting to an emotional trigger of rejection or resistance from the victim, indicating a more expressive motive? Perhaps his motive is even more complex than either of those—perhaps his would-be victim was pleasantly responsive to his advances but, he, being the social misfit and loner he was, perhaps did not 'know what direction to go,' panicked, and killed her.

Self-at-time-of-crime as "conniving" and "took advantage, sneaky" is reflected, at a minimum, by Lenny wearing the uniform when he was not actually in the military, allowing the victim, who was attracted by it, to believe that he was. His presumed objective of having sex with her, too, could be thought of as taking advantage, particularly if his style of approach with her was not reciprocal or accepted.

Lenny and the Experience Cycle

Given that Lenny's crime could have been Instrumental or Expressive and he is not determined as self-preserving or self-promoting, I will explore two potential progressions through the Experience Cycle.

The first scenario aligns more with an Expressive murder: It seems two primary "hypotheses" of Lenny's concern achievement and his self-construct as not having a role in his family—perhaps not having achieved anything that provided for him such a role-- and as a "social misfit." He felt, perhaps, that spending the day with this woman ("the fact that I was willing to spend an extensive amount of time with her") would result in acceptance of him and his sexual advances— possibly even "perverted"-- of the type that he admittedly experienced from others on the road. It seemingly did not, however. At a minimum, it was taking too long ("seems like forever") or, at worst, she outright rejected him (disconfirmation of anticipation). His hopes for achievement were disconfirmed and/or he, possibly being rejected, was invalidated. Though this may have not been a major invalidation, it may have been the latest in a long line of events throughout his life in which he felt he wasn't getting anywhere and, thus, was, for him, the 'final straw.' He became hostile and, according to Kelly (n.p., 1964), "With the adoption of hostility, he surrenders his capacity to judge the outcome of his way of life and without that capacity, he must inevitably go astray."

His judgment was blurred, and he belied his own objective(s). By killing her, he forfeited any acceptance of him by her and denied himself his chances, at least for the time being, of achievement.

Another potential progression through the Experience Cycle is that there was no disconfirmation of his hypothesis/anticipation. This scenario would align more with an instrumental murder: Lenny's need for achievement, which was throughout his adolescence suggested by his ability to get away with crimes and, seemingly, outwit authorities, would

have likely been a primary hypothesis at play here and he saw this as an opportunity to 'up the ante.' The risks he took were extensive. He used his victim's car to get away; two or three days later, he returned to the scene of the crime—in her car, at a State park which had one way in and out-- a gated entrance manned by staff. He headed homeward, traveling through many States, using his victim's checks and forging her signature in locations along the east coast. When he reached his home State, he got pulled over—the officer was a male he went to school with previously and he did not run the vehicle's plates. When Lenny got to his parents', he opened a letter to them from a newspaper in the State in which he committed the murder, asking them about Lenny and his being wanted for murder. Lenny called the newspaper reporter. "I told him it was me. (Laughs). I called them from my mom's house." When the reporter wasn't available, Lenny called him back later, collect. Lenny then stole a starter pistol from a department store, robbed a convenience store with it, and was, shortly thereafter, picked up by police. This amount of risk-taking raises the question, "Did he do it to create a challenge for himself, overcoming which would constitute a grand achievement?" -- confirmation of his hypotheses along the way serving to bolster him and elaborate his perceptual field (demonstrating Kellian aggression)?

Lenny revealed later in his interview that, although he told the police that it was an "S & M [sado-masochism]-type situation," he had made that up. Yet he claims to have told his parents, eventually, "the absolute truth, unvarnished." In spite of several opportunities to do so, he did not share what this was with the interviewer. However, if chance were given to go back and ask questions, they would certainly be more pointed, significantly more educated by the analysis. It may even help Lenny to understand in greater depth why he committed the murder.

Active Shaping and Others as Functional

Through the case of Tremayne, I will illustrate the theme of Active Shaping with a focus on how others were construed as there to 'serve' the participant, who instigated a group assault on an elderly couple, his employers, for their life savings. This was judged to be an instrumental murder, and his life path demonstrates a repeated confirmation of self-serving hypotheses, primarily in the form of taking from others. Firstly, I will touch on the development of Tremayne's constructs in this regard. Secondly, I will examine the structure of his construing and explore how this contributes to understanding the notion of seeing others principally in terms of Self. Thirdly I will explore how an understanding of Tremayne's construing can be applied to his crime then comment on how we might understand Tremayne's movement through the experience cycle.

Tremayne's history

Tremayne was raised in a single-parent home and shared his home and resources with 8 siblings. His mother had two jobs so was gone much of the time and the children "roam[ed] free." However, she was insistent on the chores being done and "administer[ed] discipline to get her point across […] some hands-on discipline." Instead of speaking about relationships with his family, he tells a story about how he got to "takin'." His mother would send him to the store and get some things for the family. This became an opportunity to take what "wasn't rightfully mine."

> "I might take and I go past along there […] and get all the stuff, put it in the bag. […] I used to always take and go to, you go in the front door then you just keep on walking and you, you walk on straight on out the back door. So, I get the stuff and I just… don't bother 'bout paying for it. I just goin' on with it. $5. So that's really what ah brought me as to far as just takin' it."

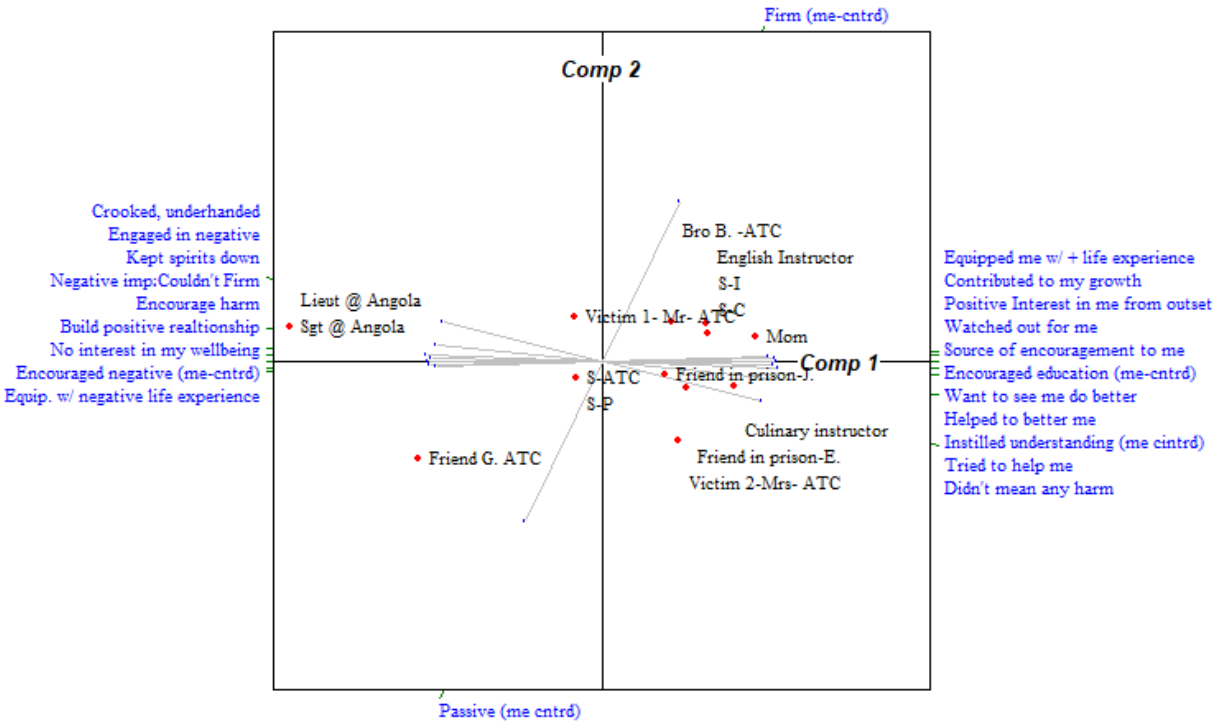
Interestingly, his use of the word "take" and "took" saturates his narrative, even when context does not call for it.

- "[…] wasn't able to take ya know what you might say, form a close bond with one another […]"
- "[…] that's basically who took and raised me […]"
- "[…] trying to take and raise nine kids […]"
- "[…] she was take and ah, she used to work two jobs […]"
- "[…] we tooken and we gotten out of school […]"
- "[…] then we take and we ah go ahead on home […]"
- "[…]" they had to take and ah do the cookin' and thing[s…]"
- "[…]" And this was the way, their way, of taking an' administering discipline […]"

And so it goes, on and on. He made a habit of taking and even incorporating it linguistically, perhaps signifying the extent to which he construed others in terms of what they take or construing it as a very 'natural' part of his world.

The structure of Tremayne's construing

Figure 9.Tremayne's Pingrid (Grice, 2002)



Tremayne's construct poles are heavy-laden with self-referencing— "contributed to my growth," "watched out for me V no interest in my well-being," "tried to help me," etc.-- and indicative of his construing of others as having a positive or negative influence — "source of encouragement to me," "encouraged harm," "encouraged the negative," "helped to better me V negative impact on my life." He makes minor mention of education— "encouraged education" -- and trust, in that he "couldn't trust" and saw some others as "crooked, underhanded."

Tremayne's construal of others regards the influence or impact they had on him— whether they helped or harmed him, were positive for him or negative. He also demonstrates constructs of whether others cared for him or were obliging to him. The common notion amongst these -- how others affect him or what they do for him—indicates his attention to others' characteristics in terms of what they do for *him*, a "taker" mentality of sorts. While this may seem a cynical assessment at first glance, a very large percent of his construing variance—89.3 %-- is covered by just a single component, which seems to be comprised of a utilitarian construal of others. Tremayne, like several other participants, demonstrated a pronounced construal of others in terms of what it is others do, can, do, or have done for the participant.

Another variant to his construing seems to consist of the idea of whether others are passive or firm. While the context of his elicitation speaks to the influence of others upon

him ("had a positive influence in my life"), it also speaks to the level of assertion or control he perceived in others, whether that be greater, as in "firm," or lesser, as in "passive." His elicitation is as follows: "[These two] individuals had a positive influence in my life…. [One was] a little more firm, whereas [the other] was a little more passive."

Tremayne's high PVAFF (89.3) indicates his construing is tight. The terms in which he construed were unelaborated, narrow, and less allowing of varying perceptions. Visually, this is demonstrated by a large majority of his constructs lying along the x-axis and only one bipolar construct running (somewhat) perpendicular to that (Firm V Passive). One bipolar construct runs more-so than the others on both the x-axis and the y-axis: "didn't mean any harm V Crooked, underhanded." This indicates a notion of what was themed surreptitiousness versus what seems to be a somewhat positive influence— "didn't mean any harm." Overall, in a very black-and-white way, it appears he perceives others as either being *for* him and/or encouraging the positive or, alternatively, as not being interested in his wellbeing and/or encouraging the negative. Tremayne's crime narrative is revealing about the manifestation of his elicited constructs in his crime.

Understanding Tremayne's Crime

Tremayne worked as a 'helping-hand' of sorts for an elderly white couple, with whom he spent a great deal of time. While he was helping the wife clean, she asked him firmly to not touch a particular bag in one of the bedrooms and he couldn't get it out of his thoughts. "I was like, 'Wonder why she told me don't fool with that right there. Just kinda like stayed on my mind. It was like, it wouldn't leave. Something ain't right 'bout that." One day, while the couple were out on the porch relaxing, he "eased up in" that bedroom to see what her fuss was all about. What had been in the brown bag earlier were stacks of money, now moved to a case, but not locked. He took one stack. It amounted to $5000. He returned several times, taking more periodically. Upon realizing some of their money was missing, they were suspicious of Tremayne. He contested their suspicion and stopped working for them. However, the temptation was still too great, so he got a friend of his to start working at the couple's house. Tremayne "kinda like knew their pattern" – knew the house, knew when they would be gone from it, knew when they cashed checks and stored the money in the house. He and his friend, newly hired by the couple, went to get more of their money when the couple was away but the couple came back unexpectedly. While Tremayne ran out the back, his friend was caught by the couple. Not much was done about this by police, though. Thus, no consequence was experienced by Tremayne. He adjusted his approach-- he told his brothers about the money. They waited for this incident "to blow over," and plotted a return, including several others to help. A group of them, Tremayne included, invaded the house late one night, hog-tied the couple in their bed, and beat them-- the

man, to death, and the woman to a four-month stay in the hospital. They never found the money, as it had been moved.

The interpretation of a 'taker' mentality of Tremayne's constructs, then, becomes quite apparent by his narrative. His surreptitiousness is also demonstrated by his narrative—he was a long-time (nearly 6-year) and beloved employee of this couple, yet he "eased" up to the bedroom to take from them, repeatedly; he planted an accomplice in the couple's house, using knowledge of the house and the couple's habits to instigate another infiltration; when this failed, he waited. He recruited others to help, and approached the planned intrusion with tape, rope, face masks, and a shotgun.

The worth of the female victim to Tremayne is, 40-years on, recognized by Tremayne as encouraging of him and benevolent--not meaning any harm. She was particularly encouraging of him gaining an education. "She understood my situation, […] my struggles. […] But I didn't grasp that at the time that she was takin' and she was takin' and tellin' me this here, […] 'I want you to take and keep your grades and things up cuz when you take and you finish High School,' she said, ah, 'I'm gonna send you off to college somewhere.'"

The male victim is still, however, rated toward the negative side of Tremayne's shaping-by-others. It is possible that Tremayne saw him as white, wealthy, and privileged, while his family struggled and went without. Tremayne "watched my mother's struggles, alright. And it just got to a point in my life that I felt that, hey, that I'm tired of this here. I need to try and taken and find some kind of way to take and just fend for myself." Tremayne's construct poles, although categorized as Active Shaping, also reflect a notion of status/achievement or wanting to get ahead-- "Contributed to my growth;" "Helped to better me;" "Want to see me do better;" and "Encouraged education."

Tremayne's elements are made up mostly of mentors, adversaries, and friends. Only 2 elements represent family. One of these was his brother, whom Tremayne rated as a positive shaper of Tremayne's life in spite of him being the one who ultimately planned and recruited others to carry-out this crime. This fact speaks of a probable lack of recognition on Tremayne's part of the negative impact his brother had on his life and a possible degree of idealism Tremayne holds for those who assist(ed), even surreptitiously, in his attempts at such 'achievement.'

Tremayne's lack of familial elements might indicate lack of intimacy-for-the-sake-of-intimacy between Tremayne and others, as family is typically loved regardless of their 'usefulness.' Alternatively, Tremayne's greatest number of elements fall into the category of Mentor/Idol and represent, again, those who *served* Tremayne by shaping his life in what he discerned to be a positive way.

Tremayne and the Experience Cycle

Tremayne, in terms of the Experience Cycle, appeared to reflect the life path of construing as a self-promoter, whose crime was Instrumental, and who often served to promote his interests. It is possible that the development of Tremayne's constructs formed an anticipation of positive or fruitful outcomes by engaging in theft. Past opportunities arose, he acted on them, and he got away with them. He may have made adjustments to minor disconfirmations along the way (e.g. utilizing several others when he and his friend were not successful in stealing the stacks of money). As these constructs developed and another opportunity presented itself, Tremayne appeared to 'stick with what he knew.' Tremayne was arguably not reacting out of invalidation to his construct system (i.e. threat), but desire—desire for money to fulfill his desires for his 'growth' and betterment. He "took" and appeared to use people who supported and encouraged him so that he could get what he lacked and what they had.

His rating of S-P on the text output was between passive and firm, positive and negative, trustworthy and understanding-- between all constructs but for not meaning any harm. His Self-ATC was no different—i.e. there were no degrees of difference between them according to the text output. It might be interpreted that his criminal behavior is in alignment with who he sees himself to be ideally, then. His crime narrative indicated no apparent emotional reaction to perceived, necessary change or threat to himself or his construct system.

Interestingly, the *one* construct on which he did not rate S-ATC mid-way but closer to the positive was "Didn't mean any harm (versus V Crooked, underhanded)," indicating perhaps he either did not consider the potential harm to be caused by his plan or to, perhaps, dismiss culpability for his part in the extreme violence upon these two people who took him into their home, provided for him a job and, if they had been given the chance, an education. Given the above assessment of Tremayne's narrative along with his constructs, it appears his criminal thinking has not significantly subsided.

Intimacy/Power dynamic

I will illustrate the interconnectedness of power and intimacy through the case of Malcolm, who shot a stranger whom he claims to have been robbing. There are indications, however, in his narrative that the intent was not to rob but to kill for status within a gang or on the streets. This was deemed an instrumental murder. Malcolm's narrative showed a good deal of superiority and non-transparency, the latter of which I will attempt to demonstrate here.

Malcolm's construing revolved around both intimacy and power issues and with a sense of self as the nucleus from which others are construed. His narrative also indicated a 'chameleon'-type characteristic, seeming to take on what he perceived to be what others in

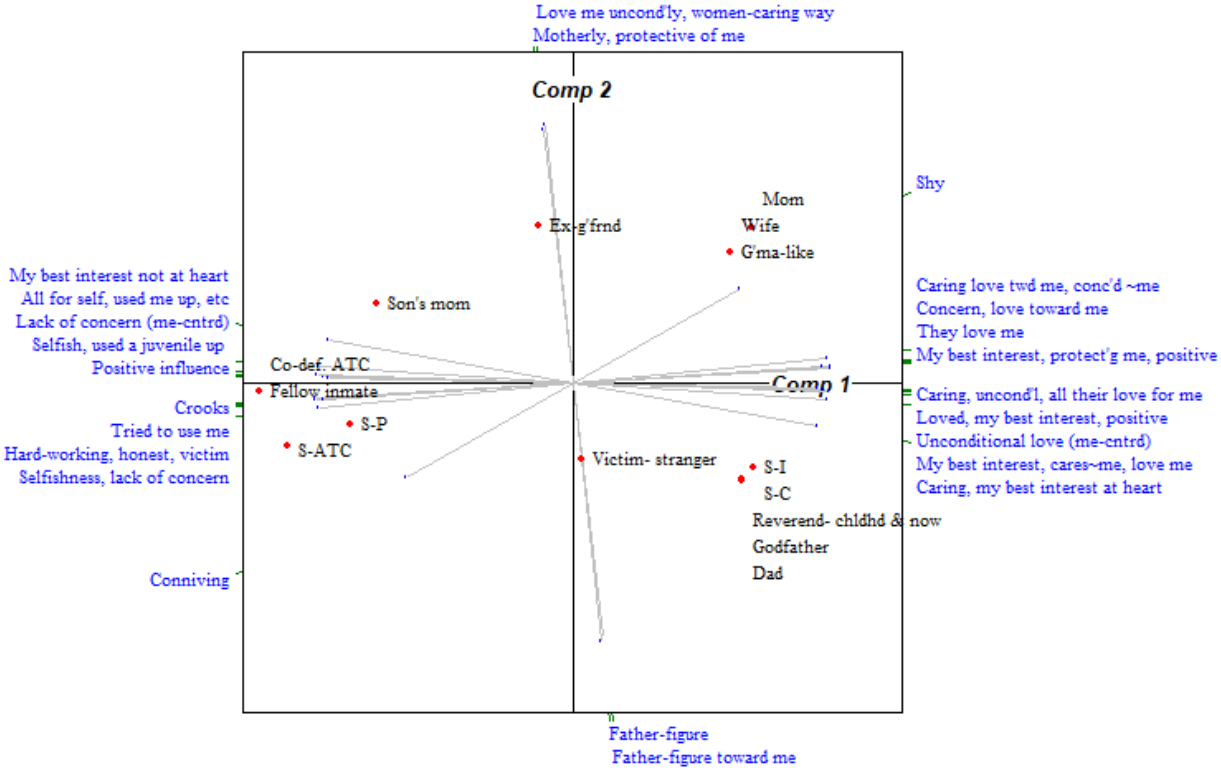
his story found acceptable, even expected, and what I as the interviewer did as well. I will first look at Malcolm's history and suggest how this may have contributed to the development of his current construing. Secondly, I will examine the structure of his construing and explore how this contributes to understanding the intimacy/power dynamic and, like Tremayne, the notion of seeing others in terms of Self and what they can do, be, or are to Self. Thirdly, I will explore how an understanding of Malcolm's construing might be applied to his crime then comment on how we might understand his movement through the experience cycle. While discussing his crime, I will also try to demonstrate some of his non-transparency and its possible indications, as this will assist in illustrating incidents which I deemed to be non-transparent and how it might manifest.

