

REPORT

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**Zooanthropology of Deviance
Zooanthropological Behavioral and Criminal Profiling
of Animal Abusers and/or Killers
ANIMAL CRIME CLASSIFICATION**

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Introduction

THE LINK

In the everyday language the word LINK generally means <<relationship>> but in more technical areas such as the psychological, psychiatric, criminological and investigative sciences, this term indicates the close connection between animal abuse and interpersonal violence or any other anti-social, criminal and deviant behavior such as murder, sexual assault, stalking, domestic violence, robbery, drug-dealing, fraud, psychological manipulation, etc. (Arkow, 2008; Arkow 2014).

Since the 1960s extensive scientific researches on the LINK have been carried out in the US and other English-speaking countries such as England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada: their findings in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and criminology show that animal abuse and/or killing is not only a blameful act to be condemned but is also evidence of:

1. **A symptom of a potentially pathological state of mind** – specifically when children are victims of mistreatment, neglect and/or psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse (AAVV, 2011; Ascione, 2001; Ascione et al., 1997);
2. **A predictor of current and/or future deviant, antisocial or criminal behaviors** of escalating violence which include *vandalism* – malicious destruction of property often by means of arson; *physical and/or psychological aggressions*; *robberies and thefts in the presence of the victim* such as pick-pocketing, extortion, armed robbery; *kidnapping, rape, assaults* with specific reference to the phenomenon of Spree Killers, *murders* with particular reference to the phenomenon of Serial Killers.

In other words, the above crimes represent the escalation of an initially deviant, antisocial and criminal behavior: animal abuse.

In the *International Classification of Mental and Behavioral Disorders* (ICD-10, 1996) issued by the World Health Organization and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III-R 1987) by the American Psychiatric Association, physical cruelty to animals is considered one of the symptoms of Conduct Disorder. This disorder is usually first diagnosed in early childhood or adolescence and it is described in the DSM-IV-TR as “*A recurrent, persistent pattern of behavior that violates the rights of others or major age-appropriate social norms or rules*” (APA 1994).

Behavioral disorders cover a variety of symptoms which negatively affect many aspects of the child's life including mental development, learning capacity, family life and relationship with peers. They also have an economic impact on the health care and judicial systems. It must also be noted that the symptoms of Conduct Disorder and the behavioral pattern of severely violent young criminals often overlap.

As the early detection of children being likely to become violent criminals is of the greatest importance, it must be highlighted that cruelty to animals is statistically one of the major symptoms of Conduct Disorder that young children display. According to parental reports on the initial symptoms of Conduct Disorder, Frick et al. (1993) have noticed that cruelty to animals usually begins at the age of six-and-a-half well before bullying, violence to people, assaults, vandalism and arson. This disorder is a burden on children's present and, inevitably, future life because it interferes with their emotional, psychological, social and moral growth and, around the age of 15, it may turn into Antisocial Personality Disorder. The latter is characterized by the disregard and violation of the rights of others, so those who suffer from it. The subjects affected by this disorder fail to conform to social norms and commit illicit actions such as property destruction, harassment, animal cruelty, larceny, etc. (Gullone, 2011). Antisocial behaviors have a disruptive impact both either individuals and society (Dishion et al., 1995). As a whole these behaviors represent one of biggest global health issues, accounting for over 1.6 million dead a year and a countless number of injured people (Krug et al., 2002). Though the Antisocial Personality Disorder differs from crimes committed by adults only for easy money and are not associated with the personality traits typical of this disorder, violence to

animals during childhood and adolescence is a common feature in both deviant behaviors (Arluke et al.1999).

More specifically, research data show a graduating hypothesis that connects animal cruelty with antisocial behaviors (Wright e Hensley, 2003).

Statement of the NSW Police Service in Sydney (April 26, 2005):

- Animal abuse is a better predictor of sexual assaults than any previous criminal records for homicide, arson or firearms offences.
- 100% of sexual homicide offenders have a history of animal cruelty.
- Prevention measures and/or final judgments for murders, arsonists, rapists of women and children, greatly benefit from information about previous episodes of animal abuse.

Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Psychological Violence

Under certain circumstances, animal maltreatment and/or killing must be considered as an integral part of other crimes such as domestic violence against women and children, stalking, intimidation, children's exposure to violence, juvenile delinquency – juvenile animal-related crimes –, drug trafficking.

On Nov. 5, 2000 the New York Daily News published an article about 35 male New Yorkers who had never been reported to police despite the fact they used to batter their partners but were in jail or under psychological treatment because they had abused their pets. Their arrest was made possible with the close cooperation between the District Attorneys' Offices of Brooklyn and Staten Island and the Family Supervision Unit of ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). Since 1998 their *Anti-Violence* program has informed all *Municipal Bodies* about the intersection – or LINK – of animal abuse, human violence – mostly on women and children – and any other deviant or criminal behaviors. Thus the statement of the Deputy District Attorney at that time, Carol Moran, sounded very explanatory: *“Those who abuse or kill animals are often violent towards people. Consequently, sentences for animal abuse allow the imprisonment or the therapeutic treatment of human abusers”* (Santiago 2000)¹.

As a matter of fact physical abuse of animals is often an instrument of psychological violence through which the abuser gains power and full control over his human victim (Harrel e Smith,1991; Ascione 1998; Carlisle et al., 2004). This is the case when it comes to domestic violence on women, children and other family members, threats, stalking, retaliation and intimidation.

As concerns the LINK in domestic violence and stalking, abusers – mostly male – threaten a pet abuse just to coerce their partners into remaining – if they want to leave – or coming back home – if they have already left –. In other words, a violent partner often threatens to harm or kill a pet, or actually does so, just to tell his human victim that she will be the next one on the list. It is no coincidence that female victims of family violence usually refuse to leave their homes because this would mean leaving their pets in the abuser's hands (Carlisle et al., 2004). In this event, police, social services and family violence shelters cannot intervene in time and fail to save human victims' lives – either women or children –. The only way to convince these women is to offer protection for their pets in *Safe Havens for Abused Pets* or *Shelters for both human and animal victims*. Cruelty on animals is often an intentional tool of psychological violence to women being abused at home or stalked and it contributes significantly to the so-called *Battered Woman Syndrome* (Walker 1979, 1984/2000), where <<flaws>> in the social system and institutions may lead the human victim to kill the abuser as an extreme act of self-defense. Domestic violence on animals is also an accurate predictor of dangerousness for women and children who are 6,7 times more likely to become, in turn, victims of severe forms of violence (Flynn, 2011).

¹Santiago R., (2000): *Das Link Pet Abuse, Domestic Violence*, New York Daily News. Sunday, November 05.

As to the psychological LINK, one of the most gruesome warnings of the organized crime – **mafia, 'ndrangheta, camorra** – is the delivery of a lamb's, sheep's, goat's, horse's or dog's head to those who must be intimidated.

(...) Everyone must see it, the head. So much better if found by the family members or the wife who may get hyped up. If bleeding, it is fresh meat. Those who want to hurt you are breathing down your back, they are round the corner. They keep an eye on you and can take you at anytime (GEAPRESS 2010).

In countries where the scientific knowledge of the LINK is already deep-rooted, animal cruelty is considered as an integral part of the human violence with special reference to stalking and family abuse. Therefore helping strategies and institutions that disregard this connection seem to penalize victims even further. In several English-speaking countries – particularly in the U.S. – a close cooperation has been established between professionals involved in the care and protection of animals – which are given an important social value – and professionals in the field of care and protection of abused women, children and, generally speaking, victims of violence. Training courses on the LINK as well as violence prevention and treatment programs are jointly organized. In those countries it is a common practice for veterinarians or an animal protection associations to contact the police or social services whenever they find signs of animal abuse and alleged domestic violence. In the State of Colorado veterinarians are obliged to report to the police and it is an established practice for social workers to investigate animal cruelty in the households where women and children are abused, and then report to a veterinarian. In San Diego, Ca., social workers are required to report about the health condition and treatment of pets living in families where children are abused.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.)

In the U.S. there are two *Special Police Units*, i.e Animal Cops and Animal Control, which deal with animal abuse and/or killing according to the LINK.

Here below some of their training tools:

- **In the Line of Duty** has made the following training videos:
 1. *Animal Abuse: Why Cops Can and Need to Stop It*
 2. *Pit Bull and dog fighting*
 3. *What Dogs Try to Tell Cops*
- **The Chicago Crime Commission** has developed a program called *Reducing animal cruelty to reduce gang violence*.
- **The Police Department of Colorado Springs** has developed the *DVERT program -Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team*.
- **The Police Department of Boston** has developed the *LINK UP* Program.

In its capacity as Federal law enforcement agency investigating and fighting against the ultimate escalation level of animal cruelty, that is to say crimes such as kidnapping, sexual abuse, assault (with special reference to Spree Killers), homicide (with special reference to Serial Killers), the F.B.I. has always considered animal cruelty as a significant predictor of interpersonal violence (Ressler et. al., 1998, Lockwood and Church, 1996). In 2014 F.B.I upgraded animal cruelty to Class A felony and entered a specific category in the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. As a result, since 2016 all federal data regarding crimes against animals have been collected in the National Incident-Based Reporting System (N.I.B.R.S.) where animal cruelty is classified as a “*Crime Against Society*”. Four types of animal cruelty have been identified: **neglect, intentional abuse and torture, organized abuse and sexual abuse**.

According to the F.B.I's definition, animal abuse is *<<intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly taking an action that mistreats or kills any animal without just cause, such as torturing, tormenting, mutilation, maiming, poisoning, or abandonment>>*.

Thanks to the awareness of the LINK, the classification of animal cruelty as a felony crime has been extended from 7 to all 50 states since 1990.

PART I

*“A child who learns animal cruelty is more likely to rape,
abuse or kill people when he grows up”*
Arnold Arluke & Stephen Kellert ²

1.1 LINK-ITALIA – Association for Social Advancement –

LINK-ITALIA (APS) is the first and only Italian association for social advancement whose members are professionals with expertise in crime analysis, prevention, treatment and law enforcement. Since 2009 this association has investigated the LINK in Italy thanks to all the information material available internationally – i.e. scientific papers, case studies, criminal and victim profiling, guidelines for hostage-taking and kidnapping – and it has also published its own latest findings in the fields of criminology, victimology, investigative, psychosocial and veterinary sciences.

Moreover it has developed a new branch of zooanthropology, so called *zooanthropology of deviance* – as part of the crime and investigative science (Sorcinelli et al. 2012).

