Offender Profiling: Bottom-up approach

**Geographical profiling:**
First described by Rossmo (1997). Uses information to do with the location of linked crime scenes to make inferences about the likely home/operational base of offender – Crime mapping. Used in conjunction with psychological theory to create hypotheses about how the offender thinks as well as modus operandi. Assumed that offenders restrict ‘work’ to geographical areas they’re familiar with – providing an investigator with a ‘centre of gravity’ (including offenders base). May help make educated guesses about where the offender is likely to strike next – jeopardy surface.

**Canter’s circle theory (1993):** two models of offender behaviour. Idea that offenders operate within a limited spatial mindset that creates imagined boundaries in which crimes are likely to be committed.

- **The Marauder** – offender operates in close proximity to their home.
- **The Commuter** – offender is likely to have travelled away from their usual residence.
Supporting evidence for geographical profiling: supports Canter’s claim that it is a key factor in determining the base of an offender.

Lundrigan and Canter (2001): collated information from 120 murder cases (serial killers) in the USA using smallest space analysis. Revealed spatial consistency in the behaviour of killers.

Location of each disposal site was in a different direction to the last – creating a ‘centre of gravity’. The offender’s base was located at the centre of the pattern – the more murders the more noticeable the effect.

Scientific basis: the approach is more objective and scientific – grounded in evidence and psychological theory – less speculative.

- With the aid of artificial intelligence, investigators can manipulate geographical, biological and psychological data quickly to produce insights and results that assist in an investigation.
- Investigative psychology recently expanded to include areas of suspect interviewing, examination of materials presented in court – support utility in aspects of the judicial processes.
**Neurotransmitters:**

Seo et al (2008):
Low levels of serotonin may predispose individuals to impulsive aggression and criminal behaviour.

Wright et al (2015):
Both high and low levels of neurotransmitters have been associated with violence, aggression and criminality.

**Epigenetics:**

Capsi et al (2002):
A longitudinal study on 1000 participants from birth. They were assessed at 26 years old for antisocial behaviour. 12% of individuals had low MAOA gene activity and were found to have experienced maltreatment in childhood.
Psychological explanation: Cognitive distortions

Application of research:
Research is beneficial for treatment of criminal behaviour in terms of rehabilitation of offenders (particularly sex offenders) by the use of CBT to think about what they’ve done and establish a less distorted view of their actions. (Key feature of anger management is acceptance).

- Reducing denial/minimalisation is highly correlated with the risk of offending.

Heller et al (2013): worked with a group of young men from disadvantaged groups in Chicago. Used CBT to reduce cognitive distortions. Those who attended 13x one hour sessions had a 44% reduction in arrests compared to a control group.

Evaluation:

Evidence that Hostile attribution bias stems from childhood:

Dodge and Frame (1982): children were shown a video clip of an ambiguous provocation. The children identified as ‘aggressive’ and ‘rejected’ prior to the study interpreted the situation as more hostile than those classed as ‘non-aggressive’ and ‘accepted’.
Kohlberg proposed 3 stages of moral development. Each is divided into two. Each stage represents a more advanced form of moral understanding. People progress through the stages as a consequence of biological maturity and having opportunities to discuss and develop their thinking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Punishment and obedience orientation: rules are obeyed to avoid punishment.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-conventional</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Hedonistic orientation: rules are obeyed for personal gain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Interpersonal concordance orientation: rules are obeyed for approval.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional level</td>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Law and order orientation: rules are obeyed to maintain the social order.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Social contract/legalistic orientation: rules are obeyed if they are impartial – challenge democratic rules – infringing on others’ rights.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-conventional</td>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Universal ethical principles orientation: individual established their own rules in accordance with personal set of ethical principles.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Kohlberg's moral development

Evaluation:
Individually differences: level of reasoning depends on the type of offence.

Thornton and Reid (1982): crimes for financial gain are at a pre-conventional level. Impulsive crimes/assaults do not show any reasoning.

Langone et al (2010): intelligence may be a better predictor of criminal behaviour as it can explain findings that groups of people with low IQ are less likely to commit a crime even though they show low moral reasoning.

Alternative theories:
Gibbs (1979) revised Kohlberg's theory. It contained two levels.

Mature = moral decisions are guided by avoidance of punishment and for personal gain.

Immature = guided by empathy, social justice and one's own conscious.

The stages are equivalent to Kohlberg's pre-conventional and conventional levels. Gibbs argued that the post-conventional level should be abandoned as it is culturally biased (Western) and does not represent a 'natural' maturation stage of Piaget's cognitive development theory.

+ Supported by Piaget's theory – suggesting child-like behaviour/reasoning (criminal) is self-centred and egocentric. Giving was to empathy and concern for others as a child gets older.
Psychological explanation:

**Inadequate Superego**

**Weak Superego:**

Same-sex parent is absent during the Phallic stage – resulting in the child not being able to internalise a fully formed Superego and having no opportunity for identification.