Malcolm's history

Malcolm was "kinda tossed back and forth between the two [parents]." He had a stepmother who "was real nice to me," doted on him even, but when her son came to live with them, this interfered with his intimacy with her so he moved to his mother's. His mother had a boyfriend that slapped him, so he moved to his father's. His father went to jail so he moved back to his mother's, and so it went. "I had to, I learn how to adapt." He also mentions feeling angry due to this back and forth. He started getting in fights at school and got suspended. He was sent to a police summer camp for kids which held shooting competitions, which he didn't think was a good idea "because I was fascinated with guns." He excelled at shooting and won these competitions. He shared, too, "I was angry at the system. I was angry at society." He speaks at length about how he was known to people and how he had a lot of people helping him. Yet, they were older people and, as such, he did not relate to them either. He speaks of his behavior at that time: "Arrogant. Arrogant. I was an arrogant young man. […] I was a little flip with the mouth, a little bit arrogant. Felt like I had it all together, had my own little thing, in my own world, I'm cool, got it goin' on." Yet, when asked who he was spending time with, "Mostly myself. Really, I hang with myself but I hung out with some older people at times, ya know, cuz ah I felt that my siblings didn't have a lot of time for me cuz I was the youngest out of everybody. […] My brother Bobby […] was at [an institute for delinquent boys] […] And so it wasn't cool to be hangin' out with my sisters, so I ain't gonna hang with my sisters. That ain't cool of a boy, so…" Malcolm, then, was seemingly yearning for communion with others, unable to find it at home, angry, fascinated with guns, thinking himself to be 'cool' and arrogant, and went looking for belongingness elsewhere. As such, he "learn[ed] how to adapt" and did what he felt would promote belongingness with others. In the streets, to an "arrogant" young man living in a poor and violent neighborhood, this is often gained by earning respect from others—by being violent.

The structure of Malcolm's construing

Figure 10. Malcolm's Pingrid (Grice, 2002)



Although many of Malcolm's construct poles speak to intimacy, they, like Tremayne's, are very often self-referencing – i.e. the love, care, concern others have *for him* and *his* wellbeing— "caring, love toward me, my wellbeing;" "caring, my best interest at heart;" "my best interest, care about me, love me;" etc. Given the various themes/subthemes under which his construct poles were categorized-- selfishness, exploitation ("tried to use me," "Use a juvenile up," etc.), surreptitiousness ("crooks," "conniving"), active shaping, benevolence, achievement, role/relational—one would think that he construed elaborately. However, construal variance is still rather tight, with a PVAFF of 73%. The lack of evenly distributed fanning of construct vectors also indicates that his construing is rather narrow. His frequent mention of his self in his construct poles may hint toward an underlying construing very similar to that of self-promoting.

Malcolm's overwhelming number of construct poles in which he assesses others according to *his* receiving of what they have to offer-- the love, care, and concern they had for him, or lack of— seems to reflect a recognition of the intimacy others can provide, while, at the same time, seeing them for the benefit they offer Malcolm. Malcolm also sees others in terms of the power they can or have had over him-- whether they used or tricked him ("Crooks," "Conniving," for example) or if they were simply out for themselves, not caring

about him in the process (for example "Used me up, not caring about me or my best interest;" "Used a juvenile up").

Eight of Malcolm's elements consist of people who are or have been intimates to him-- family and lovers, his life-long reverend, and his godfather. His level of and need for intimacy, then, seems to be quite salient to him. Malcolm, ATC, was perceived as most like his co-defendant, though. The other nearby-elements to S-P and S-ATC—the contrast to ideal-- were people who had some sort of power (according to the designated theme) over him. It seems then that he construes not only himself as engaged in these sorts of power, but that these others also had some sorts of power over him (exploitive, surreptitious, as themed) at the time of his crime and prior.

We might interpret that he was at the time of the crime and prior (by positioning of his S-P and S-ATC) not overly connected to either his father or his mother. His mother and father had separated, and, although he went back and forth a lot between the two, he feels his primary residence was with his father in a poor neighborhood. Previously though, he was living in "an upper-scale neighborhood which was predominant [sic] white and we was the only black family there," which he said was "a little difficult at times" and, as such, he did not feel belongingness there. Being uprooted from his former lifestyle when his parents divorced and then feeling marginalized in both his father's and his mother's household possibly left him feeling not only a lack of belongingness but also a lack of control over his environment. This, perhaps, left him seeking both intimacy and power. In an environment in which violence was respected, as it was where he lived, one might not be too surprised to see that a belongingness (intimacy) is often obtained through demonstrations of power in the form of violence.

Understanding Malcolm's Crime

Malcolm was 15 years old ATC. He and an older accomplice, who happened, official records revealed, to share the same first and middle name as him, went into a cabinet factory and shot one of the two employees there. Malcolm claims to have just met his accomplice on this very day. This might speak to his need for intimacy—a connection already in place due to the sharing of their name—and/or to active shaping by/influence of others, as this co-defendant, who was older, may have set Malcolm up to carry out whatever *his* agenda was, thinking a minor would be less affected by consequences. Malcolm says of his co-defendant, "He the one that talked me into it."

Malcolm is rather evasive about the details of how events culminated into his crime, changing minor details at times, for example, stating his time in the factory was first 7, then 10, then 15 minutes. Later, it will be noted by the witness that it was immediate. An increased length of time might serve to indicate the 'coldness' and instrumentality with which the crime occurred. Also, Malcolm indicates the scene of the crime was "a cabinet-

makin' business" and "the intent was to rob." When asked why this type of shop would be a target for robbery, he backpedals and states it looked like a store, yet, contrarily, explains "It was like a warehouse like building." This confused explanation casts doubt on Malcolm's account, particularly when there was a public money-transferring business, from where the police were ultimately called, mere steps away-- seemingly a more fitting target for robbery than a warehouse.

Details that, at first glance, seem unimportant are otherwise highlighted by the fact that Malcolm overly stresses them. He opens by saying, "The intent was to rob, never to hurt, never to harm anybody, ya know, nothin' like that. as though, unsolicited and inexplicably, accentuating the non-intent to kill and, at the same time, shifting blame. He stresses this intent several more times throughout both his initial telling and his recap. He shares, as well, that "I had money in my pocket already that my, so…" Between his indicated lack of need to rob and continuous highlighting of the fact that the intent *was* to rob, along with the questionable venue for 'robbery,' it became, to me, a pertinent point, the contradictory nature of it prompting pause and warranting doubt.

Malcolm and his accomplice stood outside of the factory for a bit and, when one of the workers came to see what they were doing there, they "bummed" a cigarette from him. "Five minutes later me and the guy were in the place" --a rather passive way of getting to the scene of the planned crime, speaking to lack of agency. Prior to entering the building, "He had gave [sic] me the gun. I had the gun in my hand." Again, here, Malcolm is lacking active agency, as would be in "I had the gun," period. He goes on, "Went in there, like I said, intent was never to hurt anybody," sidestepping the fact that "*I* went in there." And, again, he stresses this non-intent of murder. He points the gun at the man whom they had just gotten a cigarette from. Malcolm twice avoids providing an agent to this statement, but one of them states, "This is a hold up." He later says it was his accomplice who stated this and, later yet, says it was himself, again, confusing agency in this act. Malcolm shoots the gun, killing the man.

After Malcolm shot the man, he hovered above the victim, staring intently. He was then pulled out of the building by his accomplice, and they ran. Malcolm then provides a very vague and muddled version of what, in short, according to what official statements say, is that he bragged to others about killing this man.

Malcolm's over-stressing that the intent was to rob (in spite of him having money in his pocket), the report that the kill was "immediate" by a witness, that he bragged about killing moments afterward, and many other instances of non-transparency put in question the motive. Malcolm was looking for belongingness from others—he had been tossed back and forth between his parents, his brother was locked up in a prison, it wasn't "cool" to hang out with his sisters. It makes sense that he turned to the streets for connection and

acceptance. One way to bolster this, according to several research participants, was to earn the respect of gang members in the area by engaging in extreme violence—the more extreme, the more respect is gained. Malcolm supports his apparent need for belongingness and the extreme to which he would go. When asked, at the end of the interview, why he did it, he stated as much—

> Peer pressure because of the other guy older than me [although he made it clear they were not friends, nor did they hang out] and bein' accepted and, ya know... I didn't spend a lot time with my own family, brothers and sisters because they didn't have a lot of time for me." […] "Bein' accepted but also to feel like ya know I can be down with whatever. However, whatever it gonna fall, it's gonna fall. That's not the way I was raised but it's just the way I adapted to, because of the people I was around, ya know... And well there's life or death, ya know, and it is what it is

—a rather unemotional view of life and death, really. Yet, in terms of doing whatever it took to belong, his statement seems to support this-- "bein' accepted," showing that he "can be down with whatever," and, regardless of how "it's gonna fall," he "adapted," even though it was "life or death…. It is what it is." It seems that power (here in the form of violence) was used to gain intimacy. In this example, it can be seen how the intimacy and power, as motivators to violence, are not entirely exclusive.

For Tremayne and Malcom, whose construct systems are rather un-elaborated, it is difficult to apply *specific* constructs to characteristics of or motive to the crime, as could be done to a greater extent in Theodore's and Lenny's cases. Narrative is perhaps exceptionally fruitful in gaining a better understanding of a murderer in cases like Malcolm's and Tremayne's, whose grids are less elaborate.

Malcolm and the Experience Cycle

Malcolm appeared to reflect the construing of a self-promoter. It seems he anticipated positive or fruitful outcomes by emulating himself to be like, and thus accepted by, those around him. Malcolm may have learned this through various, previous challenges-- shuffling back and forth between parents, his move to a foreign neighborhood, wanting to be cool and fit in-- all of which he navigated to some degree of success. It seems he learned that being accepted by others can be done by "adapting," as he himself indicates, to those around him. At the time of his crime, it is quite plausible that, in his desire for acceptance, he did what has arguably worked for him in the past -- he "adapted" to the influence of an older man who had the same name as him. Living in an area where violence was a quick path to respect (a form of belongingness), Malcolm took his opportunity.

It appears he met his needs a bit differently than other self-promotors, however, in that he *aligns* himself with others to advance himself into what he portrays as 'desired' positions. His ultimate act of self-promoting, as it is suspected he wanted to appear "cool" to his new-found friend and likely gain street status, was in the taking of a stranger's life.

Summary

In this chapter, four cases were used to illustrate various aspects of the research findings. Each addressed a different theme or combination of themes derived from these participants' elicited constructs. Each suggested how the participant's history, as discerned from their life narrative, may have contributed to their construing at the time of their crime. Each drew on the structure of the participant's construing to illustrate issues of key concern to them, and each explored how an understanding of the participant's construing can be applied to his crime. A brief discussion of how we might understand their motivation to commit murder in terms of their possible movement through the Experience Cycle was provided in each case. The content and structure of Tremayne's and Malcolm's cases also demonstrated how Self as the nucleus from which others are construed might appear in grids—through heavy self-referencing and tight construing—and how such construing manifested in their crimes.

While the RGT provides a great deal of understanding of participants, it was shown herein that narrative provides a great deal more, including indications of how constructs may have developed for each participant and, most importantly, how they possibly manifested in each murder. Repertory Grids examined with narrative, providing a context and background, provides richer insight into participants' psychological processing, behaviors, and potential motive.

Chapter 8 -- Discussion

Research Aims

1. To explore the construing of a sample of convicted murderers.
2. To examine any differences in construing between those committing Instrumental murders and those committing Expressive murders.

Summary of Main Findings

A PCT approach was used to explore the construing of 25 offenders who committed murder. Elicited constructs from these participants provided themes of construing which were prominent in this sample of murderers—power, intimacy, chaos, pleasure/hedonism, achievement/status, persona, spiritual/religion, active shaping, and anger. Distinguishable differences were seen in the themes of hedonism and active shaping, weighted more heavily by committers of Instrumental murder, and chaos, weighted more heavily by committers of Expressive murder. To a lesser degree were differences in the themes of achievement and persona, also weighted more heavily by the committers of Expressive murder. Key subthemes which appeared to distinguish committers of Instrumental from committers of Expressive murder included exploitation, surreptitiousness, and enemy in the power theme and love/care for 'me' and obliging of 'me' in the intimacy theme. The analysis suggests key differences in the way those who committed Instrumental murder and those who committed Expressive murder see themselves and Others. The Instrumental group tended overall to engage in more 'self-referencing' than the Expressive group; they were more prone to construing themselves as superior to others, to seeing themselves as a victim and they were often non-transparent in their accounts of their crimes.

This suggested there may be two forms of construing underpinning Instrumental and Expressive murders, which I have called 'self-promoting' and 'self-preserving' respectively. Self-promoting construers tend to see Self as the nucleus of Others' attention and this often manifests in a perception that others, if not 'for' them, are against them. They perceive a power imbalance between Self and others, which primes them to strive to be "one-up" on others and for conflictual interpersonal dynamics leading, at times, to violence and murder. The self-preservers tend to value intimacy and relationships with others. The role they play in relationships often defines who they are. Attachment to this, or some other crucial aspect of their identity, when invalidated, threatens their whole construct system, as it is foundational. The perceived need to preserve this self-identity, and thus one's entire system seems, at times, to lead to violence and murder.

Constructs of both power and intimacy appear to be important in understanding the motive to murder in both groups; however, *how* they are construed differs between the self-

promoters and the self-preservers. Moreover, power and intimacy do not seem to be separate notions as suggested by the existing literature.

It is proposed that conceptualizing Instrumental and Expressive crimes as ways of thinking, perhaps in terms of self-promoting and self-preserving, rather than as discrete acts may be a more useful approach to understanding murder.

Although other points of interest were found, these will be the primary focus of discussion, as they seem to be most fundamental to the enhancement of our understanding of murder.

Contribution to Knowledge

Firstly, the Instrumental/Expressive (I/E) dichotomy has been adopted as a useful distinction in the analysis of offenders' behavior. However, issues with this distinction have been raised in the literature and I have suggested that exploring the psychological processes behind these types might be helpful. This was the focus of this research.

The focus of much I/E research has been based on crime scene behavior. Some research goes further and attempts to draw associations between crime scene behavior and characteristics of those who commit crimes. My findings provide a more in-depth understanding regarding those who commit Instrumental and Expressive murder and suggest that differences in these crimes might better be understood in terms of the people who commit them and, even more so, their psychological processes, rather than simply characteristics or crime scene behaviors.

Secondly, while the importance of Self and Self's perceptions has been posed in the theoretical literature as significant, it had not been substantially explored in terms of the deeper psychology that may underlie murder. My research has done this and, in doing so, has validated what some theorists of violence have found and has also expanded upon and, in some cases, challenged that current knowledge. Moreover, it has done this applying PCT in a thorough attempt to understand more fully the *process* of construing behind the *act* of murder.

Lastly, while the notions of power and intimacy have been discussed in the literature to play a role in the motive to murder, which is supported herein, they have previously been posed as notions separate from each other. My findings suggest that they are inseparable in many cases and, essentially, two sides of the same coin.

Discussion of Findings

Thematic Construing of a Sample of Murderers

Several themes in participants' construing appeared to link to their psychological motivation to engage in the act of murder-- power, intimacy, hedonism, achievement, and chaos. While some of these-- power and intimacy (Youngs & Canter; 2011),

pleasure/hedonism (Canter & Ioannou, 2004; Ramirez, Bonnoit-Cabanac, & Cabanac, 2005; Ramirez, Millana, Toldos-Romero, Bonnoit-Cabanac, & Cabanac, 2009) and chaos (Winter, 2003a, 2006) have been proposed as motivators in person-to-person violence, my findings suggest varied nuances to the previous findings.

Power and Intimacy

The power theme was characterized by a perceived dominance of one person over another. It indicates a perception that one (the participant) is devalued in comparison to the other—the other is perceived as considering himself to be more important than the participant. The theme of intimacy relates to a closeness, or seeking of closeness, with another. In terms of motive to kill, it was the breaking of this bond or threat of losing it and the participant's role in relation to another which led to murder. When the themes of intimacy and power were broken down into subthemes there emerged an identifiable difference in construing between the committers of Instrumental murder and the committers of Expressive murder.

However, when intimacy is betrayed, it can reflect or replicate an imbalance of power. As with the Instrumental/Expressive dichotomy, the delineation of a power or intimacy motive was quite difficult, as it seemed that, depending on what aspect of motive one is looking at, either one can apply to nearly every case in which the other applies. In the cases where intimacy was seemingly the motive, the offenders appeared to go from feeling unity and intimacy, upon the dissolution of this connection, to feeling powerlessness over their dissolving relationship. Power, here, is not exactly the same as power over others, as discussed in the power theme. Rather than needing power and control over others, the construer here seems to need power and control over his feelings of vulnerability and other emotions. The difference is, perhaps, slight but important. The betrayal of their vulnerability 'had to' be rectified. Their intimate had been perceived as taking control over the participant's own emotions and this had to be re-balanced, re-gained or stopped in some way. Power and control over what was happening were sought.

Additionally, in those cases in which power appeared to be the motive, intimacy, too, played its part. For example, in the cases of Walter and Elroy, the desire for power manifested as greed for money and material things. However, when examined further, these material things were sought out in order to impress and attract a mate (in Walter's case) and to provide for family in Elroy's case – seemingly intentions of intimacy. In other cases, too, a desire for power manifested as a desire for respect, to stand out as admired by others. Respect, though, is utilitarian in gaining a belongingness with others—a motive of intimacy; for example, the respect of peers in a violent neighborhood, as in Malcom's case, to feel belongingness. As such, the notions of intimacy and power were difficult to discern as unrelated, or separate issues/motives.

Themes of "power" and "intimacy" in narrative/construing/crime motive are not new, but they have been often been presented as two concepts, independent of each other. McAdams (1982; 1988) speaks of humans' need for both power (potency) and love (intimacy). On one hand, humans strive to be autonomous—to expand and enhance themselves through power and achievement; on the other hand, they yearn to bond with others, to surrender themselves in a way that feels secure. Similar concepts are addressed by various authors, such as Youngs and Canter (2011), who stress in their theory of criminal narratives two analogous psychological underpinnings-- potency and intimacy; and in Leary's (1957) notion of Dominance/Submission (potency) and Love/Hate (intimacy) as two dimensions of interpersonal personality; Hermans' and Hermans-Jansen's (1995) 'S' motives – superiority, power, and expansion (potency)—and 'O' motives—union, contact, and intimacy (intimacy); and, as McAdams (1993) notes, Bakan's (1966) notions of agency (potency) and communion (intimacy).

While these authors of human behavior, narrative, and even criminal behavior present intimacy and power as two, distinct orthogonal constructs, and while this research indicates that power motives tend to overlap with the notions of Instrumental murder and self-promotion and intimacy motives with Expressive murder and self-preservation, I still find that a clear separation of power and intimacy motives is misleading. While a need for power and a separate need for intimacy might make sense conceptually, in practice, and specifically in attempting to discern a discrete motive for murder, they are much more difficult to tease apart. For several participants, intimacy resulted in loss of power and control, and the need to reverse that prompted violence. For other participants, for whom power at first appeared to be the underlying catalyst for their behavior, further examination revealed that a more foundational desire for intimacy was involved. In their desire to attract or impress a mate or peers, they sought usually monetary goods/money, inflicting power over others to gain this. In other cases, an obstacle or interferer to a desired intimate was over-powered and eliminated. Again, notions of power and intimacy, in the murders studied herein, act as interconnected stimuli to violence.

Chaos and Achievement

The notions of chaos and achievement are much less apparent in the literature on personal violence and murder. Violence as a path to avoiding or removing chaos or creating meaning and/or order in a world of perceived chaos has been discussed by Winter (2007), his point being that the avoidance/removal of chaos or insertion of order tend to offer a form of relief. However, while the application of this theme as a motivator pertained significantly to only one participant's crime, it manifested slightly differently than a seeking of relief. Instead, his construct of the world as chaotic prompted him to carry a gun at all times and be ever-vigilant in assessing his environment and others' behavior as a threat or

not. This hyper-alertness to the possible eruption of chaos at any time arguably primed him for violence. Perhaps this one case sheds light on an important aspect of chaos and violence which needs further examination, particularly for youth in violent, urban communities.