On the one hand, crime science traditionally considers animal cruelty as an integral part of interpersonal violence and includes it in the profiling of spree and serial killers, sex offenders, stalkers and sociopathic subjects; on the other hand, thanks to zooanthropology, according to which the understanding of humans’ ontogenetic and cultural traits cannot leave out the contribution of non-human otherness, the traditional approach can be studied in depth, completed and summarized by means of the following:

- Analysis of the *Types of Relationships and Interactions* between humans and animals.
- Outlining the *Zooanthropological Behavioral and Criminal Profiling of the Animal Abuser and/or Killer* (Sorcinelli 2002).
- Using Manuals such as *Classification of Crimes against Animals* and *Zooanthropological Investigation and Autopsy* during investigation (Sorcinelli 2012).
- Suggesting *Zooanthropological Diagnosis* as a supplement of the multidisciplinary crime assessment techniques and *Didactic and Welfare Zooanthropology* as a major prevention and treatment co-therapy for deviant or antisocial behaviors.

On the one side, animals can help explain or highlight humans’ traits; but on the other, they may become a scapegoat and a ‘free zone’ where any crimes or unethical actions can be committed.

The *Zooanthropology of deviance* is a branch of zooanthropology which thoroughly studies the various forms of animal cruelty and focuses on the zooanthropological and psycho-social implications of such a deviance. Its scientific approach aims to analyze the characteristics of animal abuse and, through the LINK, the characteristics of crime and deviant behaviors, with the contribution of disciplines such as ecopsychology, ecopedagogy, evolutionary psychology, ethology, pedagogy and sociology of deviance, criminology, victimology, psychiatry, criminal psychiatry, investigative sciences and veterinary forensics.

² A. R. Felthous, S. R. Kellert, *Childhood cruelty to animals and later aggressive against people: A review*, American Journal of Psychiatry, 1987.

1.2 Investigative Unit for Crimes against Animals

N.I.R.D.A. – C.F.S.

In May 2005 a section of the State Forestry Corps became responsible for monitoring crimes against animals to enforce law n. 189/ 2004 on animal abuse and subsequent amendments of the Penal Code (art. 544). Initially, it had also to carry out anti-poaching and hunting supervision activities at national level but due to the increasing demand for interventions and the particular nature of animal crimes, an *ad hoc* unit was established in October 2006 with the following purposes:

- organization and management of all law-enforcement activities to prevent and fight against crimes related to animal abuse, abandonment and transportation.
- In-depth investigation activity to fight against this kind of crimes and protect animals and their rights in compliance with the current regulations.

Their successful achievements and the need for a greater institutional prominence led to the setting up of N.I.R.D.A. – Investigative Unit for Crimes against Animals – on March 21, 2007. This unit is part of the State Forestry Corps and aims to prevent and fight against all animal crimes, in conformity with Law no. 189 of July 2004, containing “*Provisions concerning the prohibition of cruelty to animals, as well as their use in illegal fighting or unauthorized competitions*”.

It is clear that they do not only fight against single episodes of cruelty or mistreatment but also against organized crime groups operating all over the country and making illegal business worth millions of euro. It is not a coincidence that, after drug trafficking, illegal trade of animals is the second largest business of organized crime worldwide. Over the last few year, N.I.R.D.A’s interventions have focused on animal protection in kennels, quarantine sites, public or private shelters, circuses and pet stores in close cooperation with all the Italian public prosecutor’s offices.

N.I.R.D.A staff is highly specialized and trained and carries out investigations to protect animals with the support of local authorities and health units, environmental organizations, animal welfare volunteer associations, professionals and private citizens.

PART II

Very little of the great cruelty shown by men can really be attributed to cruel instinct. Most of it comes from thoughtlessness or inherited habit. The roots of cruelty, therefore, are not so much strong as widespread. But the time must come when inhumanity protected by custom and thoughtlessness will succumb before humanity championed by thought. Let's work so that this time may come.

Albert Schweitzer³

2.1 The mandate of the World Health Organization

This report takes into account violence and crime in their broadest meaning as defined by the World Health Organization (W.H.O.) which is the institutional and scientific reference point for all the member states. It also acknowledges W.H.O.'s calls to officials in the judicial, public health and welfare branches to view violence, especially interpersonal violence, as a complex issue where mental attitudes and behaviors as well as prevention strategies and treatments go well beyond national borders.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as “*the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.*” The term <<power>> and the sentence <<use of physical force>> expand the scope of an act of violence and the traditional concept of violence: as a result, such as threats or intimidation can also be included. The term <<use of power>> makes it possible to add neglect and acts of omission to the list of crimes. Consequently, <<*the intentional use of physical force or power*>> can include neglect and all kinds of physical, psychological and sexual abuse as well as suicide and any other form of self-directed violence.

The *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014* issued by the WHO, U.N.D.P. (United Nation Development Program) and U.N.O.D.C (United Nation Office on Drug and Crime) shows that antisocial behaviors are responsible for over 1,3 million deaths every year and an even higher number of injured people.

In its *World Report on Violence and Health 2002*, the W.H.O. had already defined violence as a major public health problem worldwide and *interpersonal violence as a growing global phenomenon*.

More specifically, in 1996 the 49th World Health Assembly (W.H.A.) passed the resolution no. 49.25 emphasizing the long- and short term serious consequences of violence on individuals, families, communities and nations and the relevant impact on the health care system.

The Assembly also urged the member states to tackle the problem of violence within their territories and to this purpose the WHO Director General was asked to set out public health procedures.

The first *World Report on Violence and Health* together with the more recent *Report 2014* represent a significant answer to resolution WHA 49.25. They are both mainly directed at researchers, judicial officials and professionals in the fields of public health, social care, education and crime prevention.

³ A. Schweitzer, *Memoirs of Childhood and Youth*, Hardcover, 1997.

2.2 The LINK Memorandum of Understanding

On September 18, 2014 the State Forestry Corps and LINK-ITALIA signed in Rome the first **Memorandum of Understanding** on the LINK between the State Police and an association for social advancement.

According to this memorandum:

- The **Investigative Unit for Crimes against Animals** (N.I.R.D.A.) is responsible for the investigation, prevention and fights against LINK-related crimes through a multi-disciplinary approach;
- All data regarding LINK-related cases ascertained by the N.I.R.D.A. staff are to be collected in the *Animal Crime Reporting System* (F.A.R.M.A.).

Taking for granted that animal abuse and killing is a serious crime, a symptom of a pathological condition and an accurate indicator of social dangerousness, this *memorandum of understanding* is the answer to the WHO's calls for an increasingly innovative, detailed and multi-disciplinary cooperation among institutions, public bodies, organizations and associations to develop and implement programs which may prevent violence or at least reduce its impact.

In this respect, N.I.R.D.A and LINK-ITALIA work closely together to provide Italy with new tools for crime prevention and violence control and contribute to the change in the national concept of animal abuse and killing from the current *misdemeanor* to *felony* with serious social implications. To this purpose and thanks to a close collaboration between the two parts signing the memorandum, the first **Italian scientific team working on the LINK** has been set up in order to study the **Zooanthropological Criminal and Behavioral Profiling of Animal Abusers and/or Killers**.

PART III

*The link between childhood animal cruelty and later adult violence
towards humans is an important predictor of danger.
This suggests that future research should be carried out
taking this link into account.*
M. Wright, C. Hensley⁴

3.1 Problem analysis

Defining animal cruelty as a symptom of a pathological condition and a serious indicator of social dangerousness, i.e. *the probability or mere possibility that those who have perpetrated animal crimes may be involved in other felonies later*, is not the brilliant insight of a single school of thought. On the contrary, this theory has been widely accepted not only by the top academic world such as the Utah University, North-Western University, Massachusetts University, Harvard University, Florida University, American Psychiatric Association, World Health Organization, Australian Psychological Society etc., but also by investigative and judicial bodies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (O.J.J.D.P.), Scotland Yard, New South Wales Police Force, Canadian Police, etc.

Italy follows the operating rules set out by the W.H.O. as concerns the activity of professionals in the fields of psycho-social care, health care, education and in the judiciary. Before including animal cruelty among the symptoms of Conduct Disorder, it was entirely up to doctors, teachers, educators, social workers or police officers to decide whether the question “*Has this patient/student/citizen/offender ever been violent towards animals?*” could be relevant or not. Now it is mandatory, in compliance with the W.H.O. and A.P.A. guidelines.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that in Italy this obligation is too often minimized or even blatantly ignored.

Acts of animal cruelty are classified as minor crimes or misdemeanors and therefore not included in the official data records thus diminishing their impact on the public opinion and their social implications. Indeed, crime policies are guided and shaped by these implications. Setting up a serious crime policy means getting to the roots of a crime but this is possible only if all underlying factors are known to the investigators.

This is the reason why the teamwork between the State Forestry Corps and LINK-ITALIA (APS) is so important for the data collection and trend analysis of all LINK - related crimes.

⁴ J. Wright, C. Hensley, *From Animal Cruelty to Serial Murder: Applying the Graduation Hypothesis*, International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 47(1):71-88, March 2003.

PART IV

Those who commit a single act of violence against animals are more likely to commit other future crimes. As a possible expression of antisocial behavior, single episodes of animal cruelty should not be ignored by judges, psychiatrists, social workers and police officers whenever they detect them during their work
Arnold Arluke⁵

4.1 First retrospective statistical analysis in Italian prisons

Data collection: From September 2015 to October 2016

Thanks to the support of the Department of Penitentiary Administration, LINK-ITALIA (APS) and N.I.R.D.A. - C.F.S. have successfully carried out a survey in Italian prisons on the correlation between animal abuse and/or killing and other criminal behaviors.

The findings reported here below were collected until October 2016 among inmates of 7 medium security prisons, which first joined this project. At present, the survey is being carried out in other prisons.

The method applied to data analysis was *retrospective*: inmates were asked whether they had committed adult cruelty towards animals and also had been exposed to violence against animals either as a witness or perpetrator in their childhood (age 0 to 10), pre-adolescence (age 11 to 13) and adolescence (age 14 to 17).

4.2 Notes

Questionnaires were written in six languages – Italian, English, French, Arabic, Rumanian and Albanian – to facilitate foreign inmates.

Participation was completely voluntary and inmates' answers were kept anonymous.

All information freely given by the inmates have been expressed in this report as percentages.

The survey team had no access to the criminal records of the interviewed inmates so the classification of crimes is exclusively based on their own statements.

Due to the fact that the majority of the inmates had perpetrated more than one offence, accurate statistics of all crimes could not be elaborated.

The most common types of crime found in the survey are in line with the national records and are mainly related to drug possession and dealing, thefts, grievous bodily harm, street fighting and robberies.

Also severe felonies such as sexual assault, family maltreatment, homicide and organized crime were taken into account.