This makes immoral/criminal behaviour more likely.

**Deviant Superego:**

If the Superego the child internalises has immoral/deviant values, it would lead to offending behaviour, e.g. Being raised by a criminal parent.

**Overly-harsh Superego:**

Healthy Superego – a kind but firm internal parent which has rule but is forgiving of transgression.

Overly-harsh Superego – excessively punitive where the individual is crippled with guilt and anxiety which may unconsciously drive the individual to perform criminal acts to satisfy the Superego’s overwhelming punishment.
Psychological explanation: Maternal deprivation

A person’s ability to form meaningful relationships in adulthood is dependent on the child forming continuous/warm relationships with a mother figure during childhood. A bond that is seen as unique, superior and vital to a child’s development.

Failure to establish meaningful bonds in childhood (critical period) has damaging/irreversible consequences – it can lead to the personality trait known as ‘affectionless psychopathy’.

- Characterised by lack of empathy, guilt and feelings for others.

**Link to criminal behaviour:**

People with these characteristics are likely to be delinquent/unable to form relationships with others due to lack of early experience to do so.
Correlation not causation:
If there is a link between deprivation and committing crime later in life, it does not indicate a causal link between deprivation and delinquency. There are other reasons for this apparent link such as genetic factors and the influence of others (Differential association). Maternal deprivation may be one of those reasons but not the only one or the most decisive.

Contradictory evidence:
Lewis (1954): data analysed from interviews with 500 young people found that maternal deprivation was a poor predictor of future offending and ability to form close relationships in adolescence.
Psychological explanation: 
Differential association theory

Evaluation:

**Farrington et al (2006):**

- Cambridge study in delinquent development.
- Prospective longitudinal study with 411 males (working-class, deprived, inner city areas of South London).
- Began at aged 8 and followed up to 50 years old – looking at recorded convictions and self-reports.
- 41% were convicted of at least one offence between 10 and 50. The average criminal career age was 19-28 years with at least 5 convictions.
- 7% were chronic offenders – accounted for half of all recorded offences in the study.

Important childhood risk factors (8-10) include:

- Family criminality
- Daring, risk taking
- Low school attainment
- Poverty
- Poor parenting

- Supports differential association as it shows how intergenerational crime was a risk factor of developing a delinquent behaviour – seeing and growing up in pro-criminal attitudes lead to crime.
Custodial Sentencing

**Rehabilitation:**
Provided to individuals to help them develop skills, access training and treatment programmes for drug/alcohol abuse. Programmes like social skills training and anger management, where an individual is given an insight into their behaviour and a chance to reflect on their crime, thinking about what they have done which is likely to reduce recidivism rates as it may make them see that what they did was wrong.

**Evaluation:**

**Rehabilitation:** Some prisons may lack the resources to provide inmates with these rehabilitation schemes which means that not all offenders have a chance to change for the better and may continue to offend after release.

**Retribution:** The length of the sentence has been found to make little difference as to whether or not an individual will reoffend (Walker (1981)). Suggesting that even giving a life sentence of 25 years will not reduce recidivism rates.
**The Biggest ‘slave labour’:**
- Inmates can earn a minimum of £10 for a 40 hour work week – working out to be £238 cheaper a year to employ an inmate.
- ‘Speedy hire’ – slashes 37 depots (300 jobs) and employed 200 inmates.
- In August 2012, The Guardian reported a call centre in South Wales from an open prison (21 miles away) and paid them £3 a day.

**Changing behaviours:**
- Desirable behaviours are identified, broken into increments and a base-line is established.
- All those who come in contact with the offender must follow the same selective reinforcement regime.
- Whole programme overseen by prison officials – monitor the effectiveness.

**Easy to implement:**
- Easy to administer – not requiring expertise or professions (Anger Management).
- Can be implemented by anyone in any institution.
- Cost effective and easy to follow once methods are established.
Restorative Justice

Davies and Raymond (2000):
- Regarded restorative justice as a soft option – sentiments echoed by politicians to show people they are ‘tough on crime’.
- Shows people prefer harder options as they punish not rehabilitate – disregarded as an option – least preferred.

Diversity of programmes: degree of flexibility – covers a range of possible applications. Schemes can be tailored/adapted to needs of individual situation. Difficulties making generalised conclusions of effectiveness.

Relies on offender showing remorse – a danger that some offenders ‘sign up’ for the scheme to avoid prison/for the promise of reduced sentence. Not genuine willingness to make amends.
The victim may also have ulterior motive – seeking revenge or retribution of their own.
May not lead to positive outcomes when best intentions are not present.

Feminist critique: ‘Women’s aid’ have called for legislative ban on restorative justice used in domestic violence cases – there is a power imbalance and often resorts in blaming the victim.