Achievement as a motivator for behavior has been presented as having a negative correlation to violence (Butler-Barnes, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2011). Research suggests that if people are focused on doing well in school, getting ahead in their jobs, and the like, their propensity for being involved in criminal or violent activity is reduced. My findings widened the concept of achievement and suggested the contrast as well-- that it can be a motivation to violence and murder-– and captured the meaning of this in its salience to the individual.

Anger

Anger is often implicated in the engagement of violence (Berkowitz, 1993; Wolf & Foshee, 2003; Del Vecchio & O'Leary, 2004; Davey, Day, & Howells, 2005; Gardner & Moore, 2008; Kimonis, Ray, Branch, Cauffman, 2011; Wongtongkam, Ward, Day, & Winefield, 2014; and others) and, thus, I feel it needs addressing if only to relay that, in the present study, anger-related construct poles elicited by the RGT were very few. It appeared in narratives, but, again, only minimally. The lack of anger-related RGT elicited constructs could be due to the fact that the participants were often reflecting on others as elements and not necessarily self-reflecting or, perhaps, most simply did not recognize themselves as angry.

Overall, my research implies there are constructs which contribute to violence which add to those in the existing literature or manifest a bit differently from what existing literature has indicated and may indicate areas or perceptions into which further exploration may be beneficial.

Psychological Processes behind Instrumental and Expressive Homicide

Much of the literature on the Instrumental/Expressive (I/E) dichotomy has, as mentioned, focused on the grouping of crime scene behaviors and/or characteristics of offenders (Fox & Allen, 2014; Last & Fritzon, 2005; Meneses-Reyes & Quintana-Navarrete, 2017; Salfati, 2000; Salfati & Park, 2007; Santtila, Canter, Elfgren, & Häkkänen, 2001; Santtila, Häkkänen, Canter, & Elfgren, 2003; Thijssen & de Ruiter, 2011). Characteristics of the offenders refers to such things as education level, marital status, or employment status (Meneses-Reyes & Quintana-Navarrete, 2017); criminal history, housing type, relationship status, having a weapon permit (Santtila, Häkkänen, Canter, & Elfgren, 2003) and the like. While that might help in identifying suspects during an investigation, it essentially results in lists, or more appropriately, "groupings," of crime scene variables or offender characteristics to allocate to either the Instrumental or Expressive category. Multi-dimensional scaling has

most often been used to do this. This approach shows which acts and/or characteristics occur most frequently together (thus, "groupings'). However, the results seem to vary depending upon the specific acts committed and/or the characteristics of the people committing them. These variations have caused a lack of clarity in the distinction between Instrumental and Expressive acts and what characteristics of offenders correlate with what types of acts. My research offers a broader way of conceptualizing offenders, based on possible processes of construing, and suggests the crime itself as the focus is not the only or perhaps the most effective way of conceptualizing this dichotomy. It suggests that the foundational difference lies in the process of construing and tentatively proposes two psychological processes. One does tend to overlap with Instrumental murder and one does tend to overlap with Expressive murder.

The differences in these psychological processes—self-promoting and self-preserving—the basis of which are differences in the construal of self, others, and self in relation to others-- manifest differently in regard to motive to murder, as either a desire (for gain or status) or a threat (of loss of role or identity). While the I/E literature has already recognized desire and threat as motivating factors for violence (Miethe & Drass, 1999; Prentky, et al., 1985; Salfati, 2000; Santtila, et al., 2003), my research has provided a more nuanced understanding of these. Also, in regard to the desire motive, it offers a less pejorative understanding by providing a tentative explanation of its development as a response to historical oppression, poverty, and the like, adding to what has been previously understood.

Stepping back from the flicker of time which the moment of a murder encases and stepping back from the I/E dichotomy, these two systems of construing, viewed as long-standing, psychological processes as motivators to murder, help us to better understand what may be going on in the minds of those who murder. Applying these construct systems to the people who commit murder adds insight into the notions of Instrumental and Expressive homicide, focusing not on the act, as much of the literature has, but on the person.

Overall, the psychological processing of the different types of selves who commit murder has extended the notion of the salience of self and self-perceptions in the act of violence present in existing literature.

The Importance of Self and Self/Other Perception

My findings support the notion proposed by other authors of violence theory, who generally seem to agree that the self and self's perceptions of the self and others contribute greatly to one's engagement in violence. Toch (1969) puts forth that the offender has "unconscious assumptions" about others that contribute to his incitation to act violently. Winlow and Hall (2009) also put forth that assumptions about others' perceptions contribute

to violence. One example they provided was that people are trying to wrestle dignity from one another. My research supports these claims and goes beyond them to provide insight as to what, at least in the case of self-promoters, these "unconscious assumptions" are — an overriding construction that others are against them. It might also, consistent with a PCT approach, challenge the concept of their assumptions being "unconscious" but might more appropriately refer to them as preverbal or their meaning as yet to be understood. My research brings an awareness of these relevant constructs and offers a tentative meaning for the experiencer and those studying him by exploring how these may have developed. My research suggests, even beyond Toch's recognition of offenders' lack of *understanding* of the motives of others, discussed in the literature review, that what their perception entails is a near complete lack of *acknowledgement* of others' construing and the potential that others may construe things differently than what the offender assumes. It is a lack of sociality, perhaps, or a form of hostility in which the offender fails to accommodate evidence of others' construing within his construct system. In the case of self-promoters, the assumption that others are against them seems to be a major contributor to their propensity for violence. My findings do, however, align with those of Toch (1969), who suggests the existence of two typologies of men who engage in violence—the one who acts out of threat and the other who views others as instruments to fulfill his own needs. Within each of these typologies, however, are several sub-categories which delineate further what appears to be essentially, according to my findings, the same psychological process amongst Toch's sub-categories at work. Understanding sub-categories as overall types of processes (as either self-promoting or self-preserving) might be more coherent and more economical in practical terms, such as trying to identify it in a research participant or in a patient in a therapeutic setting.

Katz (1988), too, focused very much on perceptions of the Self and the foreground of crime—immediate precipitating factors to one's engagement in crime-- rather than longer-term psychological processes. His theory proposes, as well, a different psychological process for various types of violence, which he referred to as the "badass;" street elites; persisting with stick up; and the evil, desire-driven murderer. My findings, looking at longer-term construing, do not necessarily map onto what he has found and, while there may be some overlap, the overall construing of how one comes to engage in violence is quite different. As in my findings, Katz' notion of "moral emotions" reflects the salience of an attachment to a self-perception and invalidation of that (e.g. humiliation) and he suggests that the offender thinks he is superior (e.g. righteousness, arrogance). However, he argues that the offender's subsequent attack upon others in response to this is a result of his perceived moral superiority and an attempt to level the moral ground. He argues that these are based upon his external values and his violence binds himself with a temporary

sense of synchronization with the Good. My research suggests that these are not attempts to balance the moral ground but, rather, are attempts to redress the imbalance of power; are based not on external values but personal constructs, "personal" being the key word, as they are not outside of oneself and the impetus is quite internal; and my research does not suggest that an offender has or takes on some alignment with a higher, more moral sense of Goodness in his act of murder. (Subsequent justifications for the act may have alluded to a sense of righteousness or arrogance but my participant data did not indicate that alignment with a higher purpose or sense of Goodness was their reason for murder or a cognition at play at the time.) Katz also states that, in order to be violent (e.g. kill) in such circumstances, the offender must "successfully organize his behavior to maintain the required perspective and emotional posture while implementing a particular project" (1988, p. 19). This implies a degree of contemplation of the back-and-forth of behavior and thought and, seemingly, that the behavior influences thought. My research challenges this in exploration of the C-P-C cycle and foreshortening of circumspection as the incitation to action, as Winter (2006) suggested, in these more expressive cases of murder. Kelly implies, in cases of hostility, that there is a blurring of judgment, rather than effective circumspection, as Katz seems to propose. Kelly states, "With the adoption of hostility, he surrenders his capacity to judge the outcome of his way of life and without that capacity, he must inevitably go astray" (1964, n.p.). The implication in all of this is perhaps that, although Katz gives detailed steps taking place in one's cognition within each of these processes and they seem to makes sense, he speaks of the process as "sensual," implying that they are somehow transcendental, and quite suppositional, as they are not based on interviews with offenders but, rather, investigative documents and biographies of offenders. Thus, the question of validity remains.

Athens (1992), who did interview offenders directly for their stories, focused much more so on their behavior, rather than their perceptions. From this, he presents a model for the dangerous violent criminal which suggests that one must pass through a series of rather rigid stages of violent socialization to get from one to the next. He states explicitly that, if one does not complete each stage successively, he will not become a dangerous violent criminal. While it is quite likely that if one undergoes the experiences he speaks of in each of his stages, they will form a certain system of construing that may well result in murder, my research puts forth that it is not the experiences that will result in dangerously violent (or murderous) behavior but, rather, how one construes his experiences. I believe this is an important distinction to make, as it leaves open the possibility for change in construing to be made and, thus, for different behavior. Moreover, looking at development toward violent behavior from a PCT perspective necessarily extends examination beyond simply behavior but includes the exploration of cognition and emotion in tandem with behavior, as

construing is and, in fact, according to Kelly, *humans* are, a process. Separating these and studying just one of them (e.g. behavior) does not lend itself to understanding violence more fully.

Extending PCT in forensic research

The perceptions of self and others as salient has also been very apparent in other PCT forensic research. However, much of this research has focused on sexual offending. While the PCT and sexual offending research has also underscored the salience of self- and others-perceptions in regard to offending, my findings have expanded upon this in regard to another type of offending, murder. Much of the sexual offending research has focused on self as a sex offender, offenders' self-esteem and self-worth, and the possible implications for this on their future self. Being their focus was on the psychosexual self primarily, their findings indicate sexual-self related topics—for example, lack of feeling attractive, sexual adequacy, and how their sexual preferences might affect their future behavior (Blagden, et al., 2018; Horley, 2003). This may be reflective of, more broadly, negative self-image and an insecure self which might be considered as a reason for such extreme attachment to one's identity in the case of self-preservers or, in the case of self-promoters, as a reason to pose as superior-- to compensate for their possible sense of inferiority. Thus, negative self-image, (i.e. insecurity, overcompensation for a sense of inferiority) may be a more foundational aspect contributing to offending, regardless of type of offending.

In another application of RGT to understand sex offending, Blagden, et al. (2018) studied another four cases. Findings overlapped here as well, some of which included the importance of intimacy, relationships, and trust ("caring," "loving," "lasting relationships," etc.); constructs of power ("domineering," "manipulative,"); one offender had, at least in the past, "egocentric/'me-istic' constructs (p. 748); and, again, as in Blagden, et al. (2012) and my research, a lack of elaboration of others and polarized thinking. Other parallels were also apparent. Blagden, et al. (2012) recognized through analysis of a single sex offender's repertory grid that he views himself differently and as separate from others; as a victim; with a grievance style of thinking (similar to my concept of blame); and construes with hostility. He also views the victim negatively ("uncaring," "jealous," "devious") and views others rather indifferently, which might align with my finding that others are not viewed elaborately. My research adds weight to these findings in which only a very few cases were studied, as similar findings were made in this study of a sample of 25 participants. While comparison between the findings of these two subjects (sex offending and murder) is perhaps too premature, my findings do contribute further evidence for these features and show that their significance may well extend beyond the narrow field of sex offending. The overall implication that certain aspects of perceptions of self and others are salient across offending types is a promising foundation for future research.

Horley, who has done much of the sexual offending/PCT research, does speak of murder in his 2003 work. He offers reasons why a person might kill, which my research does support—to extend his construct system (he offers the example of killing a gang rival to increase his status) or to refine one' sense of Self—both of which might be considered self-promoting. My research also gives weight to Horley's claim that "systematic differences in construct systems among various categories of offender are likely" (2003, p.7) and, while this statement is referring to such a possibility in regard to sex offenders, my findings suggest that systematic differences among murders, at least, are likely to exist.

Winter's (2006) discussion of violence/murder in PCT terms stems from Kelly's (1961) taxonomy of suicide and his diagnostic constructs (1955). He uses PCT to explain various pathways to murder—as a foreshortening of the C-P-C cycle, as constriction, as a consequence of tight construing, as slot-rattling, as a way to establish meaning and escape chaos, as a lifestyle, and as a way to relieve oneself of certain emotions, such as anxiety, guilt, and shame, to include a few. My research, however, has gone beyond the 'acute' act of murder and explored the act of murder as the culmination of a life-long process by applying Kelly's Experience Cycle. This has resulted not in a contrasting view of murder using PCT but, perhaps, a more elaborate understanding of it as a process. Winter's (2006) pathways to murder might be applicable to various cases of mine. However, as suggested in discussion of Toch's (1969) taxonomy, my conceptualization may present a more efficient way to explain broader typologies of murderers (e.g. Instrumental and Expressive) while still using PCT.

Winter (2003a, 2007) also offers 'dilation' as another pathway to murder in which one is extending one's construct system. He suggests this as a possibility in a case of serial murder. In my participants, who are not (as far as is known) serial murderers, the extension of one's system might be more appropriately understood in reference to one's constructs of robbery, an unfortunate 'side effect' of which is the murder of a victim. In other words, they may push their own previous 'boundaries' in engagement in robbery by taking more aggressive approaches and/or taking greater risks (e.g. going from bringing an unloaded gun to bringing a loaded gun; robbing a store that is closed to robbing a store that has people in it) while not actually meaning to kill. My findings do suggest, though, that some participants in this current population are likely constricting their systems, as Winter discusses (2006, 2007), minimizing the perceived incompatibilities in construing by removing the source of the incompatibility. It seems this notion could be applied in several cases of both Instrumental murder and Expressive murder. It seems then, that various PCT notions, while not inconsistent with each other, can be applied to the act of murder in different ways. My findings have added to this by thoroughly exploring how PCT can be applied to understanding the development of construct systems over the long-term, aiding

our understanding of why these phenomena, such as dilation and constriction, might be happening.

Byrd, O'Connor, Thackrey, & Sacks' (1993) RGT study of self-concept did not support their hypothesis that a direct relationship exists between delinquent behavior and a self-concept as a delinquent offender. Byrd et al. argue that those who behave delinquently may not identify as such because they are in denial, concealing information from self. Secondly, while the authors try to reconcile their findings with the consistency theory, which "holds that delinquent behavior is a way of affirming one's self-beliefs in that area," (p.199) they propose that the delinquents must be maintaining such a self-concept through other verifiable behavior. Lastly, they propose that delinquent behavior might be explained as a way to protect a non-delinquent concept of self. My findings seem to offer some support for the last one of these explanations. My findings suggest that, at least for the self-promoters (who might arguably be regarded as more prone to delinquent behavior), they may not even recognize self as delinquent because how they behave is justified and fair—they are simply trying to redress the perceived unjustified imbalance of power or make the first move toward being on top, as others are assumed to be motivated to do so as well.

Houston (1998) focused on a personality disordered population and found impulsivity and dualistic thinking to be a trend, particularly in the psychopathic offender, and offers that their construing seems to be marked by a Good v Bad superordinate construct. The female disordered offenders she discusses tended to, similarly, rate others dualistically—they saw them as ideal or they denigrated them. My findings, again in regard to the self-promoter, support this, as this is primarily how they construed others. It also extends this by presenting the notion that "good" or "bad" was tied to how that other treated them specifically.

Finally, although empirical studies of a person's progression through the Experience Cycle have been done (Oades & Viney, 2011; Sedumedi & Winter, in press), it is implausible to empirically study a person's life-long progression through the Experience Cycle due to limitations of memory. This aside, I have attempted to apply this particular PCT concept to present a plausible way to understand the long-term development of constructs and how they might manifest in a murder.

A word of caution

Overall, my research has added to the literature and understanding of murder in PCT terms, expanding the understanding of the phenomenon of murder as the culmination of a long-term psychological process. However, I feel a caution is warranted. The labelling of murder as either Expressive or Instrumental, as motivated by threat or desire, *or* as psychologically processed through self-preservation or self-promotion must be done with thoughtfulness and the awareness that people are more complex than fitting into one

category or another. The categorization of self-promoters and self-preservers regards the *construing* of the people who commit these crimes, not the crimes themselves. It is a tentatively posed "mind-set" or construal process which appears foundational to different types of murderers' ways of perceiving and being in this world which play a part in their murders. One's crime can be self-preserving, while he himself is a 'self-promoter.' Less often, perhaps, is that a murder is self-promoting but done by a self-preserver. Also, an act may appear one way but, as more is discovered about the psychology behind it, it may more appropriately be deemed as its contrast.

Another point to be made which adds issue to categorization of both crime acts and people committing them is that events and, thus, intentions may change instantaneously. One who is set out to rob a convenience store may be outright willing to kill to obtain his goods. Others may not, however. During the commission of his crime, a threat may occur (e.g. the owner of the shop pulls a gun of his own during the robbery) and the motivation to kill, then, may be an unintended murder performed out of response to the threat and self-preservation. Thus, not all murders that are a consequence of the pursuit of desire, or even self-promotion, are intended. Realistically, though, in cases in which a perpetrator goes into a shop where it is known or likely that others are there working or shopping, the idea of the *threat* those employees or patrons may pose as outweighing the perpetrator's *desire* for goods as a motivator to violence does not resonate as likely in many people's ears, particularly those of judges and jurors. Although the would-be-victim is perhaps more accurately perceived as an *obstacle* to obtaining the object of desire (i.e. self-promoting), the potential that the would-be victim may become a threat may or may not have been weighed in the decision to commit the crime prior to commission of the crime. A thief may have anticipated the possibility of such a threat and, in all intentionality acted in accordance with his self-promoting character as one who will kill or be killed, "It's me versus others", or 'Self first,' for example—to meet his desired end. More naively, though, a thief may not have anticipated this potential threat, yet, in all "innocence" acted in violence in response to this threat. Such cases of murder do not, then, entirely result out of desire and are not strictly speaking instrumental. The armed robbery was instrumental, but the murder may have been much less intended, as it was enacted out of a response to threat. In short, this is to recognize that the distinction between self-promoting and self-preserving, as with Instrumental and Expressive homicide, cannot be considered simple and unproblematic.

Reflections on the Research Process

I genuinely feel the collection of data from these participants was one of the most unique and enjoyable experiences of my life. It seemed I was able to establish rapport with them quite quickly, which led to a natural and relaxed interchange between us. While I was aware that some participants might be looking at this opportunity to advance their agenda,

I feel that I remained neutral to indications of this and neither encouraged nor discouraged it in my response to them. This is important because, should the participant feel either persuaded to proceed or not proceed down such a possible path, it could alter his presentation to be less authentic than what it might otherwise be. On the other hand, my awareness of this as a possibility could, just as well, have influenced my interpretation. As such, I was consistently challenging this possibility, asking myself if my interpretation of the participant/data is a result of my own construing. And, yes, while it always will be that, I was careful to consistently challenge my potential sensitivities to being "used" for another person's agenda. Being a counsellor in a prison, the notion of "being used" by inmates is prominent. Staff often state such things as "Oh, he is just manipulating you" or "You've been had by him." I gently challenge these staff to seek beyond what they pejoratively call manipulation and encourage them to ask *why* an inmate might be manipulating. What is psychologically salient is the *function* of that behavior. In terms of counselling, one should then be exploring further why an inmate is manipulating, perhaps asking what happened to the offender for him to find the need to engage in this way and, ultimately, helping him to discover what might be a more effective way of approaching a situation/people. This, too, was the approach I took with these participants. Also, I felt that somewhere within each participant is a genuine need for compassion and understanding. A non-pejorative approach to examining (and presenting) their stories was a major impetus for this research. While each one is not individually shared in depth herein, it is hoped that my findings generally provide a deeper understanding of these participants and their behavior so that pre-emptive construing of them might be curbed. In short, my feelings going into this research were that more can be understood of people who commit murder if we are open to just listening to and better understanding them, and these feelings have been reinforced—that everyone has a story to share and we will better understand him/her if we just listen. Also, awareness that there are potentials for being 'manipulated' are much less of a concern when one looks beyond their own pejorative judgment of this as a negative phenomenon or as a personal attack on them and seeks, instead, to understand *why* one is trying to manipulate. This research process has afforded me the opportunity to really experience and demonstrate the benefits of an unbiased, non-judgmental approach and further adopt it into my practice, both professionally and personally. Clients seem to "sense" this and it invites them to open up and also explore themselves non-judgmentally— e.g. why they do what they do, how experiences have affected them, etc. I can see from experience that this is when healing begins to take place.