The report shows only the main percentages of collected data.

None of the inmates mentioned insects among abused and/or slain <<animals>>. We are unable to say if this was a truth or an omission due to cultural reasons. Only mammals, reptiles, fish and amphibians were listed by the interviewees.

⁵ A. Arluke, *Brute Force: Animal Police and the Challenge of Cruelty*, 2006.

The total percentage may exceed 100 when, for example, the same inmate was both a witness and a perpetrator of animal abuse or killing, or abused or killed more than an animal, or was a witness of animal cruelty on several occasions, or committed more than one animal crime.

4.3 Results

The panel consists of **682 inmates** who answered the questionnaire on a voluntary basis.

Data show no statistically significant differences based on ethnicity and level of education.

As to gender, the participation of male inmates was overwhelmingly higher: only 4 women took part in the survey, so their answers were not statistically relevant.

Almost the whole panel is therefore composed of male inmates, in line with the national data.

4.3.1 Survey data on exposure to animal cruelty as a witness and/or perpetrator in the age group 0 to 17

Of **682** prison inmates:

- **28%** reported having witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in the age group 0-17, specifically **3%** in their childhood, **7%** in their preadolescence, **6%** in their adolescence, **12%** in several age groups;
- **16%** reported perpetrating animal abuse and/or killing in the age group 0-17, specifically **3%** in their childhood, **2%** in their preadolescence, **5%** in their adolescence, **6%** in several age groups;
- **45%** reported being both a witness and a perpetrator of animal abuse and/or killing in the age group 0-17, specifically **8%** in their childhood, **8%** in their preadolescence, **7%** in their adolescence, **22%** in several age groups;

Therefore

73% of the prison inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

Abusers and/or killers were:

- family members, friends or neighbors (**43%**);
- peers (**26%**);
- strangers (**4%**)

61% of the inmates abused and/or killed animals in their childhood.

89% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

4.3.2 Survey data on the motives underlying animal abuse and/or killing in children aged 0 to 17 years

Of 682 prison inmates:

- 41% were animal abusers and/or killers in the above age group and reported venting their rage and frustration with a family environment characterized by violence and carelessness. 19% of them reported having a difficult relationship with their mother and this negatively affected later relationships with other women. It must be highlighted the particular case of a prisoner responsible for cruelty against 62 animals from childhood to adult life: he was fully aware that his rage against his violent mother was closely linked to his animal cruelty and rough sex practices with prostitutes, the only women he could establish a relation with.
- 23% of the inmates reported a difficult relationship with their father, 8% with the family environment in general.
- 29% were animal abusers and/or killers in the above age group and reported seeking revenge against social isolation, helplessness, emptiness, boredom and perceived social rejection.
- 17% were animal abusers and/or killers in the above age group and reported seeking peer approval and/or acceptance.
- 10% were animal abusers and/or killers in the above age group and reported being unable to properly interact with animals because of their early age and lack of parental supervision.
- 10% of them gave other reasons including mafia initiation.

62% of the animal abusers and/or killers in the above age group reported starting a fire at least once in their lifetime.

4.3.3 Survey data on animal species abused and/or slain in the age group 0 to 17

Due to the fact they are easily accessible, animals mostly involved (81 %) are:

- cats and dogs (43%);
- lizards, hamsters, tortoises or turtles, fish (29%);
- birds, rabbits, chickens, pigs (16%);
- exotic animals (4%);
- other animals (8%).

4.3.4 Survey data on various forms of animal cruelty and/or killing witnessed by children in the age group 0 to 17

The most common forms of animal cruelty and/or killing witnessed by children in the above age group were: beating with a variety of objects, punching and/or kicking, choking, impalement, hanging, burning, crushing, neglect, abandonment.

Moreover, the interviewed inmates reported being exposed as a child to:

- killing of livestock such as rabbits, chickens and pigs in family's or neighbor's farms and according to standard slaughter practices (9%);
- animal hunting, mainly poaching, in a family environment (6%);
- animal killing, mainly during dog – or other animal fighting (12%);
- killing of fish according to standard fishing practices (11%). Half of these inmates admitted fishing when they were children.

The most common forms of animal cruelty and/or killing perpetrated by children in the age group 0 to 17 were: beating with a variety of objects, punching and/or kicking, choking, impalement, hanging, burning, crushing, drowning.

The **mean age** of children starting animal cruelty is **4 to 5 years** and this accounts for **14%** of our panel.

3% of the inmates reported having sex with animals in their childhood.

4.3.5 Survey data on animal abuse and/or killing perpetrated in adulthood (from 18 years on)

64% of the inmates abused animals in their adulthood and **96%** of them had already abused animals when they were children.

4.3.6 Survey data on the motivations underlying animal abuse and/or killing in adulthood

The interviewed inmates reported:

- their animal cruelty was an integral part of another crime, namely live animals used as drug carriers, intimidations, domestic violence against partners, stalking, etc. **(35%)**;
- they had committed the animal crime for money – poaching, illegal breeding, animal fighting, etc. **(27%)**;
- they had committed the animal crime under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol **(22%)**;
- sadism and gave the following justification: <<I just could not help it >> **(19%)**;
- their adult crimes against animals were the expression of a psychological condition – rage, loneliness, sense of helplessness and emptiness, boredom, difficult relationships, need to exert power and control over the others. **(17%)**;
- zoomafia-related animal crimes **(6%)**;
- other motivations **(6%)**.

The most common forms of adult animal cruelty and/or killing were: beating with various objects, punching and/or kicking, hanging, burning, drowning, neglect, fighting, abandonment, poaching, illegal breeding and training.

13% of the inmates reported adult acts of and/or bestiality.

4.4 Data classification by types of crime as reported by the inmates

4.4.1 Drugs

22% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

18% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

29% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

51% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

47% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood;

69% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

42% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood.

4.4.2 Larceny

28% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

16% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

32% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

60% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

48% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood.

76% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

39% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood.

4.4.3 Robbery

30% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

8% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

50% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

80% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

58% of inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

88% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

47% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood.

4.4.4 Grievous bodily harm

19% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

15% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

58% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

77% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

73% of inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

92% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

68% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood.

4.4.5 Domestic violence

61% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

11% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

28% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

90% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

40% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood.

94% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

68% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood

32% reported pet abuse and/or killing to exert power and control over family members

22% reported mistreating pets in the same way as they did with partners and children

4.4.6 Sex crime

18% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

16% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

56% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

74% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

72% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood.

90% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

71% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood

4.4.7 Organized crime

21% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

30% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

47% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

With a total of:

68% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

77% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood.

98% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

70% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood.

4.4.8 Homicide

25% of the inmates witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood

8% of the inmates abused or killed animals in their childhood.

54% of the inmates were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood

With a total of:

79% of inmates who witnessed animal abuse and/or killing in their childhood.

62% of inmates who abused or killed animals in their childhood.

87% of inmates who were both witnesses and perpetrators of animal crimes in their childhood.

69% of the inmates committed animal abuse and/or killing in their adulthood

PART V

Serial Killers are the kids who never learned it is wrong to poke out a puppy's eyes.

Murderers very often start out by killing and torturing animals as kids.

Robert Reessler⁶

5.1 Zooanthropological Behavioral Profiling of Animal Abusers

In the Webster's Dictionary of the American Language the term <<profiling>> is defined as the act or process of extrapolating information about a person based on known traits or tendencies.

Though the method used to analyze human personality, i.e. the set of innate and learned characteristics, is the same, there are different terms to define it, namely Criminal-Profiling, Behavior o Behavioral Profiling, Criminal Personality Profiling, Criminal Investigative Analysis, Forensic Profiling, Psychological Profiling.

Profiling refers not only to the biological traits – i.e. genetic and somatic tendencies, impulses, needs, emotions that lead to a certain type of reaction – and psychological traits of a personality – i.e. set of dispositions and distinctive features acquired by an individual during his/her life and influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors –, but also to the values, behavioral patterns and forms of social organization which may affect the environment and the personality of the individual.

Although psychological investigations are considered too intrusive and therefore forbidden by our penal code, with the only exception of the mental state examination aimed to evaluate the full possession of the offender's mental faculties, Article 133 of the penal code – *Gravity of the offence, consideration for the purposes of punishment* – says that:

“...the judge must take account of the gravity of the offence as inferred from:

1. the nature, type, means, object, time, place and any other aspect of the act;
2. the seriousness of the harm or the danger occasioned to the victim of the offence;
3. the scope of intent and the degree of negligence.

The judge must also take account of the offender's delinquent capabilities as inferred from:

4. the motives for delinquency and the character of the offender's;
5. the criminal and legal records and, in general, the behavior and life of the accused prior to the offence;
6. the behavior of the accused during and after the offence;
7. the individual, family and social living conditions of the offender.”

To some extent the above provisions allow a psychological evaluation of the offender in order to provide the judge with all necessary tools to determine the fairest sentence.

The introduction of the *Zooanthropological Criminal and Behavioral Profiling of Animal Abusers* is therefore of the greatest importance to meet the needs of the judicial and social systems for new, more efficient and more effective investigative methods that may lead to the classification of animal abuse as a serious felony and a reliable indicator of social dangerousness.

The ultimate purpose of this profiling is to provide investigators with detailed personality traits of the individual who has committed or may commit animal crimes.

Following Fredrickson and Siljander's study (2002) and depending on the type of information available – *specific* investigative activity carried out after or just before the event, or *general* prevention not related to a particular event - profiling can be classified as follows:

- *Zooanthropological Reactive Profiling* that helps solve a crime already committed against animals (Sorcinelli 2012)
- *Zooanthropological Proactive Profiling* that helps prevent an animal crime or abuse well before it occurs (Sorcinelli 2012)

⁶ R. Larson, *Animal Cruelty May Be a Warning. Often Precedes Harm to Humans*, The Washington Times, 23 June 1998.

In zooanthropology, a **Reactive Profiling of an animal crime either perpetrated or just attempted may represent a Proactive Profiling of a crime against humans at its earliest stage.**

Traditionally, there are two different approaches to criminal profiling:

- The *deductive profiling* examines the victim and the evidence on the crime scene to outline the offender's behavior. No statistical data are used.
- The *inductive Profiling* analyzes a set of data regarding the characteristics that similar crimes and relevant perpetrators have in common. Data collection and analysis are largely used in this approach.

The latest approach is a combination of the two above mentioned profiling and supplements statistical data with evidence-based criminology and criminalistics or forensic science.

