


- 
- Offender Profiling
 - Explanations of Offending
 - Dealing with Offenders

Offender Profiling

The Bottom-Up Approach

Overview

- The bottom-up approach was largely developed in the UK by British criminologist David Canter (1994).
- Canter argued that the focus should be on the individual offender and the unique circumstances surrounding the crime.
- The bottom-up approach is a data-driven methodology that doesn't assume there are existing 'categories' of offenders.
- It relies on statistical analysis, evidence and psychological theory to make inferences about the offender.
- *How is this different to the top-down approach?*



The Bottom-Up Approach



Investigative Psychology: the application of psychological theory and research to the profiling of offenders. Pioneered by Canter.

Interpersonal Coherence

- People are consistent in their behaviour → traits of crime should be similar to everyday traits of offender. However, behaviour does change over time → should be reflected in crimes over time.

Forensic Awareness

- If offender seems 'clued up' on forensics/police investigation, e.g. techniques for concealing evidence, it may indicate previous study/experience with conviction.

Smallest Space Analysis

- A statistical technique that enables correlation of crime data to find patterns. Salfati and Canter (1999) identified three themes:
 - Instrumental Opportunistic: murder to achieve a goal, easiest methods used
 - Instrumental Cognitive: criminal is concerned about being found and is very careful
 - Expressive Impulsive: criminal is uncontrolled/emotional; heat-of-the-moment actions

The Bottom-Up Approach

Geographical Profiling: the study of spatial behaviour in relation to crime.

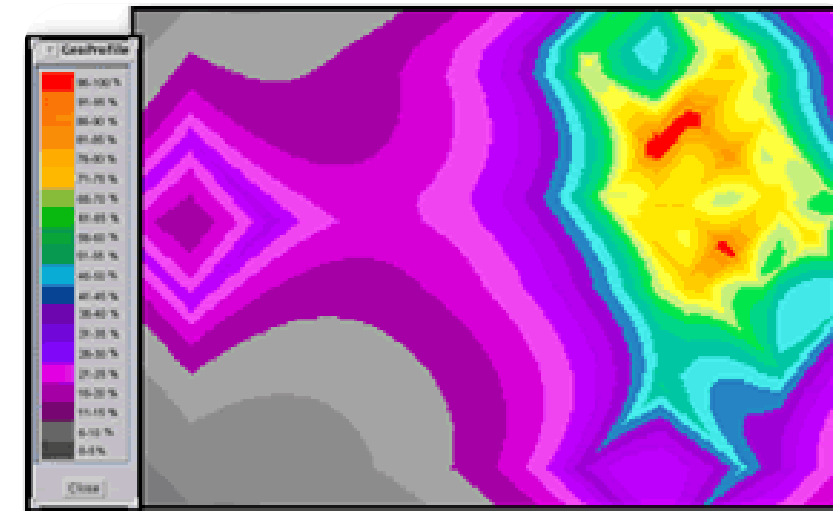
- Aims to build a profile about the likely location of the offender
- Can be used to analysis links between series of crimes

Data can be combined into a model: '**Crime Mapping**'

- They likely live at the centre of all the committed crime scene locations (Canter's **Circle Theory**: Marauders vs Commuters)

A more complex (valid?) model:

- The **jeopardy surface**: a 3D model of time, space and movement data that illustrates the probability of offender location



Probability of Offender Residence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IChVZzDV3ME>

Evaluating the Bottom-Up Approach

- **Critics question its effectiveness.** For example, Holmes (1989) found that only 46% of cases using offender profiling resulted in an arrest, with only 17% of these actually using the profile to make the arrest. This is reinforced by Copson's (1995) finding that only 14% of senior police officers believed that profiling was useful. Therefore, it seems that the bottom-up approach fails to add value in real-life cases.
- **Many argue that it is not useful for most crimes.** For those involving material gain, such as theft, profiles are currently far from adequate. Despite this, there is some promise in profiling for crimes such as arson and stalking. Therefore, perhaps the bottom-up approach needs further development to increase its value.

You could compare to top-down here...



Evaluating Investigative Psychology

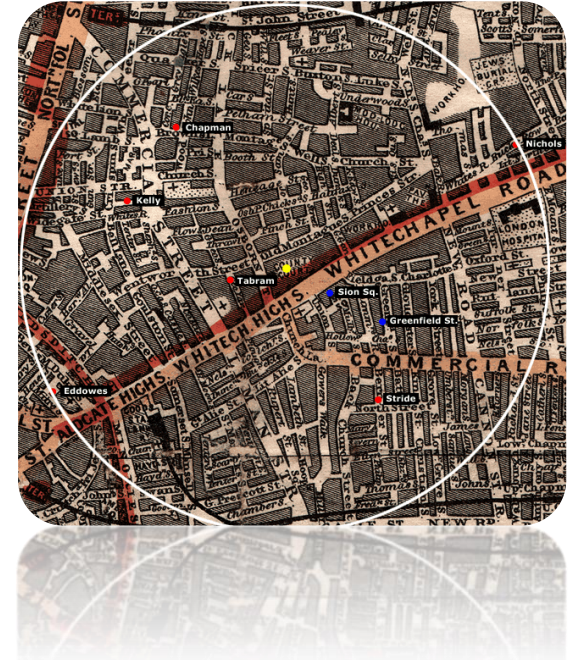
Canter and Heritage (1990): analysis of 66 sexual assault cases using **smallest space analysis**. Found that **five factors** in particular characterised the cases (but contribution varies with offender):