Limitations of the Research The population studied herein was limited by accessibility and, while it must always be the choice of the participant to participate, their opting in or out of interviewing may have been affected by their psychological processing—self-

promotors may have been more likely to contribute as it provided a venue in which to grandstand, yet, they may have avoided contributing, perceiving that I might somehow surreptitiously use their information against them. Self-preservers might be seeking a bond of sorts or closeness with a person outside of the prison system, prompting them to come forward. Volunteers for this kind of project may be quite different from those who choose not to come forward. As such, my sample may be of a very particular kind represented by those who want (for whatever reason) to engage in this kind of interaction. Those who do not want to come forward might represent a completely different psychological process.

Because this type of population for this type of research—in-depth interviews-- is difficult to access, in terms of permission from prisons, participant willingness, and time necessary to conduct lengthy interviews, the sample size is quite limited. This is a notable limitation of this study, particularly in terms of the veracity of the quantitative results that have been posed herein. Again, though, the results are meant to pose possible trends of differences between Instrumental and Expressive murderers and to provide a foundation for further potential research.

The culture of the area of the country from which I drew my data is also likely to impact findings. The history of oppression or not, the acceptability of carrying a gun or not, poverty levels, the actual violence (as opposed to simply perceived conflict)—these all impact construct development and behavior which is pertinent to this study. Analysis of additional participants or a different offender population may produce additional findings.

The time span between commission of the murders and the time of the interview/construct elicitation also poses a limitation, as it is not known to what degree that amount of time may have had an effect on participants' construing. As such, it must be understood that the participants' constructions elicited are retrospective of past behavior. While attempts were made to mitigate this and analysis of life and crime narratives throughout seemed to demonstrate these elicited constructs, constructs at the time of the crime cannot be strictly assumed. However, although studies regarding stability of constructs over such a long time period are lacking the available evidence does suggest the general stability of construing over time.

The current population is a niche group-- murderers from a particular part of the United States. Again, the culture in the location studied may impact these offenders in ways other murderers are not impacted. As such, these findings may not be transferable to other murderers. Also, non-offenders and non-violent offenders were not included in this study. Wider populations might be researched in order to identify whether there are similar themes in their constructs and how tightly or loosely they construe in comparison to self-promoters and self-preservers. While self-promoters appear to construe more tightly than self-preservers, it is difficult to say if self-preservers construe more tightly than the average

person, than non-violent offenders, or than other violent offenders. This is of particular relevance because of the implied attachment to their self-identity as a catalyst to murder. It would be interesting to assess how tightly or loosely other populations construe in this regard.

Another limitation is that I had only one opportunity to access these participants for information. Following up with the participants on some of my speculations would have been helpful (for example, would they agree with my speculations on what factors contributed to their murder if posed to them?). I suspect some would welcome this information, so as to understand themselves better, while others might want to avoid this. Additionally, had I been able to detect potential areas of non-transparency during the interview process, I would have been, at that moment, able to ask pertinent follow up questions whose answers may have clarified, for example, the instrumental/expressive categorization given to their crimes. An additional meeting with them would also allow for laddering (Bannister & Mair, 1968) of constructs, which may have granted even deeper insight, and/or provided information about the ordination of the constructs elicited. In some situations, participants gave the same constructs repeatedly. While attempts were made to encourage participants who fell into a pattern like this to come up with other constructs, they were not heavily pressed and they continued to fall back on the same or similar constructs. While this may pose concern regarding the actual tightness or looseness of their construing, as further prompting may have elicited broader elaboration in construing, this may just be reflective of, indeed, tight construing. Again, though, responses are, in their own right, reflective of the psychology of the participant and the trends demonstrated herein were reflective of previous findings (e.g. salience of Self, egotism, indifference to others, etc.). Moreover, the interview process was long and arduous and the RGT, which was the last step of the interview process, often seemed to leave interviewees exhausted; also, taking into account the cognitive capacity of some, it was decided to not push them into what was assessed to perhaps be "too much" for them in hopes that they endured. Future research would take into consideration these factors when designing the interview process and the elicitation of constructs specifically.

Implications for Practice

Therapeutically

Understanding the psychological process of murder/violence is particularly essential to the treaters of violent persons and to the offenders, themselves, who seek personal improvement. When one has a deeper understanding as to his motive for acting violently and the psychological processing behind that, his insight can lead to greater control over such self-sabotaging tendencies.

While the current research did not go into any detail about what happens to the self-preserver and self-promoter in Step 5 of the Experience Cycle, revision of hypotheses (Step 5) is arguably at some point necessary for personal growth. For the self-preserver, the consequences of prison and all its detriments may have catalyzed this personal growth. For the self-promoter, the consequences of prison and all its detriments may solidify their hypotheses (e.g. others are against him and, thus, I need to do what I have to do to be on top [as the prison environment can be antagonistic]). While the self-promoter, then, seems to 'successfully' complete the EC (i.e. hypotheses are confirmed), he will actually experience further conflict the more he construes in this way.

Unveiling his constructs at work can help him to see other perceptions and assemble more productive and hopefully more meaningful constructs. He can learn that the ways/constructs which may have served him in the past are no longer serving him and new ways of thinking/constructs can take hold. As noted, RGT and narrative are valuable tools in unveiling self-identity, and *attachment* to that, as a determinant in action as extreme as murder. Realizing this can loosen its grasp on the patient. What was once perceived as a life-destroying threat/conflict may now be realized for what it is, simply, his *perception* of extreme threat/conflict, perhaps prompting him into acceptance, which is needed to continue successfully through the Experience Cycle.

Insight into a client's self-perception and other-perception and constructs might provide an understanding by which a therapist and patient together can instigate prevention planning. They can prepare for scenarios in which perceptions of self and others might be challenged, thus, aiding clients in loosening of those constructs. Alternatively, healthier perspectives can then be "tried on," practiced, (as in Kelly's Fixed-role therapy [1955]) and eventually become part of the person's self-concept.

RGT can identify quite readily, too, if a participant has an idea of his future self as improved from his current self and, if he does, what his notions are in that regard. Once identified, he and the therapist can "map" more readily his way to becoming his ideal self. A therapist (or supervising agent) of an offender can assess not only their goals for self-change through RGT, but their amenability to treatment. If he wants greater change in his current self and to move toward an ideal self, of his own definition, he is likely motivated to be an active agent in that change. If his ideal self reflects his past or current Self, as may be more likely with self-promoters, his motivation to change may be minimal. Motivation to change is an important factor in triaging resources, which are limited and often seriously deficient. It is highly unlikely that a person who does not want to change or does not see the need for change will do so and, thus, resources might be better spent on those who do. Yet, assessing the constructs of those who do not want to change and discussing those with them may be useful in identifying how those constructs are no longer serving that individual

and, thus, prompt motivation to change. Kelly provides in Volume Two of his *Psychology of Personal Constructs* (1991) in-depth material for clinical diagnosis and treatment utilizing PCT and RGT.

The RGT, in particular, is of value in assessing and treating offenders, wherein truth-telling can pose obstruction to treatment, as it is an implicit way to unveil things that may not be so explicit.

Investigatively

Construct themes presented herein might present themselves in varying ways and can likely be useful in identifying underlying motivation to commit violence. If an investigator listens astutely to the way a suspect talks about even more mundane things, unrelated to his/her crime, (s)he might recognize indications of what motivates the individual. A motivation of Intimacy, a need for connectedness, may be demonstrated by preoccupation with a particular person or the importance of relationships more generally. Motivations of Power might be considered if a suspect's narration reflects a need for superiority, demonstrated through presentation of superiority, victim stance/blame, talk of injustices, unfairness, or imbalance of social markers. Achievement motives may present themselves as preoccupation with those that have potential or achieved success, notions of wealth, education, career, status, acquiring symbols of achievement, respect in a particular field, etc. Motivations of pleasure or hedonism might be demonstrated by a lifestyle of "vice" or hedonism or as a personal, passionate interest in some activity or thing, possibly even addiction. Chaos and order might be reflected in one's lifestyle as well—street living, violence, "running wild," even, simply, survival. The sub-themes discussed herein, too, may be telling for a perceptive investigator. For example, focus on unfair power imbalances and perceptions of malicious intent on the part of others may give hint to the suspect's construing as self-promoting and, perhaps, Instrumental motives. Even if a suspect is not talking about the crime at hand, he may reveal a great deal about his constructs and, as such, a motive. Knowledge of the construct themes/sub-themes discussed herein could provide useful insight for investigators of crime.

Attention to the prominence of a suspect's particular constructs is important to investigators because it cues the inquirer as to what lines of questioning may be fruitful to follow in regard not just to motivate but perhaps even provide insights as to whether or not one will confess and/or into what may compel them to confess and/or provide insights into crime scene behavior. Awareness of intimacy-related motives and the notion that the suspect's intimates are of great value to him might lead investigators to question more thoroughly a suspect's intimates, those to whom he may have confessed or with whom he may have hidden evidence. One who is motivated to kill out of power is perhaps less likely to confess, as it gives up his power; yet, being motivated by power, questioning might be

crafted in a way so as to play into that need, for example, making him think he has the upper-hand, when in actuality he is revealing a great deal of information pertinent to the investigation or treatment.

Suggestions for Future Research

To develop a foundation of knowledge in regard to construct themes and structure that delineates murderers from other violent offenders or non-offenders would be an important first step. Research into how female offenders construe-- differences between them and males or amongst themselves-- would be valuable as well.

Then, developing a more substantial database for understanding and profiling violent offenders using PCT may be advantageous. Possible avenues for fruitful exploration would include how construct themes/sub-themes might relate to specific crime scene behaviors (pre-, post-, and during the commission of the crime); greater understanding of tightness/looseness in construing and its impact on violence; and perhaps additional data outputs available through RGT computer software, such as implicative dilemmas which would shed light on internal conflicts, element ordination which might shed light on victim choice, and more.

Empirical research of linguistics of violent offenders might also be beneficial. As noted, nuances in narration were helpful in gaining a greater understanding of participants' non-transparency and possible purposes behind their narration. I was able to tentatively identify nuances in their narration and linguistics which they used, knowingly or unwittingly, to serve various functions, such as stalling to give them time to think, to accept or deny agency, to confuse the audience, etc., each of which were telling-- for example, indicative of lying, accountability, superiority, victim stance, etc. Future research might expand upon the ways in which the narrative nuances utilized herein, Bruner's (1997) self-indicators, and those identified by O'Conner (2000) might manifest in self-promoters and self-preservers differently or be used by offenders in general.

Conclusion

Themes in construing were found to be somewhat different for instrumental and expressive murderers. Committers of instrumental homicide tended to construe others in terms of an imbalance of power. Expressive murderers tended to construe more elaborately and be more varied in their construing of Others. Instrumental and Expressive murderers were also found to differ in terms of self-referencing, superiority, victim stance and blame, and the transparency with which they spoke of their crimes. This suggested the existence of two different forms of construing that are proposed to underpin Instrumental and Expressive murders. Instrumental murderers tended to see themselves as the nucleus of others' construing and of their environments. They often viewed others antagonistically and

even as intentionally out to harm them. This seemed to prime them for the perception of conflict and, thus, a perceived need to redress an imbalance of power and/or pre-emptively position themselves in an advantageous position over others. Expressive murderers tended to see others more in terms of reciprocal relationships and as people with whom they formed bonds. These bonds were often significant in terms of their self-identity, to which they were very attached. When others threatened or invalidated their heavy investment of self-identity, violence ensued. Thinking of Instrumental and Expressive murder in terms of the construing of perpetrators rather than in terms of crime scene behavior may be beneficial in understanding perpetrators moving forward and has a number of implications for the practice of crime investigators and providers of treatment for violent offenders. Finally, my PCT approach has argued for the benefits of trying to step into the shoes of the perpetrator, trying to see the world through their eyes, rather than seeing them as simply 'evil' or having a psychopathic personality. It also argues for the usefulness of understanding construing within the life-history of the individual. I believe this is a less pejorative and more humanitarian approach to murder and murderers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Approval/Procedures—State Prison System, University, and Participants

Appendix 1.1- Research Proposal

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Re: Summary of Research Proposal Entitled *Violent Offenders' Narratives and Personal Constructs: What They Tell Us about Motive, Victim Selection, Crime Scene Behavior, Risk of Recidivism and Amenability to Treatment* by Victoria Sebranek

Very little research has performed in-depth analysis of murderous behavior using comprehensive input from those who actually engage in this behavior. Moreover, none has taken such a holistic approach as to include both the narratives and personal constructs of these offenders. This research aims to do that and to go one step further-- to analyze offender response alongside official crime scene records to identify how the *psychology* of the offender was demonstrated in the *actions* of the offense as indicated by the crime scene evidence. Analyzed aggregately, it is anticipated that themes in both psychology and action can be identified and correlated. This research, then, intends to add to our understanding of the psychology of murder and implement a practical application of this knowledge by developing quantitative indexes, which are expected to add scientific value to violent offender profiling, using qualitative information supplied by offenders themselves. Adding such scientifically substantiated, empirical knowledge to the 'profiling' of violent offenders is what lies at the heart of the developing science known as Investigative Psychology. Including the input and insight of the offenders themselves adds richness and depth rarely elicited or examined and applied to such data.

This proposed project anticipates conducting in-depth interviews with 20 to 25 convicted murderers for their narratives of significant life events, including a semi-structured questionnaire regarding their index crimes, and the elicitation of their personal constructs (per George Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology) in order to get the offenders' history, input and perceptions of themselves, others, and their world to reveal their internal motivations toward extreme violence. Their input will then be analyzed alongside of the official crime scene record of their murder to identify their actions taken during the crime. The purpose of this research is to 1) gather from offenders themselves their perceptions (conscious and unconscious) and input as to what might drive them to engage in extreme violence; 2) to analyze this offender input alongside the actual evidence of actions taken during the commission of the crime so as correlate psychological dispositions behind particular violence-related actions; 3) to build upon the working Offense Narrative theory as posed by Canter and Youngs by applying it to extremely violent offenders; and 4) to highlight the potential for utilization of Personal Construct Psychology (specifically the Repertory Grid Technique) in assessing violent offenders. Its practical applications focus on increasing efficacy in identifying and apprehending murderers, augmenting and enhancing current approaches in assessing extremely violent perpetrators, and discerning implications for possible treatment and intervention strategies for such offenders.

Appendix 1.2- State Department of Corrections Research Approval Procedure

(A scanned copy is provided on the following pages, as it was redacted to ensure anonymity of the State in which the interviews were conducted.)

STATE OF [redacted]
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS
CORRECTIONS SERVICES

Department Regulation [redacted] [redacted] 2008

FIELD OPERATIONS
General
Social Science Research Regarding Prisons, Offenders and/or Effects of Incarceration

1. **AUTHORITY:** Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections as contained in Chapter [redacted] of Title [redacted].

2. **REFERENCES:** [redacted] ACA Standards [redacted] through [redacted] (Administration of Correctional Agencies); [redacted] (Adult Correctional Institutions) and Department Regulation Nos. [redacted] "Access to and Release of Active and Inactive Offender Records" and Health Care Policy No. [redacted] "Offender Participation in Medical, Pharmaceutical or Cosmetic Experiment and Research."

3. **PURPOSE:** To state the Secretary's policy regarding social science research and the direct participation of offenders in such research.

4. **APPLICABILITY:** Deputy Secretary, Chief of Operations, Undersecretary, Assistant Secretary, Regional Wardens and Wardens. Each Warden shall ensure that appropriate unit written policy and procedures are in place to comply with the provisions of this regulation.

5. **POLICY:** It is the Secretary's policy that the institutions be encouraged to support, engage in and use research activities relevant to program services and operations. Requests and proposals for research shall be reviewed and approved in accordance with the provisions of this regulation.

6. **DEFINITIONS:**

   A. Offender: Anyone in the physical custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or under the supervision of the Division of Probation and Parole.

   B. Minimal Risk: The probability and magnitude of physical or psychological harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives, or in the routine medical, dental, or psychological examination of healthy persons.

   C. Research: A systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to common knowledge.

7. PROCEDURES:

A. Research studies of the possible causes, effects and processes of incarceration and studies of institutional structures and/or of offenders as incarcerated persons may be conducted.

B. The Warden or designee shall review the research proposal and discuss with the researcher(s) the contents of the proposal and plans for the research results. The Warden shall initially approve a research proposal before forwarding it to the Chief of Operations for final approval.

C. The following criteria shall be considered during the Warden's and Chief of Operations' review of the research proposal:

1) The conduct of research in the institution complies with professional and scientific ethics and with applicable state and federal guidelines for the use and dissemination of research findings.

2) The research presents no more than minimal risk to the offender and may consist of written questionnaires, surveys and analysis of census and demographic data.

3) The research involves conditions particularly affecting offenders as a class.

4) Research on practices, either innovative or accepted, which have the intent and reasonable probability of improving the health or well-being of the offender.

5) Operational personnel may assist research personnel in carrying out research and evaluation.

6) Any direct offender participation is voluntary. (If an offender is under the age of 17, consent is needed from the offender's parents or legal guardian, unless the research only consists of retrieving data that has previously been collected during the normal course of business.)

7) The names of all participants are to be held in confidence.

8) The results of the research shall be shared with the Department.

9) The research activities will not interfere with the normal operations of the institution.

10) The persons conducting the research are qualified to do so.

11) Unless conducted at the Department's request, the research shall be conducted at no cost to the Department.

12) No studies or research may be conducted which would provide a monetary profit to any entity.

13) From the point that a research project has been approved by the Chief of Operations, the Warden or designee shall monitor its progress to ensure compliance with the provisions of this regulation.

D. Each Unit Head or designee shall utilize a Consent to Release Information (see Form [redacted] attached) for the purpose of releasing information pursuant to this regulation and a copy shall be placed in the offender's Master Prison Record.

E. See Health Care Policy No. [redacted] "Offender Participation in Medical, Pharmaceutical or Cosmetic Experiment and Research" for additional information as may be necessary regarding the research request.

[redacted]
Secretary

Form [redacted] Consent to Release Information

This regulation supersedes Department Regulation No. [redacted] dated [redacted].

Form [redacted]
[redacted] 2008

[redacted]

The information contained in an offender's institutional record is confidential and cannot be released without written permission, except as provided for by statute.

Date: _____

Offender's Name and DOC Number (Print): _____

Full Name of Information Recipient: _____

Address of Recipient: _____

I hereby waive any confidential information contained in my institutional record and consent to the release and sharing of such information to any approved researcher(s).

I understand the purpose for this request and that authorization is hereby granted voluntarily. In doing so, I hereby relieve and release the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Corrections Services, their agents, officers and/or employees, of any responsibility or liability which may occur directly or indirectly as a result of this release. I further understand that this authorization may be cancelled or revoked by me in writing at any time.

I do this of my own free will without coercion, threats of punishment or promise of reward from the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Corrections Services, their agents, officers and/or employees.

_____ _____
(Offender's Signature) (Staff Witness' Signature)

I hereby guarantee the anonymity of the offender and the information gathered in my research of the offender.

_____ _____
(Researcher's Signature) (Staff Witness' Signature)

Appendix 1.3 – Ethical Approval from University of Huddersfield

University of
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9 May 2013

Ms Victoria Sebranek
Research Student
School of Human and Health Sciences
University of Huddersfield

Dear Victoria

School Research Ethics Panel (SREP) Submission
(Revision to previously approved submission)

Revised Title of Study: "Violent Offenders' Personal Constructs and Narratives: Revealing Motive, Victim Selection, Crime Scene Behaviour, Amenability to Treatment and Risk of Recidivism"
Ref: SREP/2013/33(Rev)

Original Title of Study: "Violent Offenders' Personal Constructs: What they tell us about motive, victim selection and crime scene behaviour" (approved 27-Jul-12)

I confirm that the revision to your previously approved research project as titled above has received ethical approval from the School of Human and Health Sciences Research Ethics Panel, University of Huddersfield.