As concerns the *Zooanthropology of Deviance*, the deductive profiling outlines the interaction styles by analyzing:

- the evidence at the scene where an *animal mistreatment or crime* occurs;
the victim;
- *the zooanthropological relational style*

The Zooanthropological Diagnostics defines two **Types** of Zooanthropological Profile based on the interaction styles:

- **Non-Empathic Profile**
- **Empathic Profile**

When analyzing the LINK from a zooanthropological point of view (Sorcinelli 2012), we must bear in mind that the concept of aggression does not coincide with violence. Similarly, the concept of **empathy** is different from the concept of **empathic accuracy** and both of them must be distinguished from **the lack of empathy**.

If the psychological approach defines a violent individual suffering from Antisocial Personality Disorder – ASPD – as non-emphatic, the *Zooanthropology of deviance* recognizes two types of Animal Abusers: **Non-Empathic and Empathic Abusers** (Sorcinelli 2012).

Empathy is the capacity to focus on someone's inner world, to understand how someone really feels inside in a certain situation, well beyond spoken words. It is the capacity to read between the lines, catch emotional signs and non-verbal indicators of a certain disposition, understand the importance of the experience someone else is going through without being influenced by one's own frame of mind.

It must be stressed however that empathy means being highly sensitive but not necessarily <<good>>, <<moral>> or <<ethical>>.

On the contrary, if this kind of sensitivity does not go hand in hand with a sense of morality commensurate with age, it may become an effective support for violence, maliciousness and destructiveness.

Skillful, intelligent psychopaths can learn kindness, sensitivity and morality as abstractions and weaknesses to be exploited but they do not integrate these qualities into their personalities.⁷

Recognizing and understanding someone else's sorrow is not enough to become a <<moral>> individual: the so-called **Empathic Accuracy** is required, i.e. the capacity to take on that sorrow in a positive way (Pagani 2002). The accurate empathy implies being compassionate.

Finally **lack of empathy** means that some individuals are unable to assume someone else's perspective, in other words to feel as if they were in others' shoes. From a zooanthropological point of view, this is the incapacity to understand the animal's perspective. It is very important to distinguish empathic from non-empathic animal cruelty or mistreatment in order to understand the

⁷J. Kellerman, *Savage spawn: Reflection on violent children*, Ballantine Publishing. New York, 1999.

motivations of such crimes, ascertain the social dangerousness of the abuser and take the most appropriate measures.

5.1.1 The Relationship

In zooanthropology, relationship means the ability to recognize the animal's otherness, listen to its needs and establish a dialogue. The animal is not considered as an <<object>> but as a non-human entity which can communicate with us (Marchesini 2005). This is the highest level of relationship a human being and an animal can enter into. Both parties are focused on mutual wellbeing and understanding. Although very difficult to achieve, this kind of relationship must remain a *point of reference*, a *criterion for comparison* in the event of mistreatment or abuse. If a human being gets close to this ideal relationship, he is hardly tempted to perpetrate any form of animal crime or mistreatment even under a strong social or family pressure.

The *Accurate Empathic Profile*, the so-called **Accurate Zooempathic Profile** is part of this category (Marchesini 2005, Sorcinelli 2012).

The *zooempathic accuracy* is the tendency to approach the animal being fully aware of its otherness and accepting it as a fundamental feature of the relationship without any fear, intolerance or rejection. The zooempathic accuracy has to do with passion, familiarity, ontological and educational paths which contribute to the demolition of all walls of mistrust, one by one. Most of all, it is based on a humble attitude of the human counterpart who does not think he knows animal's needs but eagerly searches them. In its most balanced form, the zooempathic accuracy is based on a cultural biocenosis where humans willingly accept the animal presence and see it as an important part of their lives (Marchesini 2005).

The zooempathic accuracy gives full recognition to animal dignity and otherness. In this respect, both anthropomorphism and reification are distortions of the animal status. The *accurate zooempathic* individual is not only able to understand the animal's pains but also to take effective actions to ensure animal welfare and fair treatment in a society increasingly focused on anthropocentrism and exploitation. Such actions range from working as a volunteer at animal shelters to reporting to the police cases of animal abuse.

5.1.2 Non-Empathic Profiles

Human beings are often unable to turn their interactions with animals into a proper relationship.

The animal remains a challenge or a thing though perceived as an anthropomorphic entity and therefore treated like a baby – for instance dressed, brushed, combed or spoon-fed – but under no circumstances is this creature recognized as a subject (Marchesini 2005).

This kind of profile shows a relational incompetence due to the lack of empathic accuracy: this is a sort of ethological betrayal because the animal is deprived of its subjectivity and species identity.

In **Non-Empathic Profiles**, the lack of animal welfare or mistreatments such as neglect or rejection are not intentional but due to some form of relational deficiency. Even though there is no intentional harm – as occurs in the zoo-sadist profile –, a serious lack of care may become an abuse and even cause the animal's death.

The *Non-Empathic Interactive Styles* (Sorcinelli 2012) are classified as **DEVIANT INTERACTIONS** (Marchesini 2005) and divided into the following main groups:

1. CARELESSNESS – Zoo-apathetic and Zoo-poietic Profile –;
2. APPETIBILITY – Zoo-maniac Profile –;
3. AVERSION – Zoo-phobic and Zoo-intolerant Profile –.

5.1.2.1 Zoo-apathetic Profile – apathy towards animals –

Zoo-apathy is a complete lack of interest towards the animal either as a non-human entity or a challenge. This non-empathic profile does not show signs of hostility but indifference towards animals. In this view, animals do not exist or cannot interact with humans. Only animals which are hardly perceived as such because of their lessened animal characteristics or the cultural significance they embody seem to be accepted.

A zoo-apathetic individual may occasionally or accidentally become a pet-owner but the relationship is limited to that particular pet and not the whole non-human animal world.

Even though not openly hostile, he is not interested in animals and therefore not concerned about the preservation of animal alterity. Zoo-apathy leads to a self-evident carelessness or intolerance towards animals or to a relationship where non-human animal traits are denied.

5.1.2.2 Zoo-poiesis Profile – Pets as a replacement –

In this profile, the interaction style is characterized by the disregard for the animal's real nature, or alterity, through a complex process of denial and psychological projection. People living on their own or suffering from psychological disorders that jeopardize human relationships find it hard to accept the ethological traits of their pets so that the latter become substitutes for a child, a partner or a friend.

When this happens, the animal dignity and its right to be different from a human fail to be recognized. Zoo-poiesis is synonymous with anthropomorphism, mechano-morphism and iconic representation of the pet where its traits of diversity, subjectivity and peculiarity are replaced with other attributes possibly deriving from its owner's disguised needs, motives, expectations, identity projection. This kind of behavior may lead to opposite interactions: everyone can see the difference between those who treat their dog like a child and those who train it for personal protection. Nonetheless, this clear-cut disparity can be misleading because in both cases the recognition of alterity is missing due to an over-projection of identity. Unlike zoo-apathy, zoo-poiesis does not push the animal away but denies its personality because, in this view, reality only consists in:

1. what is inherent to human nature;
2. what is inherent to material things

Animals are assigned to each one of these two categories depending on their degree of proximity as perceived by the human subject.

Zoo-poiesis can therefore be related to:

1. anthropomorphism, i.e. the attribution of human characteristics to an animal, which therefore deserves care and respect thanks to such a similarity;
2. mechanomorphism, i.e. the ascription to an animal of qualities similar to those of machines, such as predictability;
3. iconic structure, i.e. the interpretation of an animal through cultural stereotypes thus denying its real traits.

5.1.2.3 Zoo-maniac Profile

Zoo-maniac individuals feel such an intense and sometimes exclusive, attachment to animals that all their capacity to love and establish a relationship is addressed towards their non-human companions. This monomania towards non-humans may be idiopathic or sometimes linked to an inability to relate with humans and in the majority of cases it shows patterns of psychiatric morbidity.

Not only is the attention of a **zoo-maniac** completely absorbed by the animal but this focus becomes compulsive and neurotic. The relationship established with the animal is exclusive, morbid and somehow emotionally unsatisfactory as evidenced by the excess of cuddles and snuggles and the tendency to buy or adopt more and more pets. This kind of interaction always proves to be insufficient and disappointing for the individual because the non-human partner is overloaded with expectations.

Zoo--mania often leads to *Animal Hoarding*, that is the compulsive accumulation of animals in unsanitary conditions, or the forced domestication of wild animals, regardless of their ethological needs. These animals are victimized by this kind of relationship become but at the same time they have become so dependent on their human caregiver that they cannot free themselves.

5.1.2.4 Zoo-phobic Profile

Zoophobia ranges from a mere dislike to an uncontrolled and irrational fear of animals which are perceived as an imminent threat. The **zoo-phobic individual** may show symptoms with various degrees of severity: he may just feel uneasy in the presence of an animal or even frightened of being bitten/eaten.

This phobia may arise either when the individual is awake – taking the form of hyper-vigilance – or sleeping – nightmares about animals –. Unlike zoo-intolerance, zoo-phobia is extremely focused on animal subjectivity and, consequently, on its potential aggressiveness.

5.1.2.5 Zoo-intolerant Profile

Animals are seen as repulsive and potentially dangerous because of the diseases or infections that can be potentially transmitted to humans. The presence of an animal is so unbearable for the **Zoo-intolerant profile** that his psychological balance may be disrupted. His aversion to animals triggers an immediate rejection. He can neither share a room with an animal nor stand its mere presence, even for a short time. Zoo-intolerance may bring about disproportioned emotional reactions and turn common sense hygiene measures into a sort of obsessive-compulsive <<search of asepsis>>: from this point of view animals are nothing but disease-spreaders and parasite carriers.

5.1.2.6 Social implications

The lack of empathy characterizing these interaction styles – which may overlap – is somehow associated with the non-acceptance of otherness also referred to human relationships. For instance, people who abuse animals or neglect their needs for proper care in the home might also neglect or maltreat other defenseless members of the family, such as their own children, the elderly or the disabled.

These profiles are unable to accept *anyone*, neither human nor non-human.

Signs of zoo-mania and zoo-poiesis may be found in criminal organizations whose leaders and/or members use to keep exotic animals, e.g. tigers, lions, crocodiles, pythons, etc., or trained mastiffs as status symbols.

All mechanisms of *selective moral disengagement* that are typical of non-empathic profiles may more broadly be predictors of social behaviors characterized by apathy, phobia, intolerance, reification and non-emphatic accuracy.

5.2 Zoo-anthropological Criminal Profiling of Animal Abuser and/or Killer

Zoo-anthropology of deviance studies the *inductive Criminal Profiling of Animal Abuser and/or Killer* starting from the analysis and comparison of similar crimes and perpetrators. In other words, the psychological traits of the criminal are directly linked to the characteristics of his crime against animals. This method is based on a consistent data collection and analysis.