- Surprise attack
- Intercourse
- Impersonal language
- Victim's clothing disturbed
- No reaction to the victim

Concluded that this type of analysis can be used to determine whether two offences are linked.

Lundrigan and Canter (2001): **smallest space analysis** of 120 US murders involving serial killers. In all cases, the **offenders' bases were between the locations** of the victims' bodies. This was more significant for *marauders*.

Have a go at writing up some evaluation using the text.



Evaluating the Bottom-Up Approach



Based on scientific and computerised methods.

Holmes (1989) found that only 46% of cases using offender profiling resulted in an arrest, with only 17% of these actually using the profile to make the arrest.

Copson (1995): 75% of police officers using investigative profiling said some of the advice was useful; 14% of senior police officers believed that profiling was useful overall; 3% of officers agreed that profiling had actually led to identifying the offender. Most said they would use a profiler again.

Doesn't seem to be as useful for crimes involving material gain, such as theft, but some promise in profiling for crimes such as arson and stalking.

Canter and Larkin (1993): analysis of 45 sexual assaults supported marauder-commuter distinction. 91% were marauders.

Petherick (2006): police may look in the wrong place as a result of circle theory; circles are simplistic and other shapes may be more appropriate in some cases.

Rossmo (1999): even if geographic profiling does not identify the offender directly, it helps target searches and allocation of resources.

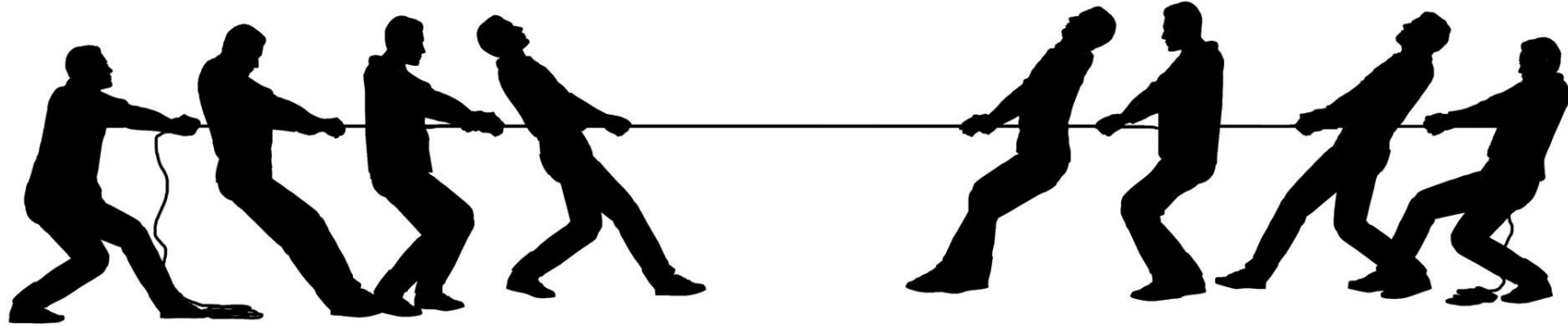
Lundrigan and Canter (2001): smallest space analysis of 120 US murders involving serial killers. In all cases, the offenders' bases were at the centre of the locations of the victims' bodies. This was more significant for *marauders*.

Canter and Heritage (1990): analysed 66 sexual assault cases and found that smallest space analysis was an effective way of deciding whether two cases were linked.

Reliance on profiling may actually hinder a case. Example of Rachel Nickell murder- Colin Stagg

- Briefly explain the bottom-up approach to offender profiling.
(Total 2 marks)
- Outline what is meant by geographical profiling in forensic psychology.
(Total 2 marks)
- Briefly explain one limitation of geographical profiling.
(Total 2 marks)
- Discuss one strength of the bottom-up approach to offender profiling.
(Total 3 marks)
- Outline and evaluate investigative psychology.
(Total 8 marks)
- Discuss one approach to offender profiling.
(Total 16 marks)

Comparing Approaches to Offending



Reasons to side with the top-down approach to profiling.

Reasons to stay on the fence

Reasons to side with the bottom-up approach to profiling.

- Geographic profiling explanation:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQjYs-D729E>
- Investigative psychology explanation:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wgLMbNSpFk>
- David Canter lecture: Following in Killers' Footsteps:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zu21OyKl6k4>