I also confirm that indemnity for this project will be covered by the insurance policy held by the University of Huddersfield, as it falls within the normal range of research activity.

With best wishes for the success of your research.

Yours sincerely

Prof Nigel King
Chair, School Research Ethics Panel (SREP)
School of Human and Health Sciences

Direct Tel: +44 (0)1484 472812
Email: n.king@hud.ac.uk

Appendix 1.4 –Full Informed Consent Packet Provided to Participants

Re: Invitation to participate in research study

Dear Potential Research Participant:
My name is Tori Sebranek and I am a student working toward my PhD in Investigative Psychology. I write to you because you have been chosen to be invited to be a possible participant in an in-depth study on people who have committed and been convicted of First or Second Degree Homicide. You are the expert on your life and, as the expert, what you have to share about yourself is valuable to the scientific community. What I would like to do, with your permission, is get your input regarding your life, your perceptions, and the commission of your crime, as many studies about homicide neglect to include talking to those who actually commit it. I come from a standpoint where I believe what you have to say is one of the most valuable sources of information we can explore. I also feel that this study will be an opportunity for you to gain a better understanding of yourself.
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your choice to be included or decline from being included in this study will have no effect on your incarceration status. Moreover, you can decline to be a part of this study at any time without consequence.

The [redacted] and [redacted] have granted me permission to conduct this study at [redacted]. [redacted] has graciously agreed to oversee and assist me while I carry out my work at [redacted]. Although she will be involved in the coordination of my visits there, **what you share with me will be confidential and not shared with her or other prison staff without your clear permission**.

I have included with this invitation information regarding the specifics of this study. In brief, I would like to interview you for the stories of events in your life that are (or were) significant to you. I would also like to ask you to share your version of what led up to and happened during the event(s) which resulted in homicide. Lastly, I would like to conduct with you what is called the Repertory Grid Technique, which is a way to identify more concretely ways in which you perceive events, others, yourself, and your world. Many have found this technique helpful in that it provides insights into one's self that one might not otherwise realize and which can be empowering.
I hope you will take the time to read over the enclosed information and consider offering your participation in this unique study. Your input is highly valued and may make a difference in promoting a more well-rounded and person-centered approach in assessing and treating those who engage in violence. It will also be a chance for you to tell your story—without judgment being passed and for the benefit of understanding those who commit violence. Each interview will take approximately 4 to 7 hours depending on how much you want to share. This will likely take place in two separate face-to-face visits with me, the researcher.

If you still have questions after reviewing the enclosed material, you may contact [redacted], who will then direct your questions to me.

I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you.
Sincerely,

Tori Sebranek, MA
Doctoral Candidate
University of Huddersfield

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Invitation and Information

Dear Potential Research Participant,

You are being invited to take part in a study "Violent Offenders' Narratives and Personal Constructs: What they tell us about Amenability to Treatment, Risk of Recidivism, Meaning of Violence, Crime Scene Behavior, and Victim Selection" by a postgraduate researcher at the University of Huddersfield, UK. You have been hand-selected to be sent this invitation because of specific circumstances of your index crime. You and you alone are the expert on your life, history, and behaviour and, as such, I respectfully request your volunteer participation in exploring key events in your life, including index crime, and assisting me in unveiling what are called your "personal constructs" through an interview with you to be conducted at _____. Before you decide to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. I will be available to answer questions through *phone, email, or mail*. Thus, if you have any questions, please (*call, email, or mail me at_____).* Please, do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the study about?
The purpose of this study is to find linkages between acts of violence and a person's more general interpretation of his world, called personal constructs. These will be captured by hearing about key events in your life and gathering from you the "personal constructs" you use to interpret and predict events and analysing this alongside official crime scene records. A personal construct is a person's individual way of interpreting one's self, the world and relationships around him/her. It is represented by a dichotomous (two-sided, often opposing) arrangement in one's way of thinking. Our aim is to identify these dichotomous arrangements for each participant and to see how they influence a person's behaviour, particularly violent behavior.

Why I have been approached?
You have been asked to participate because your index crime (the crime for which you are currently under supervision) meets the specific requirements for my research study. This includes the level of violence; the not-readily-identifiable nature of motive (motive unknown or not readily apparent) for violence in this incident; and your relationship/non-relationship to the victim.

Do I have to take part?
It is your decision whether or not you take part. Participation or lack of participation will not have any bearing on your parole/probation status or terms. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form, and you will be free to withdraw at any time prior to the researchers data analysis stage (at which point the material will be anonymized) and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw, or a decision not to take part, will result in no consequences from DOC or this researcher.

What will I need to do?
If you agree to take part in this research I ask that you share with me key events in your life history. These will be moments that, for one reason or another, stick out in her mind. You will also be asked questions about your index crime *(by way of narrative or by Crime-Emotions-Narrative*

Roles Survey) -- what were the circumstances of the crime, what your part was in it, and what you were feeling/thinking just prior to, at the time of, and after the event. I will then conduct an exercise with you in which we create together what is called your "repertory grid." This entails writing down approximately 12 names of people of significance to you, in either a positive or negative way. These may include family members, friends, former mentors or bosses, significant others, 'enemies,' authority figures, etc. Each name will be placed on a separate index card. I will ask you to pull 3 names from your stack of index cards and state for me how two of the people are similar but yet, whereby, they are different from the third person whose name you pulled. I will repeat this process with you 11 times. The information will be written to form a grid consisting of the names of people you provide and your answers, called constructs. For the second portion of this exercise, I will then ak you to rate each person using a 1 to 5 scale on how closely each person fits each answer you gave (your constructs) in the first portion. This portion of the entire interview typically lasts about an hour to an hour and a half. The length of previous part (sharing your narrative/story) will depend on you and how much you are willing to share. I estimate that the entire interview will take 3 to 6 hours, so, you must be able to sit for an extended period of time. I do not mind, however, if you get up to stretch or take small breaks when needed. All of this will take place in one interview *(or more if necessary)*. However, I may seek to reach you at some point after the interview for follow-up and clarification if necessary. The interview will be audio recorded.

What are the benefits of my particpation?

You are the expert on your life. What you have to say is of great interest to the greater scientific community. You are the teacher in this study and what you have to teach will assist researchers and, potentailly, treatment providers and agents in understanding more fully those who commit violence. This is an opportunity to tell your story, in confidence (anonymity), as you want it to be heard and without judgment. This can help shape the past events of your life in a way that gives them a sense of coherence or meaning to you, something you might not have, up until now, been able to recognize. The second portion of the interview process—the repertory grid construction—will show you concretely the way you perceive things, or under what understandings you process things. The unveiling of your personal constructs will help you to understand more clearly and concretely the ways in which you think, which allows for greater insight to yourself and your situations in life. This entire process has proven to be self-revealing and therapeutic for research participants who have been involved in similar research. Also, if you are questioning why you engaged in acts of violence or other particular behaviors, this may provide you with helpful insight in answering that question.

What are the risks of my particpation?

Psychological-- As I will be asking you to speak about events that are of significance to you, you may want to share events that were unpleasant and even traumatic for you. If you feel that speaking about such events will serve to re-traumatize rather than be a positive or neutral release for you, I ask respectfully that you refrain from offering your participation in this study. The approach I am using, however, is a humanitarian approach, which means it is with your wellbeing as a primary concern. At no time will you be forced to talk about anything you do not want to talk about. Also, I will be providing a debriefing protocol by which to assess your psychological state, share my immediate impressions regarding your personal constructs should you choose to hear them, and answering any questions you may have.

Legal—As described in more detail in the Informed Consent Form, I have duty to report certain, specific and identifiable acts of violence upon others or threat of such. In order to protect your legal interests, I encourage participants to refrain from using the real names of people and places involved in your stories. Although I will know your real name, if your information is released, it will

only be released as part of the study and you will not be personally identified, as you will be contributing to this study under a pseudonym (fake name).

Will my identity be disclosed?
No. All information disclosed within the interview will be kept confidential, except where legal obligations would necessitate disclosure by the researcher to appropriate personnel, such as under the 'Duty to Report' laws (explained briefly in the previous question/answer). This is explained in more detail in the accompanying paperwork. All information collected from you during this research will be kept secure and any identifying material, such as names and specific locations will be removed or altered in order to ensure anonymity.

What will happen to the information?
The findings of this research will appear in this researcher's PhD dissertation. It is also anticipated that the research results may, at some point, be published in a journal or report. However, in both the PhD dissertation and/or published results, your anonymity will be ensured. Although it may be necessary to use your *words* in the presentation of the findings, your real name will never be used. At the end of this study, the anonymized information (any personally identifying markers will have, at this point, been removed) will remain in the University of Huddersfield archives in the United Kingdom. This researcher will also retain a copy of your anonymized information. Further information and request for your permission for this is included in the accompanying paperwork.

What next?
If you chose to decline participation in this study, do nothing. If you choose to be considered for participation in this study, please review all paperwork included in this packet and return to me in the self-addressed, stamped envelope (*at p.o. box)* the following:
1) Your completed and signed Consent Form (the final pages only of the Informed Consent Form)-- please be sure to include at the end a way for me to contact you.
and
2) Your completed Participant Demographics Sheet and Questionnaire.

Who can I contact for further information?
If you require any further information about the research, please contact me, Tori, at: tsebrane@gmail.com or 608-799-7804 or *(inlcude P.O. Box address).*

You may, alternatively, contact my research supervisors, Dr. Donna Youngs at phone number 44-07887-506372 (this is an international number) or, more conveniently, by emailing d.youngs@hud.ac.uk, or Prof. David Canter at dvcanter@btinternet.com.

Questions regarding the protection of human subjects may be addressed to: Dr. Richard Kyte, Director, D. B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership.

Thank you for consideration of your particpation in this study.

Sincerely,

Tori Sebranek
Post-graduate Researcher, Doctoral Candidate
University of Huddersfield, UK

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Informed Consent Form (For Participant to Keep)

Dear Potential Research Participant,
Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Ask the researcher if there is anything you do not understand or if you would like more information.

Aim and Purpose of Research

I aim to research (previously) violent offenders' narratives of significant events in their lives, conduct a Likert Scale-type survey of actions taken and emotions felt regarding their index crime, and construct with them what is called a repertory grid, using personal construct psychological theory. Using these alongside what is gleaned from official crime scene records, the purpose of the research is to ascertain the likely psychological motivators behind the violent actions and reasons for particular victim selection and crime scene behaviors. In turn, I aim to expand upon implications indicated by the analysis of offenders' narratives and repertory grids regarding their amenability to treatment, risk of recidivism, and investigative inferences.

Participant criteria

1) Index offense involves the extreme violence toward or death of another human being and participant was found legally responsible due to the actions or lack of actions by the participant.
2) Research participant must have actually been at the scene of the incident and a participant in the violent action(s).
3) Research participant must have some recollection of the incident.
4) Research participant must be willing to talk about/answer questions about their life stories, including index crimes, and their thoughts and actions in regard to them.
5) Research participant must be willing to have interviews be audiotaped.
6) Research participant must be able to speak, read, and write English fluently.
7) Research participant must be able to sit for an extended period of time (approximately 3 to 6 hours with breaks).

Information regarding Researcher's Duty to Report

1) Researcher must report to authorities a perceived likely and specific threat of future harm to others, property, or to the participant himself where disclosure is needed to prevent harm.
2) Research participants may be asked about previous crimes and acts of violence, both officially recorded acts and acts which have not been disclosed to official

authorities. In order to protect confidentiality, yet allow researcher's access to valuable research information, research participants are encouraged to reveal only non-identifying features of undisclosed offending, i.e. eliminate names of people, names of locations, specific dates, etc. regarding illegal acts that have not been reported to authorities.

Confidentiality

1) The interview and accompanying questionnaires, survey's, etc. are entirely **confidential**, aside from the Duty to Report obligations, as above, and will explore your particular experiences that you have had and how you feel about them. The only people that will have access to any information obtained from the interview will be qualified research associates in the psychology department at the University of Huddersfield, UK. Moreover, your name (or any other identifiable characteristics) will not appear anywhere in the study. Some portions of the interview may be reproduced in the materials that result from this research, but respondents will remain **anonymous** in any such documents. Your name will only appear on this consent form and on a hand-written code breaker, discussed in #2 below, and these will be kept separate from the material obtained from your interview, your repertory grid, and accompanying questionnaires/surveys.
2) Research participants will be asked to provide their own pseudonym (fake name) or will have one assigned, along with which the researcher will provide a number for ease of information handling. All documentation produced by the researcher and/or research participant in regard to the research participant will be identified by pseudonym and/or number. A handwritten key matching pseudonym and code number to your real name will be kept under lock with the primary researcher.
3) Research participants are encouraged to use their pseudonym in their narratives and repertory grids. However, if their real name, a third-party's name, or other identifying information is used, this will be altered to protect anonymity upon transcription of the interview. Original audio recordings and written transcription of the recordings will be held in the primary researcher's password protected, University-secured electronic files and/or under lock with the researcher. Anonymized, written transcription will also be kept, upon completion of the research, in the University of Huddersfield archives. (See #5).
4) Criminal files will be collected from various sources on each research participant. These sources may include but are not limited to past legal records from the Department of Corrections, Department of Justice, local Clerks of Courts, police reports, medical examiner reports, and media. These will be kept under lock, or for files that are reproduced or stored by the researcher electronically, password protected and stored safely with the primary researcher.
5) Throughout and beyond this life of this research project, files will be protected and maintained, under lock/electronic protection-- one copy within the University of Huddersfield archives and one copy with the primary researcher. Again, personally identifiable, confidential data will be anonymized prior to storage in the archives. Your anonymized information will be kept indefinitely in the University of Huddersfield archives in the United Kingdom unless you indicate on the Consent Form that you would like them destroyed after 5 years.

Risks to Participants and Appropriate Precautions

1) Legal—Abiding by confidentiality laws and the adherence to precautions to maintain anonymity and confidentiality, as stated above, will be of utmost priority to the researcher. However, there are certain legal obligations that bind a researcher under Duty to Report laws. These circumstances are laid out above. The research participants are encouraged to use fake names of third parties and locations to which you might refer in your stories. However, any identifying information revealed during your story will later be altered so as to assure anonymity.
2) Psychological—Sensitive issues will be discussed in the interviews with research participants. The interviewer is there to collect the perspective of the participants and is not there to provide therapy. These interviews will be conducted with a humanitarian approach and the interviewer will keep the participants' well-being as a primary concern and do her best to see that the interviewee (research participant) is left feeling at ease. The researcher will conduct a debriefing/follow-up protocol immediately following the interview. This is an opportunity for the researcher to assess your psychological state, provide her immediate impressions regarding your personal constructs should you choose to hear them, and answer any questions you may have. If, at the close of the interview, the researcher has concerns for the participant's well-being above and beyond what would be considered usual (for example, assesses that a probable threat of self-harm exists), the interviewer will discuss this with the participant, review sources of support for the participant, and, if deemed necessary, seek permission by the participant at that time to share concerns in general terms with any treating mental health specialist or other support person of the participant's choosing.

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CONSENT FORM (to be returned to researcher)

Title of Research Project: Violent Offenders' Personal Constructs: What they tell us about Amenability to Treatment, Risk of Recidivism, Meaning of Violence, Crime Scene Behavior, and Victim Selection

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. Your contribution to this research is entirely voluntary and you are not obliged in any way to participate, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research, per the accompanying Invitation and Informed Consent Forms. I have received copies of and understand these forms. ☐

I consent to taking part in this study. ☐

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time prior to the researcher's data aggregation stage without giving any reason. ☐

I give permission for my words to be recorded and quoted (by use of pseudonym). ☐

I understand that the information collected will be kept in secure conditions with the researcher and at the University of Huddersfield. ☐

I understand that no person other than researcher/s and facilitator/s will have access to the information provided. ☐

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the report and that no written information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report. ☐

I agree ☐ do not agree ☐ to have my anonymized data kept 5 years beyond project end in the University's secure archives. (This data will be destroyed after 5 years of project's end if you do NOT agree.)

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this project please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below.

Signature of Participant:	Signature of Researcher:
Print Name:	Print Name:
Date:	Date:
Please indicate how the researcher can contact you (phone, address, and/or email) below:	Notes:

_____ _____ _____ _____	

Appendix 2 – Full Interview Schedule

Appendix 2.1

Participant Demographic Sheet and Questionnaire

Where (in what Parish) did your index offense (First or Second Degree Murder) take place?

_____

What fake name do you choose for yourself for use in this study?

_____

Current Age: _____ Age at time of Offense:_____

Ethnicity (please mark one to which you most closely identify yourself):

Asian	_____	Black or African American	_____
White/Caucasian	_____	American Indian or Alaskan Native	_____
Hispanic/Latino	_____	Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	_____
Other	_____	If Other, please specify	_____

What was the highest grade in school you complete?

_____ None
_____ Less than 1st grade
_____ 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th grade
_____ 5th or 6th grade
_____ 7th or 8th grade
_____ 9th grade
_____ 10th grade
_____ 11th grade
_____ 12th grade NO DIPLOMA
_____ Regular high school graduate
_____ GED, HSED, or alternative credential
_____ Some college credit, less than 1 year
_____ 1 or more years of college
_____ Associate degree - Occupational
_____ Associate degree - Academic
_____ Bachelor's degree
_____ Master's degree
_____ Doctorate Degree
_____ other Professional Degree

Other type of certificate of education (please list)

_____

Did you serve in the military (circle one)? Yes No

If so, what was your rank or title?

_____

Did you serve actively in combat? Yes No

What additional vocational training have you had, if any, prior to arrest? -

_____

_____

_____

What type(s) of work had you performed prior to arrest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How old were you when you were first given an official warning by the police?

_____

What was this for?

_____

How old were you when you were first found guilty/pled guilty of a crime in court?

_____

What was this for?

_____

Some of the following questions refer to 'acts of violence.' Please consider an 'act of violence' a physical force, action, or treatment which was unwanted by the recipient and likely caused injury or physical harm to the recipient. Please include acts of violence which may be considered 'justified,' such as those committed in war or self defense.

How many times have you engaged in an act of violence upon a person or animal?

_____ Never
_____ Once or Twice
_____ Three to Nine Times
_____ 10 to 50 Times
_____ More than 50 Times
_____ More than 100 Times

How many of these do you think would be considered 'justifiable' acts of violence, as in war or self defense? _____

How many times have you been *legally charged* with committing a *violent* crime?

_____ Never
_____ Once or Twice
_____ Three to Nine Times
_____ 10 to 50 Times
_____ More than 50 Times
_____ More than 100 Times

How many times have you been *legally charged* with committing *any type* of crime?

_____ Never
_____ Once or Twice
_____ Three to Nine Times
_____ 10 to 50 Times
_____ More than 50 Times
_____ More than 100 Times

Please list as many charges as you can remember receiving (include ALL types of crime) with approximate dates (just the year is fine). Use the back side of sheet if necessary.

Charge(s):	Approximate date/Year:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

How many total *convictions* have you received (include all types of crime)?

_____

Please list as many convictions as you can remember receiving (include ALL types) with approximate dates (just year is fine). Use the back side of sheet if necessary.

Conviction(s):

Approximate Date:

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

How many times have you been the *victim* of an act of violence?

_____ Never
_____ Once or Twice
_____ Three to Nine Times
_____ 10 to 50 Times
_____ More than 50 Times
_____ More than 100 Times

How many times have you *witnessed* an act of violence in real life (not in movies, video games, etc.)?

_____ Never
_____ Once or Twice
_____ Three to Nine Times
_____ 10 to 50 Times
_____ More than 50 Times
_____ More than 100 Times

Briefly, what was your relationship to the victim(s)?