5.2.1 Empathic Profiles

Unlike non-empathic profiles who deny animals any right to care or fair treatment, **Empathic Profiles** do recognize animal otherness which becomes then suitable for their cruel actions. Indeed, <<otherness>> is the target of the *Zoo-anthropological Criminal Behavior* because it serves the purpose of expressing one's sexual deviance or frustrations.

Empathic interaction styles are classified in the DIALOGIC CRIMINAL MILEU as follows (Marchesini 2005):

1. zoo-sadism, i.e. deriving pleasure from witnessing or inflicting pain or physical damage to animals;
2. zoophilia or zooerasty, i.e. sexual attraction to or fornication with animals;
3. Bestiality, i.e. sexual acts between humans and animals

5.2.1.2 Zoo-sadistic Profile

Deductive Profiling

It is characterized by occasional or frequent intentional acts of violence against animals, namely psychological and physical torture, pain and/or killing. Zoo-sadism may be targeted at either the animal or the human victim. In the latter case, a pet is tortured or killed in order to emotionally and mentally hurt its owner – see domestic violence, stalking, retaliation or intimidation –.

Acts of sadisms may include negligent or deliberately omitted care – e.g. deprivation of food and water –, imprisonment, beating, burning, skinning, maiming and eventually hanging, stabbing or strangling to death.

5.2.1.3 Social implications

The major trait of the zoo-sadistic profile is the aversion towards the animal and mostly against its otherness that is not denied – as it happens with the non-empathic profile – but exploited to give vent to anger and frustration.

A zoo-sadistic subject tends to project his own fears onto the non-human victim and to experience his obsessions through the animal's otherness.

Minors who in turn have been physically, mentally or sexually abused may get involved in zoo-sadism as perpetrators. The animal is small enough to guarantee a successful completion of the abuse but at the same time big enough to satisfy the sadistic impulse.

The zoo-sadistic profile may be found in:

- Murderers
- Stalkers
- Violent intimate partners
- Gangsters
- Childhood animal crime
- Conduct Disorder and Antisocial Disorder
- Drug users and dealers
- Ritual Crimes - Satanists

And mostly in:

- Rapists
- Pedophiles (child molesters)

where it overlaps with zooerasty and/or bestiality.

5.3 Inductive Profiling

An inductive **Zoo-sadistic Profiling** is now available thanks to a considerable amount of survey data collected in Italian prisons (see Part IV), drug or alcohol rehabilitations centers, residential youth care centers, counseling and support centers for victims, etc.

5.3.1 National analysis of Link cases – December 2016

5.3.1.1 Why choosing a Multivariate Statistics

All guidelines, standpoints or studies about the LINK in Italy stem from a scientific knowledge which has developed over three time spans instead of two, as it happens abroad. From the late 19th century to the 1960s, all international scientific research on the LINK was purely descriptive, based on the identification, observation and description of a phenomenon discovered almost by chance. In the early 1970s, a new and more conscious phase began, mostly in the United States and Great Britain, where systems of statistical analysis were gradually applied to the LINK. This kind of retrospective and/or longitudinal research was able to give a qualitative and quantitative interpretation as well as further evidence of the phenomenon and its characteristics thanks to the analysis of one or more variables at a time.

In 2011 the Italian research took another step forward with the introduction of the **Principal Component Analysis (P.C.A.)** (Sorcinelli et al. 2012), a multivariate statistical procedure which not only confirms the LINK but can also explore its complexity by analyzing a large set of variables. It can therefore solve the problems that have arisen in the previous steps as clearly underlined by Frank Ascione (2007)⁸ with this statement: “*Animal abuse may vary in frequency, severity and how chronic it is (for example, has this been going on for just the past week or for the past two years?) It can range from the developmentally immature teasing of animals (e.g. a toddler polling a kitten along by the tail) to serious animal torture (e.g. stealing neighborhood pets and setting them on fire). Unfortunately, most assessments of cruelty to animals lack measures of these important differences*”.

The P.C.A. – *Principal Component Analysis* – is a statistical procedure which converts an original set of observations of possibly correlated variables into a set of values of linearly uncorrelated variables called *principal components*. The new variables can summarize all the information contained in the original data.

The advantages of the P.C.A. are the following:

1. all possible correlations between variables and their importance are simultaneously evaluated;
2. data visualization on a chart facilitates a better understanding of the results;
3. exceptions or discrepancies or items *out of place* are on display – for instance, few items out of place and deriving from the same source may indicate that the source itself is not reliable;
4. the number of variables worth of analysis decreases;
5. the most relevant points stand easily out

⁸ F. Ascione, *Bambini e Animali. Le radici dell'affetto e della crudeltà*, Edizioni Cosmopolis, 2007.

5.3.2 Experimental design processing

5.3.2.1 Developing the questionnaire in three parts for data collection

The first step of the survey has been the development of the questionnaire for the data collection by harmonizing Italian databases like SDI⁹ or SACS¹⁰ with the international most structured databases on this topic.

The questionnaire can be downloaded from the site www.link-italia.net. It consists of three main parts to maximize data collection and can be modified under way if necessary.

The first part provides information about respondents; data collected from media are included in our survey only if the accuracy of the news shows that a sufficient in-depth analysis of facts has been carried out by journalists.

We have so far analyzed **1087 Link-related Cases**, namely cases of animal crime where:

1. offenders have committed other deviant, antisocial or criminal actions;
2. animal abuse is an integral part of another crime or deviant behavior – e.g. murder, sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, intimidation, drug trafficking, satanic rituals and so on;
3. animal abuse is classified as zoophilia and bestiality in DSM V (A.P.A.) and ICD-10 (W.H.O.);
4. offenders are minors who may or may not be involved in other forms of deviance or criminal behaviors;
5. minors have witnessed the crime.

These 1087 **Link Cases** include inmates who abused and/or killed animals and/or were exposed to animal cruelty in their childhood or adulthood.

Data collected by the staff of LINK-ITALIA (APS) account for **62%** of the total. Other sources of data include mass media (**15%**), LINK-ITALIA (APS) partners (**19%**) and online questionnaire (**4%**).

The second part consists of different sections depending on the specific research that is carried out and can be modified each time by the data collectors. There are special sections addressed to women shelters, prisons, law-enforcement agencies and so on and they help give a quantitative evaluation of the whole phenomenon.

Animals are easily accessible in **81%** of the cases thus proving the actual magnitude of the problem.

According to the data provided by victims, the episodes of animal cruelty not reported to the police account for **77%**.

The third part is the same in all questionnaires and collects information about Link-related cases with a particular reference to:

- non-human victims – number of animals and species involved –;
- classification of abuses according to their severity and weapons used;
- offenders – lifestyle, age, previous criminal records –;
- crime scenes;
- human victims – number of individuals involved and their relationship with the abuser –;
- classification of offences according to their severity and weapons used.

⁹ Sistema D'Indagine - Sitem of Investigation. Italian State Police.

¹⁰ Sistema per l'Analisi della Scena del Crimine – Crime Scene Analysis System.

5.3.3 Statistical results

Abusers: **96%** are men.

Victims: **56%** are women, **28%** children, **3%** elderly people, **5%** men, **8%** miscellaneous – for example victims of gang crime or bullying –.

65% of the cases reported that the human victims refused to leave their violent partners or delayed departure because they could not bring their pets with them.

16% of the cases reported that the human victim died.

Classification of human crimes

- **23%** domestic violence
- **22%** organized crime – mainly psychological violence using animal cruelty as intimidation or revenge –
- **20%** stalking or revenge
- **18%** sex assaults
- **7%** bullying
- **10%** other crimes

Classification of animal crimes

- **14%** bare-knuckle punching and/or kicking
- **10%** beating with various objects
- **9%** overheating
- **9%** stabbing
- **9%** shooting
- **8%** crushing
- **8%** multiple crimes
- **7%** choking /hanging
- **6%** sexual abuse
- **6%** neglect
- **5%** drowning
- **5%** burns
- **4%** negligence – carelessness –

5.3.4 Results of the multivariate analysis

Abuser's gender cannot be referred to as a variable because **96%** of those who commit crimes against humans and/or animals are male. Criminal records are not taken into account as they are dependent on the offender's age and circumstances. In some cases, for instance, offenders could not be prosecuted because of their young age, or the final judgment was still pending.

Here below the new variables on the LINK resulting from the P.C.A.:

- Variable 1

Distorted attempt to restore one's dignity

Individuals who have suffered severe and prolonged humiliation, especially in their childhood try to restore their dignity by abusing and/or killing animals. Humiliation combined with other negative experiences later in life may eventually trigger violent responses of self-defense.

Frustrated individuals tend to transfer their anger and resentment onto other people instead of those who were originally to blame. Those responsible for acts of humiliation, e.g. parents, peers, etc., exert some form of power and control over their victims who are unable to react. The latter eventually give vent to their rage against the weakest creatures – see variable 2 –.

- Variable 2

Non-human victim's body-size perception.

Abuse occurs when the abuser perceives **the animal's body-size as small enough to guarantee a successful assault but also large enough to satisfy his sadistic impulse**. In simple general terms, a 7-year-old boy mistreats lizards, a 10-year-boy mistreats chickens or cats, a teenager abuses small dogs, an adult abuses medium-large dogs, cows, sheep and so on.

This new variable takes into account several initial variables – age, animal species, crime site, etc. – and highlights the fact that the victim's size is always dramatically smaller than the abuser's. Being smaller than the offender, the victim can be easily abused with or without the use of a weapon, which therefore loses its importance. Even when large animals could be abused with the help of a weapon, abusers tend to prefer smaller victims.

Also animal species and crime sites <<do not matter>>: in other words, abusers choose whatever is small and easily accessible, for example chickens in rural areas and cats in residential areas.

Cruelty on very small animals – lizards, chicks, insects – may lead to more severe violence against human and non-human victims and other forms of deviance.

The P.C.A. shows that not only children but also adults mistreat:

1. small victims that are easy preys but still big enough to satisfy sadistic-predatory impulses;
2. anybody available or easily accessible;
3. with any kind of weapons

- Variable 3

Correlation between intimacy and brutality in human crimes

Physical violence to humans is closely associated with intimate relationships. Offences are not particularly severe when the offender and the victim are just acquaintances, school mates etc. On the contrary the most heinous crimes – bloody murder and/or torture – are committed when the relationship is very intimate and involves partners, parents or children.

This new variable, i.e. the relationship between offender and victim, collects and stores information on age, lifestyle, crime site, etc. thus pointing out similarities in seemingly diverse criminal cases. Episodes of animal cruelty as a tool of psychological violence on human victims are particularly heinous if connected with stalking, intimidation and domestic violence.

- Variable 4

Link between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence

There is a strong link between animal and human abuse: this variable has been **proven for the first time** in Italy and it is a milestone in our research. Some professionals accept it but others don't as they still believe that *"If your husband batters your cat, don't worry, Madam, he won't vent his anger on you..."* and *"after all, it's just an animal"*.

Figure 1 shows that the majority of cases cluster around the intersection of the axes, where a physical abuse on animals overlaps a similar abuse on humans. For example, offenders who batter, shoot or stab a pet will also batter their children, shoot their wives or stab other humans.

It must be noted, however, that there are also other <<cases>> on top of the vertical axis and along the horizontal axis. They represent cases where the episodes of animal abuse are not so severe but are followed by violent crimes and/or sexual abuse on human victims soon after.

- Variable 5

Nothing is negligible

This variable includes all those cases where animal abuse is perpetrated as a single episode but shortly after, the abuser perpetrates one or more serious offences against humans, e.g. physical violence or sexual assaults. **It is important to emphasize that even occasional and/or minor crimes against animals may later result in serious offences against human victims.** See data on top of the vertical axis in figure 2.

- Variable 6

Violent behaviors against animals do not seem to disappear spontaneously

Violence on animals perpetrated at any age does not disappear spontaneously but tends to escalate over the years due to a growing expertise and the onset of other forms of aggressiveness and/or antisocial behaviors. In particular, animal cruelty experienced in childhood **does not disappear in adulthood.**

- Variable 7

Animal cruelty as apprenticeship to human cruelty

This variable includes the cases where human victims have been abused following repeated episodes of animal cruelty. **It must be stressed that a history of animal cruelty increases significantly the abuser's social dangerousness.** Our research will aim to quantify the extent of this phenomenon.

Figure 1

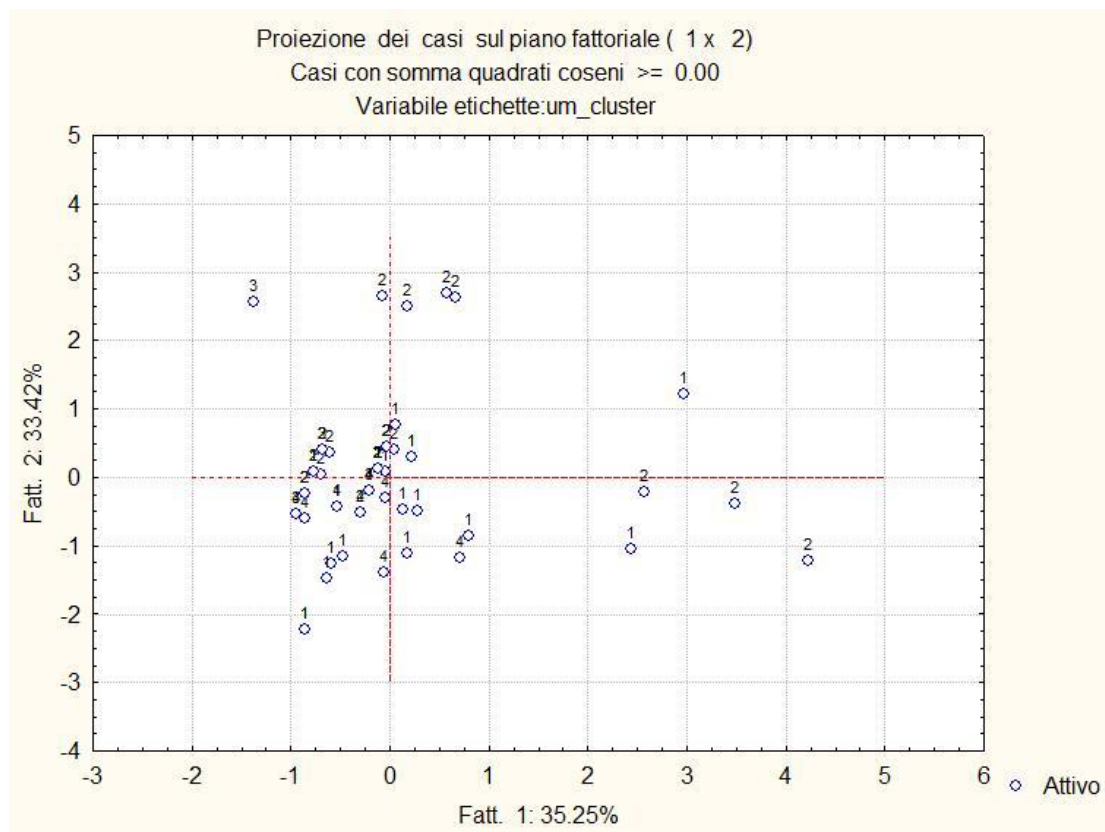
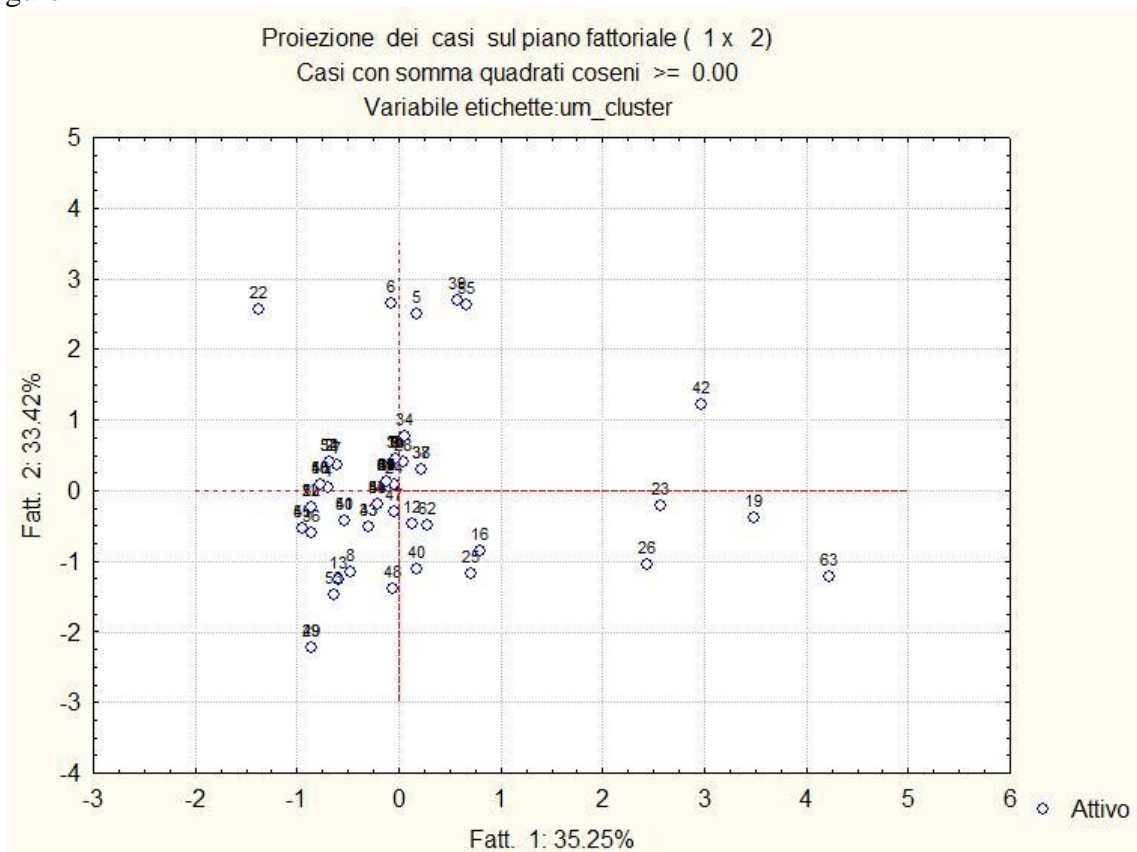


Figure 2



In multivariate statistics, we can carry out single-case studies and analyze source reliability, which proves to be particularly useful in case of anomalies.

Cases dealing with multiple episodes of abused animals are reported by several sources ranging from LINK-ITALIA (APS) and N.I.R.D.A (Investigative Unit for Crimes against Animals) professionals to journalists, because these crimes are in the media spotlight.

As for misdemeanors on animals followed by severe criminal offences towards human victims, sources are exclusively LINK-ITALIA (APS) and N.I.R.D.A (C.F.S.) professionals because they fail to attract the attention of media and investigators. It can therefore be assumed that such Link-related cases are largely underestimated.

Our research aims to give a more accurate quantitative evaluation of this phenomenon. At present we are unable to establish whether the escalation of violence is gradual or sudden. There are cases where abuse starts with a minor offence against an animal then grows in cruelty and number of animal victims until it involves human victims. In other cases a minor offence against an animal leads straight to a severe form of violence against a human being.

The Zoo-anthropological Criminal and Behavioral Profiling of Animal Abusers and/or Killers shows that:

- he is male;
- he was exposed to or committed animal cruelty in his childhood and pre-adolescence;
- he is likely to have experienced severe neglect, rejection and other forms of hostile treatment;
- he has an early history of antisocial behaviors often including arson;
- he has a sadism-related interaction style characterized by psychological projections and thirst of vengeance which are later directed to human victims;
- he is more inclined to commit crimes in his adulthood;
- he lacks empathic accuracy.

In our view, these are not final results but they indicate the research path to follow and represent a good example of how multivariate statistics can be applied to criminology.

The new variables may seem obvious in retrospect but it must be emphasized that they result from the mathematical processing and organization of random and unknown data. What eventually comes out as "*obvious*" or "*true*" was previously hidden among hundreds of variables and thousands of cases.

Moreover, the outcome may be *self-evident* for those who expected to find a certain situation but *upsetting* for those who did not.

P.C.A. is supposed to collect and analyze all available data and variables without any pre-selection. The aim of the scientific method is the elimination of hypotheses which may be legitimate but yet unproven as correct.

PART VI

*There is a common thread in all the shootings over the last few years.
I refer to individuals whose indicators of dangerousness -such as violence against peers, arson, animal
abuse, social isolation and so on -had been ignored by educators*
Harold s. Koplewicz¹¹

6.1 Animal Crime Classification

The investigative method as illustrated in the *Crime Classification Manual* - C.C.M. (Douglas, Burgess, Burgess, Ressler, 1992) is here applied to animal crimes in order to prevent the corresponding human crimes (Sorcinelli 2012). This deductive approach examines in depth the victim's personal history, crime scene, and the victim-offender relationship.