_____

_____

Is this best described as an intimate relationship (someone you were considered close to, such as a friend, partner, or family member), an acquaintance (associate, occasional contact, drinking/drugging buddy), or a stranger?:

Victim #1: Intimate _____ Acquaintance_____ Stranger_____

Victim #2: Intimate _____ Acquaintance_____ Stranger_____

Victim #3: Intimate _____ Acquaintance_____ Stranger_____

Victim #4: Intimate _____ Acquaintance_____ Stranger_____

What method(s) did you use to commit your index crime? Mark the primary method with #1 and any other method used with simply an "x":

Shooting _____ Strangulation _____ Drowning _____

Stabbing _____ Beating _____ Fire _____

Other _____ If other, please specify _____

Appendix 2.2

LIFE NARRATIVE INTERVIEW

SIGNIFICANT EVENT(s)

I want you to tell me about significant event(s) in your life that you can remember very clearly. It can be anything at all. Tell me in as much detail as you can what happened. Share as many significant experiences as you'd like.

- (Tell me more, what happened)
- Tell me why it was significant
- Tell me what impact it had on your life

OR (if they could not think of a particular event)

- Start by telling me who raised you
- What were these relationships like
- …. (using questions of clarification, follow-up, etc. to prompt further reporting)

Appendix 2.3

Canter-Youngs (2012) Crime-Emotion-Narrative Role Interview

Crime narrative

INITIAL ACCOUNT

I would like you to tell me about your index offence—the one in which a life was taken. Please tell me in as much details about the event.

- Tell me more, what happened.
- Tell me who else it involved
- Tell me what impact it had on your life

DETAILED ACCOUNT

Note to interviewers:

Idea is ask to describe in as much detail as possible. Use question prompts to ensure you are getting the richest and fullest possible description, so should ask all, even if it means some repetition. Asking all the questions will also help us to understand how to interpret missing information (i.e. if you ask all the questions and they don't mention e.g. a weapon, we can assume they didn't have one).

So output will be a free text account that we content analyse, not a set of answers to specific questions.

Description of Crime

Please could you tell me about what you did in a bit more detail.....

BEFORE

What were you doing before the crime?

What were the events leading up to you committing the crime?

What preparations, if any, did you make?

What did you take with you to assist in acting out the crime?

What did you do to start the crime? (What was the first [violent] action you took?)

What did you use for a weapon, if anything?

Did you bring it or was it already there at the scene of the crime?

What factors played a part in your choice of victim?

What did you know about your victim prior to the crime?

Was anyone with you or did you act alone?

Was anyone there to witness or even be an 'audience' to your crime?

What happened next?

DURING: THE DETAIL OF THE MAIN EVENT

What was the person doing just prior to your approaching the victim?

How did you approach the victim? (blitz, sneak, con, from behind/front/side, etc.?)

How did the person respond?

Then what did you do to the person?

What did the victim do and how did you respond (for example, did they resist, how did you respond to that resistance)?

What action or response was given by those with you or witnessing the crime?

What was your reaction to their response?

What made you stop when you did?

If Burglary was involved- Burglary Specific questions:

How did you get in?

What did you do as soon as you were inside the house?

What else did you do inside the house?

What did you do to make sure you were safe from the people that lived there?

Did the people living in the house come across you? Yes_____ No_____

IF yes, what did you do?

Alternatives

Sometimes you might decide to do a crime differently- what might you have done differently if anything?

You said your main reasons/ purpose was…. Why did you choose this/ get this by doing this particular crime, rather than another way?

CHANGES due to SITUATIONAL FACTORS or INTERACTIONS

Did you change what you planned to do during the course of the crime at all? Did anything unexpected happen? How did this change what you did?

Did anyone/the victim do anything you didn't expect? So what did you do?

Was there anything in the place or about the place that you didn't expect? So what did you do?

ENDING

What, if anything, did you do to try to make sure you didn't get caught?

How did you get out or away?

What did you do as soon as you got out or away?

Where did you go?

What else did you do to avoid getting caught? (clean up/hide evidence, hiding out, disposal/destruction of items/body, threaten others, etc.?)

Did you tell anyone at all about your crime prior to your arrest? Yes No

Approximately how long after the commission of your crime were you arrested/charged?

_____

Did you tell anyone at all about your crime after your arrest, other than an official statement? Yes No

Did you provide an official *statement* about your index crime? Yes No

Did you provide an official *confession* to your index crime? Yes No

If yes, at what point did you provide your confession officially? Choose one that best fits:

Prior to Arrest (Turned self in) _____

During or immediately after initial police questioning _____

At some point after initial police questioning _____

Additional Questions:

How did you feel about this incident right after it happened?

How did you feel about it once arrested?

Looking back on it now, how do you feel about it?

Was any violence encouraged by spectators, friends, etc. and do you feel things would've been different if the others were not present?

Was your motivation for killing your victim(s) clear to you? Yes No

At the time of the crime, what do you think were your reasons for doing this crime/ what was the main purpose and/or motivation? If it is <u>not</u> clear, what do you suspect it might have been?

What do you perceive *now* as your possible motivation(s)? If it is <u>not</u> clear, what do you suspect it might have been?

What was your intent in regard to damage done to the victim? I.e. Did the harm done corresponded to the intent (for example, was the victim's death intended/desired?)

OVERVIEW

How long did the incident last?

How strong are your memories of the incident? Please tick a box

VERY STRONG	STRONG	SOMEWHAT STRONG	WEAK	VERY WEAK

Appendix 2.4

Repertory Grid Template

Emerging Constructs											Victim	Prior Self	ATC Self	Current Self	Ideal Self	Contrasting Constructs
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
10																
11																
12																

Appendix 3- Participant (P)/Crime-Specific Details

AI= After Incarceration
UI= Upon incarceration
GC = Grade completed
GL= Actual grade level upon testing
GED= General Educational Development
SE= Special Education
TABE= Tests of Adult Basic Education

Note. * Moses was later convicted of two additional murders in prison. Details are listed here but not included in statistical analyses.

Participant #	Degree murder Conviction(s)	Age ATC	Age at interview	Criminal History (each instance or year of incidents separated by ';') & Add'l Charges ATC	Method	Victim, (V-O relationship)	Education
Wilson	2nd	44	71	Poss of Marij; Improper lane change; DWI x2	Shot foot and back; (Reports of past abuse on wife)	Wife (intimate)	GED; 8.2 grade level TABE AI
Nelson	2nd	29	66	Multiple Dist. Peace (x5) Drunk in public (x3), Profanity in public (1); Simple Battery; Theft <$20; DWI; Armed Robbery; Simple Robbery	Playing card and other games; left to get gun; came back to vic's house and shot vic twice (left face and right chest)	Male friend (intimate)	11th Grade; 4.9 GL ATC
Theodore	2nd	28	43	Simple Battery; Simple Criminal Damage to Property; Disturbing the peace, Agg. Assault; Simple battery x2, Cruelty to juveniles; ATC also stalking, attmpted 1st DM, aggrav. kidnap.	Laid outside waiting 'til dawn; cut phone lines; wife escaped, P shot at her 5 times as she drove away (Hx of physically abusing wife); took 3 of their 4 children hostage in trailer on same land as mother-in-law's house; shot and killed mother-in-law when she attempted to approach trailer	Mother-in-law (intimate) and Attempted murder of wife (intimate)	8th grade ATC; 5.4 grade level TABE AI
Grady	2nd 2nd	18	42	None indicated	Went with co-defendant to get money owed; Vic pulled gun on P; they beat and strangled him; beat and	Friend's debtor, male, and debtor's girlfriend; female (both strangers)	11th grade ATC; Assoc. Degree AI

					strangled girlfriend upstairs		
Angelo	1st	27	54	B&E (x2), Carry concealed weapon; B&E, Illegal carrying of weapon; Misdemeanor theft; Iss. Worthless checks	Beaten w/ hammer; choked w/ elec. cord; dumped body in river; burned car	Male business partner (acquaint.)	12th grade+ ATC; Assoc. Degree AI
Calvin	2nd	37	62	None indicated prior to index crime	Laid in wait; Stabbed in vic's home	Mother-in-law (intimate)	12th grade ATC; 6.6 GL AI
Darius	2nd	22	48	Shoplifting Poss. of Marij.; Felony theft; Trespassing, Drunk & Disorderly, Aggrav. Battery; Trespassing; Trespassing, Drunk & Disorderly; Fighting, Simple battery; Failure to appear, Trespassing, Resisting arrest, Damage to property, Trespassing.	Went to vic's family's house in middle of night; beat with fists, stabbed torso 9x's	girlfriend (intimate)	GED ATC; 7.8 GL AI
Dion	2nd	22	40	Aggravated Battery; Agg. Assault; Simple escape	Fatally shot in head	male street rival (stranger)	10th grade (Spec'l Ed); 4.4 GL AI
Raleigh	2nd	31	59	Armed Robbery; Poss of Marij, (disposed); 1st Degree Murder reduc'd to Manslaughter increased to Attempted Murder (disposed-probation); Agg. Battery w/ dangerous weapon (disposed); Simple Burglary & Simple Crim Dam to Prop to Attmp Simple Burglary and Crim Dam to Prop (disposed); Agg Assault 2x, Illegal Carry of Weapons, (unknown disposition)	Stranger came to P's place of residence aggressively and left; P went looking for him, hid behind fence, stabbed 13x's	Male neighbor (acquaint.)	9th grade; 4.3 GL AI; GED AI;

Tremayne	2nd	17	56	None indicated, even as a juvenile; yet he self-admits to a lot of petty theft	6 perpetrators armed w/ gun, went into vic's home in middle of night, tied and bound vics, demanded money and brutally beat them (about the head, neck, hands, feet)- got $700; left them bound and tied (w/ elec cord), battered & bleeding	In-house employers/married couple; husband died; wife in hospital for 4 weeks (intimates—due to closeness and longevity of employment)	11th grade; 4.1 GL ATC
Gary	2nd	22	55	None indicated	Shotgun to face claimed to be while cleaning gun in family living room	Wife (intimate)	9th grade ATC; GED AI
Joseph	2nd	28	40	Possession of Firearm (4 counts) as Felon, Theft >500; Theft; Agg Batt, Simple Escape-Dismissed, Simple Burg.; Forgery; 2nd DM ("justified"); Simple Batt, Concealed Weapon, Prob. Viol, Dist Drug [school], Cons to Dist, Iss Wrthls Chk, Simple Batt, Crim Dam to Prop; Iss Wrthls Chks, Bail Jump [dism]; Op Veh w/ Sus Lic, Dist Marij; Fail to appear x3, Traffic x4; Incit Riot, Crim Conspir, Simple Crim Dmg to Prop.	Met woman at bar, gave her ride to her home; had sexual relations, stabbed her repeatedly; he drove to work; blood found on back of passenger seat in truck; dumped clothes and knife overboard off oil rig	Female "one-night stand" (stranger)	GED ATC; 12.9 GL AI
Charles	2nd	25	53	Theft, Poss of stolen auto, simple burglary of auto, illegal poss of stolen things, resisting PO, Simple Battery of PO, Poss of stolen vehicle, Poss of Firearm by Felon; Intentional Inhale of Glue, Simple Escape, Simple Burglary; Poss of Firearm, Concealed Weapon by Felon, Attmp Simple Burglary, Felon in Poss of dangerous Weapon, Hab	Shot friend after argument	Male friend (intimate)	8th Grade ATC

				Fel Convict-Att/S/Burglary of inhabited dwelling; Poss of Firearm/Carry Conceal weapon by Felon			
Malcolm	2nd	15	43	Shoplifting (juvenile); suspended from school for skipping school and fighting; Armed Robbery ATC	Attempted Robbery at a cabinet store. Came in a told vics it was a hold up, vic dropped cabinet and P shot him, other vic fled.	Male shop employee, (stranger)	8th grade ATC; GED AI
Walter	1st	21	55	Burglary (dismissed); Aggravated rape (in prison- ..dismissed); also ATC: Armed Robbery (dismissed)	Shot vic in back of head at vic's grocery store (had 3 accomplices-- all released)	Male shop owner (acquaint.)	10th or 1th grade ATC; 2.0 GL AI
Harold	Murder	24	69	Armed Rob; Attmp Armed Rob.; Auto Theft; Auto theft; Fugitive from Prison; Armed Rob., Murder (Texas); Also ATCs= Theft, Aggrav. Burglary, Murder, Aggrav Rob., Attmpt Aggrav. Rob.	P was Party To Crime twice in LA, once in TX; Vics shot by crime partner in all 3 instances	Male shop keepers (strangers)	GED (un-known date); 5.8 GL AI
Elroy	2nd	26	65	Simple Burglary; also ATC= Armed Robbery	Shot during armed robbery	Male Store-keep (stranger)	12th grade; 4.6 GL ATC
Seth	2nd	28	46	None indicated	Shot	Girlfriend (intimate)	12th grade+ (Spec'l Ed); 7.3 GL AI
Lenny	1st	19	45	"Joy-riding;" Armed Rob; simple Burglary; self-reported escape from prison (not found in available record)	Met a young woman in the morning; spent day together, went to lake at night; he strangled and drown her; vic missing 3 days	Female "date" (stranger)	12th grade; 12.9 GL AI; post edu for

							Assoc. Deg.
	Murder x2	19	61	Armed Robbery (Juv.); Burglary (Juv.); Burglary (Juv.); Attempted Simple Burglary; Simple Burglary; Fugitive; also ATC Armed Rob	Shot (w/ pistol)	Husband and wife store owners (strangers)	11th grade; 5th GL ATC
Nolan	2nd	21	25	No priors indicated; ATC: Armed Robbery- Use of firearm, Armed Rob.- Attmpt, 1st DM- Attmpt (4x), Agg Burglary, Illegal use of weapons/ dangerous instrum.	Home invasion; vic was at targeted residence as a guest; vic shot in head, several others shot/shot at	Child of home-renter's girlfriend (acquaint.)	12th ATC; 12.9 GL AI
Moses-A	Murder	20	72	Disturbing the peace	shotgun	Wife (intimate)	7th grade ATC; 3.0 GL ATC
Moses-B	1st; 1st *	22	72	Disturbing the peace Murder (see above); Also Attempted murder while in prison	Shot in prison (P was "khaki-back"—inmates acting as armed guards decades ago)	Two fellow, male inmates- was targeting one, bullet went through him and into another inmate (acquaints.)	(See above; no record of testing AI)
Blair	1st	18	37	Simple Battery; Simple Arson; Simple Crim Damage to Prop; Also ATC: Armed Rob., Aggrav. Kidnapping,	Beat MR/ID man w/ hands, feet barrel of gun; w/ a co-def who drown vic too	Male peer (acquaint.)	12th grade (Spec'l Ed); 5.3 GL AI
Alex	1st (1)	20	40	None indicated; (only convicted of mother's death)	Shot-once into head, two into chest, each vic	Parents (intimates)	12th grade (Spec'l Ed); 12.9 GL AI
Prentiss	2nd	15	35	Armed Rob @ age 13; ATC also Armed Rob.	Shot vic in sleep, back of head, robbed	"Hang-around," male peer (acquaint.)	11th grade (Spec'l Ed); GED UI

Note. * Moses was later convicted of two additional murders in prison. Details are listed here but not included in statistical analyses.

AI= After Incarceration
GC = Grade completed
GED (General Equivalency Diploma)[4]
UI= Upon incarceration
GL= Actual grade level upon testing
SE= Special Education

[4] Although the GED testing is termed "General Education Development," to "receive" a GED is understood to be a General Equivalency Diploma.

Appendix 4 – Rubric for construct sub-themes

Abuse Level of assertion over others with notion of abuse as a physical or verbal assault is overtly present

Achiever/Status Implies level of ability/desire in reaching/meeting one's goals, usually related to vocation or status in life

Anger Contains reference to 'anger' specifically, even though may fit elsewhere as well

Assertion over Others Implies a level of passive forcefulness over others that does not overtly indicate abuse as in Abuse

Benevolent Refers to Element's characteristic of support, well-meaning, care, concern, etc. (i.e. benevolence), surrounding interpersonal relationships more generally, not specific to P himself necessarily

Chaos Implies a level of turbulence, instability, disorder, disarray, or its contrast, in lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, and/or personal presentation.

Deceit Lack of truthfulness, honesty, fidelity; does not necessarily contain active (as opposed to passive) intent to deceive/manipulate as in Surreptitiousness; also, not in the dependability/reliability sense

Dependability Level at which element can be 'counted on' or relied upon but without additional sense of time-honored proof as in Steadfastness in Relationship

Demeanor Connotes Element's presentation through conduct as turbulent or relaxed

Encourage/Advise (Pos., Neg.) The influence stated implies more active involvement than as in Influence/Impact; actually engaging self or participant to impart an impact

Enemy Implies that the Element was against the P and that this dynamic was specific to their relationship

Exploitation Using or taking at the expense of another w/o necessarily being 'Surreptitious'

Flagrance Level of gregariousness when with others; neutral in the sense that it does not necessarily either impede or encourage others as in Encourage or Assertion over Others

Hedonism Implies a level of desire/drive for physical or 'worldly' pleasure and/or tendency toward vice; oftentimes a lifestyle which began as pleasure-seeking; usually referring to those who like to party, live a street life, etc.

Influence/Impact (Pos., Neg.) Presence of positive or negative influence or impact element had on P-- usually serving as an example more passively, maybe unknowingly, not necessarily as actively as in Encourager

Judgmental Implies a level of piety over others

Love/Care for "Me" (Present, or Not) Presence (or not) of care, concern, love for the Participant (P) himself, as indicated by inclusion of 'me-centered' pronoun (me, my, I) or indicative of relationship between Element and P specifically highlighting the love/care was for the participant (e.g. 'motherly love' was specifically referring to love the Element had for the participant, which differs from describing element as 'motherly,' which would be referring to her character in general)

Mentality/Mindfulness Indicates level of mindfulness, awareness, clarity, organization/ management of thought, and/or decision-making ability; also, maturity, responsibility

Obliging of "Me" (Present, or Not) Implies presence (or not) of support, help, obligingness toward P himself as indicated by me-centered pronoun (my, me, I) or that relationship necessarily indicates that supportiveness is for P (e.g. "Supportive in prison" necessarily indicates support specific toward P, and is not indicative of Element being, overall in interpersonal relationships, supportive); also, not as emotion-laden as in Love/Care for 'me'

Persona/Energy Implies outward expression of the Element to others, personality; (in case of High) unreserved, usually positive energy; or (in case of Low) reserved energy

P's Active Feelings Toward The participants active feeling about or due to the Element

Relational/Role Implies what role the Element played/plays in P's life or a dynamic specific to relationship between P and Element that is not better described by another category

Religious/Spiritual Contains reference to level of religion, spirituality, pastoral duty, or membership in

Responsiveness Implies a level of openness/ amenability/effort in interpersonal relationships

Role Model Implies someone the participant himself wanted to emulate; or acted as a role model to

Selfishness Implies level of primary concern as with oneself

Sordid Implies an ignoble characteristic that is not more well-suited to another category; goes beyond 'selfishness'

Steadfastness Implies a level of enduring support or, contrarily, an unwillingness or inability to endure in the relationship

Surreptitious Element portrays as something they are not and/or with active intent to deceive

Toughness The Element's projected competence or effectiveness in gaining or taking power over others or resilience in having it taken from them

Appendix 5-- Participants' Crimes as I/E, Percent of Construct poles as Self-Referencing, and Structural Measures

	% Self-Refer	PVAFF	Diff. of degrees Betw. SI/SATC and SI/Victim	Degrees between SI and SATC
Instrumental				
Angelo	95.8	58.2	20.5	160.4
Raleigh	91.7	94	-171.64	8.36
Tremayne	89.3	89.3	-40.23	0
Gary	45.8	80.6	78.19	136.03
Malcolm	75	73.1	85.69	125.13
Walter	8	49.4	-16.89	65.33
Harold	8	87.9	59	148.54
Elroy	79.2	79.5	6.59	108.9
Sinclair	83.3	78.9	-64.99	79.75
Nolan	70.8	81	94.15	141.82
Prentiss	37.5	88.9	-26.98	153.02
Average	62.21818182	78.25455	2.126364	102.48
Expressive				
Wilson	41.6	72.8	37.33	72.98
Nelson	0	72.5	-3.81	140.77
Theodore	76	36	-5.8	73.98
Grady	0	56	90.7	134.85
Calvin	20.8	46.5	-1.38	109.1
Darius	68	83.9	4.5	163.12
Dion	29	71	-88.74	42.54
Joseph	20	66	4.69	118.11
Charles	4	70.6	-4.07	113.23
Seth	83.8	82.5	-75.04	104.96
Moses	0	91.2	-91.59	58.51
Blair	66.6	65	40.98	172.17
Alex	24.9	81	-9.44	149.04
Average	33.43846154	68.84615	-7.82077	111.7969
Undetermined				
Lenny	29	59.5	N/A	N/A

Appendix 6- Crime Vignettes* and Assessments

(*The crime vignettes herein (without the assessments) are as they were provided to the other rater for categorizing crimes as either Instrumental or Expressive.)