Victimology

*<<Victimology>> is the victim's history. It is often one of the most beneficial investigative tools in classifying and solving a violent crime.*¹²

The investigator tries to evaluate why a particular animal was targeted for a crime. Just the answer to this question will often lead the investigator to the motive and, consequently, to the offender.

Was the animal victim known to the abuser and/or killer? What were the animal's chances of becoming a target for a crime? What risk did the offender take in perpetrating this crime? What interaction style did the animal trigger in the offender?

How many crime scenes?

As a rule, an animal crime may take place in a single location – where the body is found or in two locations, if the wounded animal dies elsewhere –.

According to Ressler & Douglas's classification introduced in 1979, our survey indicates that animal abusers in Italy are mostly of the disorganized type as they attack, kill and leave their victim in the same site.

To a lesser extent, but statistically significant, there are also organized offenders who attack, kill and leave the victim's body in different locations.

Environment

*The environment of a crime scene refers to the conditions or circumstances in which the offence occurs.*¹³

Was it an indoor or outdoor crime? Did it happen in the daylight or at night? Did it happen in a busy or in a deserted place?

Answering these questions not only assists in defining the classification of an offence but also provides an insight into the offender's motive.

Place

*With some offences, location may have more obvious bearing on the motive and classification than others*¹⁴.

For instance, gangsters leave the animal's corpse or parts of it near the house of the person to be intimidated, stalkers kill their victim's pet and leave it in an area which is familiar to the victim or at least clearly visible, satanists perpetrate their crimes in sites of religious significance.

¹¹ E. Bronner, *Terror in Littleton: The Signs; Experts Urge Swift Action to Fight Depression, Isolation, and Aggression*, The New York Times, 22Apr. 1999.

¹² J. E. Douglas, A. W. Burgess, A. G. Burgess, R. K. Ressler, *Crime Classification Manual*. Centro Scientifico Editore. 2008.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Time

Generally the amount of time the offender spends at the crime scene is proportional to the degree of comfort he feels in committing the crime in that particular location.¹⁵

Evidence of a lingering offence such as torture will often direct investigation toward a subject who lives or works near the crime scene, knows the neighborhood, and consequently feels comfortable there.

How many offenders?

When animal crimes are perpetrated not by a single individual but by a gang of offenders – mostly youngsters – the ordeal is often filmed and later released.

Evidence of childhood animal cruelty found at the crime scene or in smart phones or on the internet may provide useful investigation clues because this kind of crime is often linked to arson, vandalism and bullying.

According to the data collected in the LINK Report 2016, youth gangs commit animal crimes and acts of vandalism before perpetrating an offence against human victims.

Organized/Disorganized

A disorganized offender commits a crime in a state of excitement. He acts in a spontaneous and disarrayed manner and leave a great deal of physical evidence at the scene. On the contrary, the well-organized, methodical subject plans any details of his crime and does not leave physical evidence behind.

The amount of organization or disorganization at the crime scene will tell much about the offender's level of criminal sophistication. It will also demonstrate how well the offender was able to control the victim and how much premeditation was involved with the crime.¹⁶

It should be noted that the crime scene will rarely be completely organized or disorganized. It is more likely to be somewhere on a continuum between these two extremes. Moreover, animals usually put up more resistance so the crime scene may look more disorganized than a human crime scene.

Weapon

An appropriate investigation requires information about the weapon.

Questions the investigator needs to answer about the weapon include the following:

- Was it a weapon of choice, brought to the crime scene by the offender? Or was it a weapon of opportunity acquired at the scene?
- Is the weapon absent from the crime scene, or has it been left behind? Was there any evidence of multiple weapons and ammunition?

In Italy shotguns are not as popular as in the U.S. but their use is on the rise and 70% of firearms owners are hunters. Hunting rifles at close range rank among the most effective shotguns. The severity of wounds depends on the quantity of bullets or pellets hitting the body, the organs affected and the quantity of damaged tissue. Number and speed of pellets hitting the victim decrease as the shooting range increases.

Body disposition

As happens with human victims, animal's corpse disposition may have a precise meaning though its implications are different.

Investigators should therefore pay attention to whether the corpse is concealed or intentionally displayed.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

In the event of ritual or organized crime, a particular body disposition combined with other clues may convey an intimidating message.

Items left

The presence of items or graffiti at the crime scene may assist in identifying the animal abusers and/or killers, such as youth street gangs or religious sects.

Items missing

The absence of the weapon or other items connecting the victim to the offender may indicate the intention of removing any evidence or reiterating the crime.

A disorganized offender may leave items nearby, for instance in waste containers.

An organized offender may take the weapon away because he wants to use it again or hide it, as in the case of adolescents who have stolen their parents' shotgun. A prompt search can help solve quickly the case.

Staging

The so-called <<staging>>, that is the intentional alteration of the crime scene, is crucial to animal crime investigation.

Animal crimes are disguised as household accidents much more often than human crimes because the non-human victim is unable to report the violence even if it survives. In these cases, *autopsy/zooanthropological investigation* could be of great help to verify abuser's statements and possible discrepancies (Sorcinelli 2012).

Both in animal and human crimes, staging indicates that the offender has not chanced upon the victim.

The so-called over-killing, i.e. an unnecessary excess of violence, is a typical indicator of staging in human crimes.

The attempt to disguise over-killing as a robbery is a strong staging indicator: the more the offender overkills, the closer his relationship with the victim is.

According to the first retrospective survey data collected among convicted sex offenders, abused children are likely to torture and kill animals and, later in life, to become children abusers in turn. Their cruelty begins with insects and lizards and then moves on to larger animals or directly to human beings.

6.2 Crime classification by motive

With reference to the Crime Classification Manual, a classification of animal crimes has been drawn up. It consists of four main categories:

"Criminal enterprise" including 3 subgroups:

- Intimidation by organized crime;
- group or street gang related abuse
- kidnapping

"Personal motive" including 4 subgroups:

- spontaneous domestic abuse;
- staged domestic abuse;
- fight/conflict/retaliation related abuse;
- abuse with no specific motive.

"Sexual abuse" including 4 subgroups:

- organized crime scene;
- disorganized or mixed crime scene, sadism

"Criminal social identity" including 2 subgroups:

- ritualistic and cult related abuse;
- abuse related to group excitement

6.3 Criminal Enterprise

Murders committed by a criminal enterprise are motivated by profit –for example, money, goods, real estate or other benefit –.

In this category, abuse is often a form of intimidation used by the organized crime.

Generally, the offender is a member of the criminal enterprise who kills the human victim's pet to give an intimidating message. There is no link between the abuser and the non-human victim.

Victimology

There are two types of victims:

- the human victim's pet: the abuser will rage against it to exert further psychological and emotional pressure on the human victim to be intimidated
- any animal the abuser can easily find or steal: if the human victim does not own a pet, the animal may be chosen on the basis of its symbolic value within the gang subculture.

Crime scene indicators

The offender will leave the crime scene as soon as possible either if the animal has been killed and left there, or if it has been killed elsewhere and then intentionally displayed.

The choice of the weapon will point to a professional killer: In the case of firearms, a shotgun will be preferred because ballistics identification may not be possible.

Being a professional with a well-organized approach to the crime, the offender will leave very little evidence behind, if any.

Staging

All acts of intimidation are supposed to convey a message, so there is usually no staging.

Forensic findings

As already explained, these can hardly be found.

Investigative considerations

It is important to take notice that there are hints of premeditation behind an animal crime with the purpose of intimidation. The offender is likely to tail his human victim before perpetrating the crime and he knows the site, usually the victim's house, where the pet's corpse will be found.

Information of great investigative value can be collected from witness accounts, CCTV footage, and cellular telephone tower data near the victim's house.

The crime instigator is relatively easy to identify due to his history of conflicts and rivalry with the victim. It is much harder to find physical evidence sound enough to be admitted as proof in the trial.

Search warrant suggestions

The analysis of telephone records and other forms of communication are of the greatest importance as well as information about weapons, travels or transfers.

6.4 Indicators of abuse related to membership of gangs or organized criminal groups

Street gang violence is not so widespread in Italy as in other countries. However, due to some forms of racial isolation – mostly among young people – there is a growing number of episodes of violence where animal abuse is a major predictor of future social dangerousness.

Victimology

In this category, victims are generally pets or stray animals living in a rival territory. They often represent a <<*territorial marking*>> or a challenge to the rival gang's sovereignty.

Crime scene indicators

Generally, the crime occurs outdoors, in a public place within the rival gang's territory or close to the home of the rival to be <<punished>>. The crime scene is often disorganized. The animal corpse is not concealed and may be positioned in a particular, meaningful manner. The offender will probably leave signs or graffiti at the crime scene.

Staging

Animal abuse and killing are supposed to convey a message, so there is usually no staging.

Forensic findings

The abuse perpetrated by a gang member is characterized by multiple stab wounds on the animal body and the gang's signature at the crime scene.

Investigative considerations

Investigators with a good knowledge of the area can easily track down the members of a street gang, especially a juvenile gang.

As animal crime is usually committed outdoors, eye-witnesses are likely to give their contribution.

Physical evidence of the crime can be easily transferred from one gang member to the other thanks to the exchange of stolen items or clothes.

Search warrant suggestions

Although weapons in the gang members' hands represent the most important investigative evidence, search should also be targeted at:

- distinctive signs or symbols of the gang involved;
- videos or photos - gang members often keep records of their feats that may later become evidence for the crime.
- cellular phones - gang members are often teenagers who are likely to carelessly exchange photos or details of the crime.

6.5 Indicators of abuse related to pet theft

Pet thefts followed by the demand for a ransom occur with increasing frequency because police officers are often reluctant to pursue these crimes and pet owners feel rather embarrassed to ask for help.

Victimology

Generally, victims are pets of wealthy families. They live in gardens or yards and can be easily taken away.

Crime scene indicators

In most cases, pets are killed and there will be several crime scenes:

- abduction site;
- killing site;
- body abandonment site.

The victim is usually alone when the offence is perpetrated. The crime scene may look very messy due to either the speedy action or the animal's attempts to escape.

The demand for a ransom may be left directly at the crime scene.

Owners usually offer a <<reward>> to those who can help find the pet or give useful information.

In the event of a real <<pet-napping>> which is not envisaged by the Italian judicial order yet, law-enforcement agencies might pursue theft-related crimes such as intimidation, extortion or stalking or they might refer to Title IX bis of the Italian Penal Code "*offences against the feelings towards animals*".

Staging

None

Forensic findings

These are related to the communication forms with the pet's family and include:

- ransom note;
- videos or recordings which can provide useful information if properly analyzed;
- e-mails through which the sender's location can be identified.