Wilson was set on succeeding—getting some education, making money, and making his way out of the ghetto. He was resentful that his wife, however, 'did not want him to succeed.' In spite of this, Wilson went to school. He proudly passed some tests for a well-paid welding job. While he awaited the job offer, however, he and his wife had separated due to drinking and violence in the home between the two, much of which he blamed on his wife. The job offer for which he was waiting came to the house phone, where his wife lived and from where he had moved. Wilson came to the house to ask about the potential job offer. His wife notified him that the call came in to offer him the job a week ago. He was infuriated that she did not tell him sooner; he claims his wife was drunk and a fight ensued between Wilson and his wife. Wilson went to get his gun and his wife went to get their son. The fight continued and Wilson shot his wife, first in the foot, then in the back. She died later at the hospital.

Assessment of Wilson's case: Wilson's crime demonstrated elements of self-preserving and was expressive. His crime was the result of his attempts to preserve hope for success and his attachment to his future identity as someone monetarily successful. He was grasping on to what he felt was his only hope for "success," as he had lived in poverty with 10 children and wanted better for them yet was willing to work hard to provide this. He did not have pattern of putting himself ahead of others at the expense of others. Instead, his constructs are indicative of assessment of someone's potential vs those who take advantage, with the ideal end of that being those who have or act on potential—in his eyes, through hard work—rather through power, as he sees some others do. He is wanting to promote himself but this is not in the same sense as indicated within this research—i.e. he is not out to step on others toes or take advantage of others in order to get himself a greater position in this world. He will/did, however, defend it once he nearly got there.

Nelson hung out with two brothers as friends often. One of the brothers, Nelson's best friend, had an affair with Nelson's wife. To get revenge, Nelson started having an affair with one of the brother's 'ladies.' ("There wasn't no love there, just, revenge you might call it.") The brothers then physically attacked Nelson for his attempt at revenge. This was a year prior to the murder. Over the year, they all continued to hang around together. They had all been playing cards or shooting dice at a mutual acquaintance's house and, according to Nelson, the others started talking about the beating a year ago and the men began taunting and threatening Nelson again. A witness reported that Nelson, however, was the one who "got to talking about somethin'" and, later, Nelson "started talking the some 'ole stuff he was talking 'fore [sic]." Nelson left the residence drunk and angry, went to get a gun, returned to the house and shot and killed the brother. Another man on the premises (the witness) was also fired upon but not killed.

Assessment of Nelson's case: Nelson's case is considered expressive and has elements of a self-preserving construer. Animosity for the brothers had likely built up over the course of a year due to the affair his best friend had with his wife, which ironically resulted in Nelson getting beat up when he attempted to get "revenge." On the day of the murder, he felt the humiliation had either continued or started up again and Nelson could take no more. While not elicited overtly by the RGT, the notions of "friend" and "respect" came up repeatedly in his narrative, thus were important to him. His elicited constructs highlighted notions of those who are Bad, Loud (x2), Totally deceiving, So sneaky, Wolf in sheep's clothing versus those who can be Depended upon, are Honest, Mature, Responsible, Quiet, Easy going, good, caring. His construing is rather loose, employing various components. He referenced self zero times in his elicited constructs. And, while the immediately precipitating factor prior to his going to get the gun did not match the witness's statement, regardless of the details, the bottom line was that Nelson appeared to be humiliated and, as such, to need to preserve his reputation or standing as one who has the respect of friends.

Theodore suspected his wife, who had separated recently from him, was cheating on him. Circumstances compiled over the course of several weeks and, as he sought more and more to find out who it was she was cheating on him with, he became increasingly engrossed in this fixation. He was drinking heavily and was "real mixed up, emotional about it," "hurt," and "couldn't make sense of nothin'." He tried calling his wife every day but her mother wouldn't let him talk to her. The more he called, the more upset he got--always talking to the mother, not his wife. He repeatedly stated all he wanted was to get her on the phone and tell him who it was that she had an affair with. He obtained a gun and went to his mother's-in-law to find out who the affair was with. It was early-morning hours and he laid outside hiding on the property. When they awoke, he went into the house. His wife saw him and ran, as, according to his wife, Theodore had made threats earlier. When Theodore's wife ran, she took off in a car "and I opened up – I shot every round in that rifle on the car…. All the concentration was to catch her. I wanted to know why, why, why she done everything, why she told those lies." After his wife was gone, he went to the trailer very nearby, where his kids were located, and held them hostage for hours. His mother-in-law tried to intervene. Theodore claims to have shot his mother-in-law because she shot at the trailer. She died at the scene. (Theodore's daughter reported to police that she never heard any shot come toward the trailer.)

(Assessment of Theodore's crime is addressed in detail in Chapter 7.)

Grady and his friend/roommate (pseudonym Jack) went to collect money that was owed to Jack by Calvin (pseudonym). Grady stood back while Jack approached Calvin's front door. Calvin refused to give Jack the money. Jack receded to consult with Grady. As they consulted, Calvin came out of his house with a gun. He pointed it at Grady, the larger of the two. Grady grabbed the revolving mechanism of the gun to keep from being shot and a physical fight then broke out between himself and Calvin. At one point, Calvin stepped behind Grady and started choking Grady. Grady relayed, "It elevates, it escalates things…. It's that scared, panicked fear." Jack jumped in and Grady and Jack beat the man

unconscious. As they went into the house to get, as Grady relayed, "enough stuff to account for what [Jack] feels owed [to] him" they unexpectedly ran into Calvin's girlfriend. During the interview, Grady stated, "And that's when things went from bad to tragic." Her unexpected arrival into the scenario served to escalate their panic and they attempted to render her unconscious. As they did this, Calvin regained consciousness and entered the house, again with the gun. Grady stated, "There was a decided lack of thinking. It was fear driven. It was fear driven. Everything I did that night was fear driven." In a long, drawn-out struggle, Calvin was choked to death. For fear of being caught, they made the unfortunate decision, then, to kill the girlfriend, who was also choked to death.

Assessment of Grady's case: Grady's crime was expressive and demonstrated more elements of self-preservation. While he presented some indications of superiority in his narrative, his RGT reflected zero references to himself. His transparency was unprecedented, as he, in a follow-up interview, brought his court records with him, without this being requested. He had reviewed them the night before to highlight for the interviewer the few discrepancies between his narrative and the court transcripts, which ultimately placed the onus/guiltiness of murder much more heavily on himself than previously narrated. Perhaps most relevant is the circumstance of his crime, in which his reaction to a gun being pointed at him and his subsequent actions demonstrate attempts to preserve self—his actual life, firstly, and then preserving himself, out of fear, from the chances of being caught, in his mind.

Angelo relayed the story of his crime to the interviewer as though the victim (pseudonym Rudy) came over to his house unexpectedly, was nagging at him "like a chihuahua," and Angelo, becoming so irritated with Rudy, saw a hammer, picked it up, and began to beat him to death. However, according to Angelo's own statement to the police and statements from his co-defendant, the actual events were much different. Angelo did not disclose to me in the interview that he had planned the killing or that he had arranged for another person to do the killing. He did, however, inform the police in a statement at the time of his arrest that it was, in fact, planned. The reasons he gave to the police were vague— "I needed to buy some time to get away cause I was under pressure and needed to get rid of somebody;" then "to get away, about tired of it"… because "everything was coming down on me." He told them, "I lost my job, couldn't get no work, personal problems." Rudy "pushed me a little bit" about getting out (of presumably an illegitimate business) and Angelo needed "to buy time." When asked further what he meant, he stated, "I guess they think he's (Rudy) gone and I'll be gone. That's what I was gonna do live [sic] make everybody think we was out of town." It is suspected that he is talking about an illegitimate business he and Rudy were operating together with other people.

Angelo went to pick up his co-defendant, Chris. They spoke about a plan to kill Rudy. Angelo stopped to make a phone call to invite the Rudy over to Angelo's house. As they waited for Rudy, they further planned what they were going to do. When Rudy arrived, he was with another person. Angelo gave Rudy some money and sent him away. Angelo then had to leave to make several phone calls again to get Rudy to come back (alone). (Angelo did not

have a working house phone and cell phones were rare at this time.) Angelo announced Rudy's arrival and Chris went to the back room to hide, as he was told by Angelo to get behind the open door and jump out and hit Rudy in the head with a hammer when he walked in the room. When Rudy walked into the room, the two took various actions to hurt and eventually kill him. Once he died, they left him lying on the floor. They waited until it was dark to move the body to the truck. In the meantime, Angelo left the house several times to run errands and make phone calls, some of which were attempts to sell his lake lot. At some point they took Rudy's possessions off him. They wrapped a plastic bag over his head and wrapped his body in a blanket. They carried the body to the truck, weighed it down with cinder blocks they searched for and found on the way, and dumped the body in a canal. They disposed of the other bits of evidence and some of Rudy's possessions in another body of water. They then attempted to put Rudy's truck in yet another body of water. It would not go in so they tried burning it. This was rather unsuccessful as well so they ended up leaving it as it was.

Assessment of Angelo's case: Angelo's case was instrumental and he presented rather heavily with elements of self-promoting. Although the specific motivation is not completely clear, he did, by his own statement, feel the need to get rid of the victim, as it was indicated they were in business together; the victim "pushed me a little bit" and Angelo needed to buy some time to get away;" "he was under pressure" and "tired of it" and "everything was coming down on me." While he did not come out and admit this, it was presumed the business they were in was illegitimate, as it was carried out during wee hours of the morning, under the cover of darkness and at a remote warehouse, and Angelo had told the police he did *not* have a job. Additionally, Angelo wanted others to "think he's gone and I'll be gone." His statements indicate an instrumental reason is wanting his business partner gone.

Angelo's life history indicates elements self-promoting construing-- overriding and taking advantage of others for the sake of self—as do his constructs; and his perception of others as inconsequential in comparison to his needs. He had criminal history of breaking and entering (which further digging revealed, perhaps not-so-coincidentally, were committed with the co-defendant involved in the murder) and issuing worthless checks; he defined an acquaintance as someone you "hit 'n git" – in other words you hit them up for what you need or want and then move on; his elicited constructs signified he viewed others in terms of whether or not they supported him while he was in prison, instead of who or how they are in their own regard. He self-referenced in 95.8 of his construct poles.

Calvin spoke of himself as "a family man," having Sunday barbeques with his family, doing chores with his sons, his mother being his "hero," his mother-in-law (his victim) "treat[ing] me as though I was like her son," taking her on errands—"we had a wonderful relationship"—and "life just seemed to be so much pleasant" with his wife and sons. His wife and he argued one day, though. His wife left, taking their children with her, and did not return. The next day, Calvin went to drinking and watching sports on TV. His wife had still not returned so he went looking for her. He ended up at her mother's house, wanting to

know where his wife was. As his mother-in-law would not tell him where she was, a fight quickly ensued, and he stabbed his mother-in-law with a knife he claims to have been in the victim's kitchen, killing her.

Assessment of Calvin's case: Calvin's crime is expressive and his construing was aligned more so with that of self-preserving. His identity as a family man and good husband was threatened, as his wife had left him and took the children. His elicited constructs reflected minimal self-referencing (20.8%) and, while he did attempt to paint himself in a rather good, even righteous light (indicating an air of superiority), he was transparent for the most part and his crime was quite likely driven by a response to a rather acute threat to his identity.

Darius became serious with a girl he dated. He fell in love with her and, ultimately, became obsessed with her. They lived together and, according to him, he found her in bed with another man. He does not remember beating her, but he was charged at that time with Aggravated Battery. Their relationship was on-and-off for months and, although she oftentimes laughed at him and repeatedly belittled him, he remained obsessed with her. She got pregnant and, all the while, "she makin' me think it's mine;" but when she told Darius the baby's name, it was Junior to the man she had been having an affair with. Darius felt taunted, played, and betrayed. He admittedly thought about killing her for about a month. One night, as she and Darius were talking on the phone; she got another call. He fell asleep awaiting her return to their conversation. When he awoke without having heard back from her, he went to her house. He reported that they "went to messing around," during which time she asked him for money. "She must've told me something like, 'If you don't give me no money, ah, *somebody* gonna.' […] I just kicked out and I wind up stabbing her."

Assessment of Darius's case: This is another case of expressiveness and he presented with indications of self-preservation, as Darius's self-identity as his girlfriend's one-and-only was threatened and, after suffering several humiliations in this regard, he had had enough. He was rather transparent in his crime narrative and did not demonstrate much in the way of a sense of superiority. He, however, also demonstrated indications of self-promoting in that his percent of self-referencing construct poles was a bit high at 68% and he placed blame quite a bit of on his victim.

Dion: One night, Dion and his cousins, one of whom had a "beef" with another guy, were approached by a group of males joined in force with this cousin's 'enemy.' According to Dion, astute assessment of threat and ability to refrain from premature reactionary violence led him to feel that, even though verbal exchanges and body language indicated the threat was escalating, it was mostly due to male egos. Thus, Dion felt it was still manageable. However, when the street rival raised above his head a large glass bottle ("40-ouncer") in attempt to strike Dion, the threat became very real. Dion shot and killed him.

Assessment of Dion's case: Dion's crime was expressive and also demonstrated construing of a self-preservation, the preservation of which was literally his life. He crime was, however, not one legally found to be one of legitimate homicide. In his opinion, it was because law enforcement was trying to apprehend him for a great deal of other crimes of which he was admittedly guilty. He self-referenced in 29% of his elicited constructs and his grid indicated rather loose construing.

Raleigh reported that a drunken neighbor came to his house, where Raleigh, his girlfriend, and her 3 daughters were staying. This neighbor caused a ruckus, tried to get into the apartment, and, according to Raleigh, shot at the front door. After a bit, the neighbor left. Witness statements report there was no gun seen or heard, nor was there evidence of a shot fired, nor was a gun found upon later investigation. Raleigh left the apartment and tried to rally other neighbors to help him hunt down this man. None agreed to assist him. Raleigh wandered the neighborhood looking for this man. Eventually, he hid behind a fence and waited for the neighbor to appear. Raleigh jumped out and stabbed him 13 times. (It is important to also note that Raleigh, throughout both his life and crime narratives, presented himself consistently as a 'hero,' particularly to women and children. For example, in his past, he had killed a man for reportedly abusing his niece and nephew and, when sharing this, appeared to be self-aggrandizing as their hero. In narration of his index crime, as well, he appeared highly self-aggrandizing of his status of the girls' hero.)

Assessment of Raleigh's case: Raleigh's crime, on the surface seems to be one of expressiveness. However, the degree of threat appears quite reduced if there was, in fact, no gun present and that the man simply left and Raleigh ultimately had to hid behind a fence and jump out at him in order to attack him. Raleigh's history and the way in which he narrated showed an imbedded pattern of promoting himself as a 'hero.' It is very likely that this was yet another opportunity to do so. His self-referencing in elicited constructs was very high at 91.7% and his construing very tight with a PVAFF of 94. His crime was ultimately categorized as instrumental.

Tremayne worked a job as a 'helping-hand' of sorts for an elderly white couple, with whom he spent a great deal of time. While he was helping the wife clean, she asked him firmly to not touch a particular bag in one of the bedrooms and he couldn't get this out of his thoughts. "I was like, 'Wonder why she told me don't fool with that right there. Just kinda like stayed on my mind. It was like, it wouldn't leave. Something ain't right 'bout that." One day, while the couple were out on the porch relaxing, he "eased up in" that bedroom to see what her fuss was all about. What had been in the brown bag earlier were stacks of money, now moved to a case, but not locked. He took one stack. It amounted to $5000. He returned several times, taking more periodically. Upon realizing some of their money was missing, they were suspicious of Tremayne. He contested their suspicion and quit working for them. However, the temptation was still too great, so he got a friend of his to start working at the couple's house. Tremayne "kinda like knew their pattern" – knew the house,

knew when they would be gone from it, knew when they cashed checks and stored the money in the house. He and his friend, newly hired by the couple, went to get more of their money when the couple was away but the couple came back unexpectedly. While Tremayne ran out the back, his friend was caught by the couple. Not much was done about this by police, though. He told his brothers about the money. They waited for this incident "to blow over," and plotted a return, including several others to help. A group of them, Tremayne included, invaded the house late one night, hog-tied the couple in their bed, and beat them-- the man, to death, and the woman to a four-month stay in the hospital. They never found the money, as it had been moved.

Assessment of Tremayne's crime is addressed in detail in Chapter 7.

Gary told the woman he was having an affair with about a week prior to the murder that he could not go through with a divorce or separation so the only way out of his marriage was to kill his wife. Gary told his mistress later that he deliberately took his wife's grandfather out to hunt, using the gun which became the fatal weapon, the day before the 'incident' to establish a story that the gun was not working properly. On the day of the murder, Gary and his wife left her grandfather's house and went home. Gary took the gun with him to "clean the gun." As he was cleaning the gun, he and his wife reportedly began to argue. She left the room and came back, sat down to watch TV about 7 or 8 feet from him. He shot her in the face.

Assessment of Gary's case: Even though they began to argue, Gary's crime is assessed here to be instrumental, as he had pre-planned the murder and had it staged it in advance. An argument may have prompted the final decision made in the split second before he shot the gun, but all was previously set and in place to carry out the murder. His elicited constructs were moderately self-referencing yet his narrative lacked heavy indicators of superiority and victim stance/blame.

Joseph had met a married woman, whom he did not previously know, in the bar and went home with her. They had sex and he got up and left to go to the bathroom. When he returned, he caught his 'one-night-stand' rifling through his pants and pulling Joseph's pocket knife out. Joseph, skilled with a knife, in an instant grabbed the knife from her, flicked it open, turned it on her, and stabbed her, all in virtually one gesture. (Previously in his life, Joseph was found to have justifiably killed (a legal status) his father, who had been severely abusive to him for years. One day they fought. Joseph's dad went after him with a knife. When his father did this, Joseph killed his father.)

Assessment of Joseph's case: His crime is assessed to be expressive. He demonstrated elements of self-preserving, as it appeared he was preserving his stance to not be a victim again, as his early years were wrought with abuse. While he did present with indicators of superiority, he, in spite of his history of severe abuse, did not present as a victim or place

blame upon others. The percentage of his self-referencing constructs was rather low, as well.

Charles' lifelong friend was allowed to come to Charles' apartment and take a shower. While he was there, he had stolen a microwave from Charles' landlord. Charles was getting blamed for it and it was causing arguments between Charles and his girlfriend. Charles went to confront his friend, who was fixing a truck on the street. Several people witnessed the incident. They reported that Charles started to instigate an argument by interfering with his friend's work. They argued and the friend shoved Charles to the ground. Charles left and returned moments later with a handgun. He said to his would-be victim, "You made me look shame by putting me down." Charles chased the victim around the truck that his friend was working on and down the street, while shooting at him. He unloaded all 12 bullets, shooting the truck and striking his friend twice in the upper back, killing him. He talked to him as he died.

Assessment of Charles' case: His crime was expressive and showed greater tendency toward self-identity preservation. According to Charles' narrative, respect was a big part of the culture he was from-- this culture being a big part of his construct system, as reflected in his grid. "We have a tendency to ah respect, that's the way we growed up and if you disrespect me, I'm gonna disrespect you. You put your hands on me. I'm gonna put my hands on you. That's how we growed up." As witnesses saw him "shamed," it seems he had to 'save face,' even if it meant killing his best friend.

Malcolm was 15 years old at the time of the murder. He and an older accomplice whom shared the same first and middle name as he and whom he just met on this very day were loitering outside a cabinet factory. After about 10 minutes, they abruptly entered the factory and Malcolm pointed a gun at the employee who gave him a cigarette. Malcolm and/or his accomplice asked for their money and with no hesitation, Malcolm shot the man. Malcolm reported that their intent was to rob.

Assessment of Malcolm's crime is addressed in detail in Chapter 7.

Walter had mentioned to other men with whom he was shooting dice that he needed money and he was going to rob a particular store-owner. Later, Walter and the four men were outside of the store. (A witness overheard them planning a robbery as they stood outside of the store.) Walter went into the store, ordered hamburgers for all of them and went outside with the others to wait for the order to be done. When it was, Walter went back into the store. As he began to presumably pay for the hamburgers, he asked for a pack a cigarettes as well. When the store-owner turned to get the cigarettes, Walter shot him. Walter then kicked open the door to the area behind the counter, took some money, and fled.

Assessment of Walter's case: Walter's crime was instrumental. He demonstrated tendencies more toward self-promoting, with a view toward others as competition and as against him. Placing blame upon others was exemplified by his report to this interviewer that the men he was with told on him when it was, according to official records, he who told (falsely) on them. Additionally, his narrative was wrought with indications of superiority.

Harold and his crime partner made a "career" of "hustling" and committing armed robbery. His co-defendant told him of a place that was having an auction and thought would, at the end of it, have money. They planned the robbery for about a week. They had a get-away driver set up and knew how many people would be in the place at a certain time—right as they were closing up. It was planned so that no one would get hurt. Harold pulled the gun on the owner of the store and demanded the money. The owner resisted. His "fall partner" shot the man and he later died. Harold and his co-offender weren't able to get into the room where the money was so they got everything out of the cash register. The also took, he thinks, a carton of cigarettes and some beer and two fifths of whiskey. Harold told those in the get-away car, "Ah, listen, robbery went bad."

Assessment of Harold's case: Harold's crime was instrumental and his construing demonstrated greater hints at self-promoting. He endured loss of family and a very oppressive history of abuse and injustice in foster homes and a juvenile center, all of which he admittedly blamed on "whites." As he got older, his motto became "As long as white folks got money, I gonna have money." It was him against the world-- a world in which people were "underhanded," "corrupt," and "out for self."

Elroy and his co-defendant were going to go Christmas shopping in a bigger city, away from their hometown. Elroy reported that he took this young man Christmas shopping because Elroy was trying to "pad" him so he wouldn't tell on Elroy for having an affair with this young man's sister. They stopped at a gas station, filled up with gas, and Elroy went in the store. As he asked about hubcaps and was looking around the store, his co-defendant came in and shot the store-keeper. Elroy claimed in his interview that he did not know his partner was going to do this but available official records report that "both co-defendants admitted general participation in the robbery."

Assessment of Elroy's case: Elroy's crime was instrumental. I'm presenting in this example, as well, a case in which, while various considerations are made in regard to Elroy tending more toward self-preserving or self-promoting, there is difficulty at times in making such a discrete distinction: On the one hand, a desire for money may have been driven by his self-identity as the "big brother" and his responsibility to his siblings. He prided himself on taking care of them. A motivator might also have been to go along with his co-defendant to keep his mouth shut about the affair Elroy was having. Another factor to consider in motivation to commit this armed robbery is that he was wanting money to impress his lady friends (all pointing toward self-preservation of identity as playing a role in the various lives

of his loved ones). He avoids an indication of motive in his narrative (of course, as he claims to not have known anything about it in advance) and paints himself as too trusting of others, claiming this to be his downfall. There seems to be morality in this "trusting nature;" on the other hand, presenting one's self as such may be the point, to draw attention away from a more anti-social characteristic to a more moral and innocent nature (i.e. "too trusting" can serve to both indicate a moral superiority and an innocence nearly paralleling victim-essence). Another point to consider, regarding his crime and his presentation of self, however, is that he is just this naïve and simply a "people-pleaser." His narrative is very careful to relay his story as one of naivety and innocence. "I happened to have a gun that I borrowed from a friend cuz I went target practicing … and by me just havin' it under the seat and he fumblin' around lookin' then he just found it and done went messin' around with it." Elroy also claimed that he did not know his co-defendant was going to come into the store. While he may not have been privy to the killing, records do indicate he was aware of a plan to rob the place. He denies this, however, to the interviewer. In favor of possible self-promotion, Elroy may have just gone along with the crime in order to bolster his social status as "down" with crime, "tough," "gutsy," or "not a coward" in the face of his co-defendant. In this case, the details of Elroy's crime narrative do not reveal enough to confirm what other the other factors under analysis have indicated—that his motive was one of self-promoting. His elicited constructs and narrative imbedded superiority, victim-essence, and lack of transparency highly support a motive of self-promoting. It is a good example, then, of the analyses of focus—elicited constructs, superiority, and victim-essence—being indicators which highlight the potential for much more to be revealed if questioning were increasingly focused on certain areas of non-transparency.

Seth claimed that his girlfriend called him to say she was coming over and, when she arrived and honked her horn, he went to her car to meet her. There is some question, however, about whether he may possibly have called her to ask her to come over. After the call, he put his pants on and grabbed a gun. Fearing something bad was going to happen, the brother, who saw him grab his gun, called their mother. Seth talked with his girlfriend in her car for, reportedly, about a half an hour, during which time they argued. He shared with me several statements that she reportedly said to insult him. At some point, she turned to exit the vehicle and he shot her in the back of the head. She was 7 months pregnant. Both her and the baby died later.

Assessment of Seth's case: Seth's crime was categorized as expressive. Unlike most expressive murders herein, this one appears to be more indicative of self-promoting construing. He was quite high in self-referencing in his elicited constructs (83.8%) and had given many indications of taking a victim stance and of blaming his victim; additionally, he presented heavily with indications of superiority. He also construed very tightly (82.5 PVAFF), and his narrative, again, is laden with non-transparency. His elements were all relatives, save his girlfriend (the victim), her mother, and a previous girlfriend. His grid demonstrates that all his relatives, including himself ATC, are on the side of ideal and that his victim and her mother are on the contrasting side. Seth's narrative revealed an unhealthy and extreme alignment with his parents, particularly his mother, whom he

proudly shares is a woman of God, a minister. His father is also a minister. His narrative, too, was wrought with righteousness. He rates his girlfriend the contrast and spoke quite ill of her.

It is interesting to note, though, that there was some instrumentality to his crime, for example, the grabbing of his gun in preparation to meet her; the possibility that he called her to come over to him; a comment he made to state in denial of his planning it, he could have *lured* her into the apartment. This statement seems a bit "off" or out of place unless one might actually be thinking of such an idea. These all, at worst, imply intent and possible pre-meditation. At best, in his self-promoting tendencies (an underlying 'me'-vs-others construct), it seems he was prepared to come out on top knowing that the scene would become escalated, as they had not been getting along.

Lenny was caught burglarizing a home while he was in the military and was sentenced to three years in a federal prison. It was minimum-security and he escaped. He went to the State in which he would eventually commit his index crime and, to get out of the cold, he crawled into a car where he found a high school diploma, birth certificate, and social security card. "First thing I thought of was, 'A new me!' Instant identification." He roamed to another State and eventually walked by an Army recruiting office. "I said, 'I can do that,' so I walked into the recruiter and I told him I wanted to join up. I'd already been in the service so I knew what I was facing." While he was in the Army under this stolen identity, the authorities came looking for him by his real name. So, he went "AWOL" as an illegitimate cadet. His illegitimate use of the uniform is what eventually led to the murder of his victim. He was in a brewery and met a young woman who was in the ROTC – Reserve Officer's Training Corps. He felt that she was enticed by this uniform and that "sexual innuendos" between the two and "the fact that I was willing to spend an extensive amount of time with her"—they spent the day together sight-seeing—all played a role in leading up to the potential for sex. They went back to her campground and walked to the near-by lake. His narrative goes quickly from explaining that they were talking and standing and cuddling by the lake to him putting his arms around her neck and squeezing. She fought, and he dragged her into the lake and drowned her.

Lenny stated, "We went out by the lake. […] And ah, I really don't know why, ah, I was standing behind her. Had my arms around her. We was just kinda talking. She was talking about different things and she was just, ya know, just talking. It wasn't nothing major, it was just… she kinda eased back and leaned up against me and ah, (pause) I don't know if I thought about it.[…] I pulled my arms up around her, up around her shoulder and then ah, put my arms around behind her neck and and went to squeezing. It was, and, and, ah, choked her out."

Assessment of Lenny's case is addressed in detail in Chapter 7.

Sinclair was with three friends traveling to a nearby town for a basketball game. The car started making a knocking noise so the driver pulled over on the side of the road. While he stayed to look at the car, the three others walked to a nearby store. Two went in, one of them being Sinclair, and the third stayed outside. The third witnessed, through the doorway from the outside, Sinclair pull out a gun and start shooting as the second friend was running out of the store and toward the third. Sinclair remained in the store and continued shooting. The second and third kept running toward the car. When Sinclair caught up to them, he had two bags of money, two pistols, and told them to drive. Sinclair had shot the husband and wife who owned the store. He shot the male in the head twice, the second one being in the back of the head after he was face down. The female was shot three times in the face.

Assessment of Sinclair's case: This was an instrumental crime. Sinclair demonstrated more self-promoting construing. Sinclair himself admitted that he was materialistic and greedy, without using those specific words and that he committed the crime because he wanted money. While Sinclair's version of the story claims those with him knew about the crime, were the ones to plan it, and turned him in for it later, all indications in the official record are that they did not know he was going to commit this or were aware that he even had a gun. From his crime through to the investigation, he Sinclair demonstrated a self-vs-others construct and took for himself at the cost of two lives, three friendships and the potential of ruining their lives as well. Not surprisingly, his narrative was riddled with blame upon others and him taking a victim stance. Eighty-three percent of his elicited constructs were self-referencing. His construing was rather tight at 78.9 PVAFF.

Nolan and an acquaintance of his, "Jenkins," talked about needing money. Jenkins knew of two different people they could rob. One was out of the question because he knew Nolan and could recognize his face. The other, "Charles," who was a known drug-dealer, was thought by Jenkins to have $5000 and drugs in his house. A week before the murder, Nolan and Jenkins went to Charles' house to scope it out. While Jenkins was talking to Charles, Nolan sat and talked with a 17-year-old who was staying at the house with his mom, girlfriend to one of the residents there. On the day of the murder, Nolan went to a friend's house, "Tavonta's", to get guns. Later, Nolan and Tavonta went to Charles' residence and saw Jenkins' vehicle out front, so Nolan and Tavonta drove a few blocks away and waited for Jenkins. They flagged Jenkins down and found out how many people were in Charles' house. Jenkins told them four or five, as he had only seen this many. Nolan and Tavonta then went to Charles' house. As Nolan approached the front door, it opened. Nolan shot the man who opened the door in the neck. The 17-year-old was lying on the couch. He sat up and when he did Nolan shot him in the head. There were more people in the house than they were told. Eleven people were actually there. Two of them went running out of the back door, one being Charles. Nolan followed them, shooting as he walked, hitting one in the lip and hitting Charles in the back. They kept running and Nolan went back into the house, demanding "the money" and "the dope." He came across several more people as he looked through the house for the money and drugs. As he opened a bedroom door, a man on the other side of the door grabbed the barrel of Nolan's gun and wrestled it away from him. Nolan left the house and got into his car. Tavonta was outside the whole time, holding

one person at gunpoint. Nolan and Tavonta were pulled over by police less than a mile from the crime scene. The 17-year-old died and an additional three were shot.

Assessment of Nolan's case: Nolan's crime was instrumental. He showed greater tendency toward self-promoting construing. He put his desire to get money and drugs above the lives of others (self over others construct). The reason he shared with the research interviewer for committing the crime was to sell guns to the residents of this house, which was very misaligned with his earlier reports to police and witness statements, indicating non-transparency. He also minimized others' involvement in the crime, while at one point, he told the police Tavonta was the one who went in the house and did all the shooting, again, weighing his well-being over his "friend's" who actually did none of the shooting. He painted himself to be a rather moral guy, stating he needed $400 for a security deposit on an apartment for his pregnant girlfriend and that he was expecting to get $300 off of the "gun sale," when it was found in the official record that he was doing crack/cocaine around the time of the crime, had been in rehab for cocaine use prior, and likely needed money (and "the dope") to support his habit. Nolan self-referenced in 70.8% of his elicited constructs. His construing is quite tight at 81 PVAFF.

Moses was suspicious of his wife cheating on him. He reported that he then found her "messing around" with another man in their house. He stated that he shot at the man and the man dove out of the window. His wife ran toward him telling him not to shoot her. He shot her twice in the chest and once in the back. Official records give no support to another man being present or of Moses catching his wife with another man. It does state that "an argument developed in connection with her infidelity, culminating in his shooting her with a shotgun."

Assessment of Moses's case: Moses's crime was expressive. His narrative speaks to preserving a self-identity as the *man*—the one who "wears the pants" in the family and other similar stereo-types perhaps prominent in his day (early 1960's)—and not to be betrayed or humiliated in regard to his 'manhood.' Prior to prison, the only criminal record as both a juvenile and an adult was Disturbing the Peace. He was known to be a hard worker, honest, and dependable. He self-referenced only moderately (37.5% of his elicited constructs). It does not seem he is out to *make* a name for himself (again, as with self-promoters) as it does to *preserve* his reputation as a "man."

Blair described himself as a very angry young man, who had been belittled and beat up by his two older brothers growing up. He reported that he had just graduated from school but only because he would not leave the school—not because he was a good student, as he struggled with a learning disability. At this time, his parents were prompting him to figure his life out and do something with his life. He applied to the military. However, he "didn't score high enough" and failed the test. Shortly after this, Blair and an associate of his spent a night hanging out together, drinking, and came across a young man whom Blair described as mentally retarded. Blair and his co-defendant picked up this young man and took him with them. Blair had previously worked in a group home for mentally challenged people and

enjoyed working with this population. Throughout the course of the night of cruising and getting drunk, however, they began to pick on him. They took his $40 and beat him up several times. Eventually, Blair and his co-defendant went into the woods with this young man and beat him to death, leaving his now-disabled body to drown in the pond where they left him. Blair reported that he was bothered that this young man would not defend himself, as it reminded him of himself when his brothers used to beat *him* up.

Assessment of Blair's case: Blair's case was expressive. His case is a bit different in that his seems to be a culmination of years of anger, non-acceptance, and eventual self-loathing. Blair felt he was "not supposed to be" because his parent wanted a girl. He struggled with a learning disability, which isolated him from his peers. His brothers, too, made him feel unloved/unaccepted by beating him up routinely. He graduated from high school only because the school didn't know what to do with him, as he refused to actually leave the school. His parents started to prod him to set goals for his life, be independent, and move out. He didn't want to but made efforts. He took a test to join the army and failed. These may have all felt like personal failures to him which added to self-frustration. It seems he recognized some characteristics of his own, some of which he expressed shame about, in his victim—not fighting back (as he didn't with his brothers), learning disabled ("mentally retarded" as he called it), wanting to belong, and weak. All of the frustrations about himself and his life seemed to be let loose on his victim. In this way, it seems counterintuitive to call his crime-self-preserving. Nor is it self-promoting, as he got nothing for himself out of murdering this boy, other than, perhaps, temporary release of anger. There was a possibly a threat, however, in terms of his self not living up to his self, not coming into his own identity.

Alex had been sexually molested by his father over and over again for years. His mother was aware of it and, yet, did nothing. His mother was physically and emotionally abusive and neglectful in many ways. He tried killing himself twice before. He had overdosed intentionally once and, after thinking about what he did and as he got sicker and sicker, he called his mother for help. She told him he would be fine and hung up. Alex could not remember what happened earlier on the day of the murders. He recalls thinking it just had to stop. His intent was to kill himself in front of them, out in the woods so people would have to ask them why he did that. He wanted them to answer for what they had done to him. Alex's parents were getting ready for bed when Alex told them he wanted to show them something. He is not sure why they followed him, but they did. He got in his car and they in theirs. He drove ten to 15 miles to a back, country road. He stopped in the middle of the road and his mother and father pulled up alongside of him. His mother said, "You're not fixin' to kill us, are ya?" Alex said, "No," and told them they needed to get out of the car for a minute. As they got out of the car and walked toward him, he walked to the back of his car, opened his trunk, and got his gun out of the trunk. At the last minute, rather than shooting himself, he turned the gun on them. He shot his father. His mother screamed. Alex shot her. He then shot his father two more times and his mother two more times. Both were shot once in the head and twice in the chest. He emptied the gun and thought if more bullets were there, he would have kept shooting. He then just got in his car and drove off.

Assessment of Alex's crime: Alex's crime was expressive. His construing was much aligned with that of self-preserving. Not just his identity but his body, emotions, and mind were all repeatedly threatened… abused… neglected. He admittedly hated himself and, instead of killing himself as was his intent, his instincts of self-preservation perhaps kicked in and he turned the gun on his long-time abusers. His narrative was very transparent and coincided with official records and psychological reports. He self-referenced 24.9% in his elicited constructs. In spite of his horrific past, his narrative was almost free of blame, taking victim stance, or superiority. In fact, he was sure to highlight blame upon himself. "I don't even, I guess I don't even blame 'em. I don't even blame 'em. I don't blame mom for being the way she was cuz that's the way she was brought up I'm sure. Cuz, looking at my grandmother. Same thing with daddy… I don't, I don't even blame him no more… cuz of my grandfather... that's the way he (inaudible)… that's what happened. I think I'm the only one who just had enough (very faintly)." He stated that he did not want his parents to be viewed as "monsters" and was accepting that he may be viewed that way. "I don't want them to be monsters—does that make sense? I mean, that's why I killed I don't want 'em to be monsters. Ya know, then I and I… I know what my reasoning was at the time but… I don't know, I don't want people to judge them. I don't care if people judge me… it doesn't bother me anymore." He explained his reasoning— whereas he first wanted his parents to pay for what they did to him by ruining their reputation amongst their community (which he felt would come to light if he killed himself), in the end, he did not want his parents to bear this burden and, instead, needing yet for it to stop, took their lives. He realizes "the answers are not nice simple, reasonable answers."

Prentiss was 15-years-old ATC. He was involved in dealing drugs, as was his victim. He was hanging out one night at the apartment of a "friend" of his, the would-be victim. They were up most of the night drinking and taking cocaine. His friend went upstairs to go to bed and Prentiss fell asleep on the couch. About 30 minutes to an hour passed. Prentiss woke up. He grabbed a gun (he claims it was the victim's gun) and went straight to the "friend's" bedroom. He was lying in the bed. Prentiss pointed the gun at him and pulled the trigger, shooting him in the head at close range. The victim never woke up. Prentiss went back downstairs and began to load various possessions of the victim's into the victim's car, including a pistol, an assault rifle, cash, and narcotics.

Assessment of Prentiss's case: Prentiss's crime was instrumental. His construing had more elements of self-promoting constuing. His version to the interviewer claimed that he and two brothers (not Prentiss' brothers) had been hanging out with the victim that night, all drinking and doing drugs. He claimed that there had been one or two previous attempts on Prentiss's life and that evidence was clear that the victim was behind these. He claimed that the two brothers goaded him in this regard and prompted him to kill the victim. Prentiss stated he felt like "the respect they had for me was slipping." He claimed that he did not want to do it but and that "it was like something was just pushin' me like because I didn't even feel myself walkin.'" He claimed that after he shot the victim, the brothers started going through all of the victim's things and stealing things. Prentiss claimed all he did was help load things into the victim's vehicle. He said that he sat in the back seat feeling empty

as the two brothers just kind of laughed about the whole thing. He claimed that they brothers parked the victim's car in Prentiss' sister's parking lot to set him up. Careful review of a plethora of official records, however, evidence that Prentiss was the only person there that night (this is according to the victim's girlfriend who was there until 6:00 AM with her boyfriend and Prentiss, and according to two non-involved others who lived in the same apartment building as the victim). He was the only one loading items into the victim's car and he drove the victim's car away from the scene. The car keys were found in his pocket when he was arrested. Another witness reported that Prentiss told him that the victim had taken someone else, instead of Prentiss, to a hotel to have sex with two girls, one of whom Prentiss was interested in. Prentiss told this witness that he was going to pretend to be the victim's friend but that he was not anymore and that he was going to get even with him.