Investigative considerations

In the event of a pet theft or pet napping, either connected to other offences or not, eye-witness accounts, CCTV footage or any other form of public or private surveillance are essential elements of the investigative process.

If the crime has been planned in advance, evidence of tailing or stakeout is likely to be found around the victim's home.

Search warrant suggestions

Search can be carried out at once if investigators have grounds to fear that concrete evidence of the crime or other crime-related items may be concealed or destroyed.

Otherwise, a search warrant is issued by the magistrate only if police officers can prove that the offender used that site as a shelter or a base for activities related to that particular crime.

6.5 Personal motive

This category includes crimes not related to profit or gang membership.

They are caused by psychological and emotional conflicts, often referred to as conduct disorders, personality disorders or psychiatric disorders. From a zooanthropological point of view, these forms of abuse are classified as zoosadism, zoophilic pornography and bestiality within the **dialogic criminal mileu** of the human-animal relationship.

Although the concept of domestic violence against pets is still unknown in Italy, the majority of animal as well as human crimes occur in the home.

Domestic violence against pets has its own peculiarities and should not be mixed with other forms of animal cruelty. This is the reason why we are thoroughly committed to carry out extensive and systematic research on this particular category which also represents a subgroup of the domestic violence against women and children.

Spontaneous domestic abuse

Domestic abuse occurs when a male member of the family, usually the husband or one of the sons, acts violently against one or more pets – mostly in urban areas – or one or more farm animals – mostly in rural areas –. There is no premeditation in this crime which is the consequence and/or the expression of an existential pathology in the family or the abuser.

Victimology

The victims are animals easily accessible by the abuser. Generally it is not an isolated episode of violence and these animals are repeatedly abused both physically and ethologically. Pets suffer the same forms of children abuse: carelessness, physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, neglect.

Crime scene indicators

Being spontaneous and not planned in advance, this crime leaves a single and very messy crime scene behind – e.g. home, garden, court- or farmyard – also because the abuser is not afraid of being prosecuted for such a ‘minor’ offence. The weapon is something the abuser finds by chance and then abandons on the spot. Violence is not only targeted at human and non-human victims but also at objects or furniture. Behavior and emotional condition of the other family members can provide clues to the offender-victim relationship. Autopsy and zooanthropological analysis (Sorcinelli 2012) prove to be the most appropriate investigative tools.

Staging

Staging is often used when the abuse leads to the animal death. It is an attempt to falsely present the crime as an accident – e.g. accidental electrocution, poisoning, suffocation, etc. –.

Forensic findings

Use of alcohol and drugs is a common evidence. Fingerprints on the possible weapon may not be significant when it comes to household items. There are often forensic findings consistent with an assault, e.g. battered snout, overkill, multiple wounds in the same anatomical area. Manual or ligature strangulation is typical of this assault. Gunshot injuries are also common forensic findings and shooting pellets are often washed off.

Investigative considerations

If the crime occurs in or around the home, it is likely to be a case of domestic violence. The family members may provide useful information about their relationship with the pet and autopsy often reveals signs of repeated abuse.

Search warrant suggestions

The majority of physical evidence is retrieved at the crime site.

Staged domestic abuse

Domestic abuse occurs when a male member of the family, usually the husband or one of the sons, acts violently against one or more pets – mostly in urban areas – or one or more farm animals – mostly in rural areas –. A staged domestic abuse is often planned in advance and stems from an existential pathology in the family.

Victimology

The victims are animals easily accessible by the abuser. Generally it is not an isolated episode of violence and these animals are repeatedly abused both physically and ethologically.

Crime scene indicators

The crime scene of a staged domestic abuse indicates an organized and controlled crime. The weapon or other objects are often missing. The crime does not necessarily take place in or around the home but often in woodlands or other remote areas.

Staging

Staging is often used when the abuse leads to the animal death. It is an attempt to falsely present the crime as an accident – e.g. accidental electrocution, poisoning or suffocation, other animal attacks, etc. –.

Forensic findings

Fingerprints on the possible weapon may not be significant when it comes to household items. There are often forensic findings consistent with an assault, e.g. battered snout, signs of overkill, multiple wounds in the same anatomical area. Manual or ligature strangulation is typical of this assault. Gunshot injuries are also common forensic findings and shooting pellets are often washed off.

Investigative considerations

If the crime occurs in or around the home, it is likely to be a case of domestic violence. The family members may provide useful information about their relationship with the pet and autopsy often reveals signs of repeated abuse.

Search warrant suggestions

A search warrant may only be issued in order to find *corpus delicti* – the body of evidence – or weapons or other crime related objects.

Abuse related to fight/conflict/retaliation

Animal cruelty is often used as a form of emotional and psychological violence against humans. Abuse related to fight/conflict/retaliation occurs as a result of a dispute among subjects not necessarily belonging to the same family group.

This category includes animal abuse associated with stalking or intimidation.

Victimology

The victim is a pet that can easily be seized. The offender is fully aware of the close relationship between the victimized pet and its human owner, who is ultimately the actual target of this violence.

Crime scene indicators

The crime scene often appears very messy, full of physical evidence. Premeditation requires that the offender carries the weapon with him but sometimes he may also find it on the spot. The weapon may be easily found by investigators because the offender is not seriously concerned about the legal consequences of his behavior. He will feel safe as long as he does not commit any crime against the human victim who is the real target of his rage. The animal's corpse usually remains exposed at the crime scene.

Staging

None

Forensic findings

Use of alcohol and/or drugs may be another underlying cause of this violence. Death or injuries depend on the weapon used, e.g. knife, blunt objects, guns, and so on.

Investigative considerations

Most animal abusers and/or killers have a personal history of repeat violence as a solution to their problems. Generally, stalkers have a secondary or higher education level and no previous criminal records as violent offenders towards human beings. On the other hand, they may have abused animals in the past to give vent to their frustrations. They are well known in the area so neighbors and witnesses can provide useful information in addition to the accounts of the human victim.

Search warrant suggestions

Investigators should search for evidence as soon as possible, with a particular attention to the offender's home where the weapon could be hidden.

7. Criminal social identity

Group-based identities may develop intergroup conflicts and violent forms of punishment against one or more members of rival gangs leading to the murder of the victim or victims.

Abuse related to cult and rituals

The term <<sect>> is usually referred to a group of followers of non-orthodox beliefs mostly focused on money, sex and power. Ritual abuse is perpetrated on one or more animals by the members of the sect.

Victimology

The victims are animals that can be easily found and seized by the members of the sect. The ritual abuse usually involves more than one victim.

Crime scene indicators

The crime scene may be full of symbols – either objects or drawings –, the meaning of which is often known to the followers only. The corpse of the victim will be arranged in a particular posture, if a special message is to be sent. On the contrary, it will be removed and hidden if they want to continue their ritual sacrifices undisturbed. Mass animal graves are very common near the places where these groups use to gather. The presence of more than one abuser and more than one victim is evidenced at the crime scene.

Staging

None

Forensic findings

Victims typically show sharp force or blunt force trauma, amputation and insertion of objects into the anus or into the genitals. A variety of weapons may be used to harm a single victim. At the crime scene, investigators are likely to find other ritual items.

Investigative considerations

Cult leaders are often involved in frauds and may have criminal history records. They have a strong personality, so they can attract people vulnerable to manipulation. Ritual abuse is a form of control on the followers who are coerced to commit sadistic and criminal acts.

Search warrant suggestions

Weapons and ritual items can be searched at the cult leader's home, the followers' homes or the site where they gather.

Abuse related to group excitement

A death that results from group excitement – a group's aggression escalates in proportion to the actions committed to the victim – can be structured or unstructured, with a contagious component¹⁷.

According to our research, this kind of abuse is perpetrated by gangs of adolescents who are also responsible, sooner or later, for bullying or vandalism.

Victimology

Several animals are picked on either at random or for trivial reasons. This is a form of repeat violence escalating in the long run.

Crime scene indicators

Abuse occurs outdoors, in crowded areas in front of eye-witnesses or video recordings. The crime scene is disorganized. Weapons are found on the spot and in many cases they are replaced with punching and kicking. Offenders do not try to hide the dead body, on the contrary they often film their abuse and then publish the video online. The simultaneous presence of many abusers is proven by finger- and footprints, fibers and, sometimes, semen.

Staging

None

Forensic findings

Overkill is a common practice performed with any weapon available at the crime site. The victim shows multiple wounds caused by repeated assaults. In some cases, objects are inserted into the victim's anus or genitals.

Investigative considerations

These episodes of violence do not last long and eye-witnesses are often present at the crime site. Offenders often act under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Since these youth gangs have no formal structure nor leadership, investigators can easily take advantage of their weak spots.

Search warrant suggestions

A search warrant can be requested if investigators suspect that crime evidence may have been concealed. As this kind of abuse, if perpetrated by young offenders, is often photographed or filmed, cellular phones, computers or diaries may provide significant information. Moreover, our findings show that these gangs have a well-documented history of animal cruelty before moving on to interpersonal violence.

¹⁷ Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

*Women are more likely to be permanently damaged, slashed or even killed by their intimate partners in those societies where animal cruelty is a common practice.*¹⁸

David Levinson

Every epochal transition is characterized by the progressive loss of traditional values and lifestyles. When a new era emerges, old-style solutions fail to reach the core of problems, culture itself suffers a setback and the whole system seems to collapse. Nowadays, all measures of violence prevention and fight against crime are alarmingly pervaded by a sense of helplessness. For this reason, it is vital to define a “priority” when searching for appropriate solutions. This priority consists in accepting a new paradigm on how violence and crime should be analyzed in Italy. Based on the findings of extensive researches carried out in English-speaking countries for over 60 years and the more recent Italian zooanthropological studies, this new paradigm establishes a close relation between any form of violence and a neurotic, maladaptive behavior. Being the expression of violence inflicted by the strong against the weak, *cruelty to animals and wildlife in general* should never be considered as an isolated episode but as an integral, pathological and predictive part of a whole cycle of violence. As such, it requires effective measures of crime prevention and fighting.

An epistemological approach has a lifecycle closely related to the actual situation from which it stems. The demands of a social system meet the matching cultural responses thus creating debates, new opinions and challenges. The approach to paradigm cannot be unmovable or unchangeable but it must take into consideration the two-way interaction between knowledge and problem, because new discoveries always lead to new problems and vice versa (Marchesini, 1996). For this reason, all disciplines of knowledge should be in line with the needs of the present moment and welcome all inputs and suggestions made by organizations and professionals operating in the civil society.

¹⁸ D. Levinson, *Family Violence in cross-cultural perspective*, Newbury Park, sage, CA 1989.

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