

**A MULTIVARIATE MODEL OF THE OFFENCE  
BEHAVIOURS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SERIAL KILLERS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

It was hypothesised that there would be behavioural consistencies in the offences of South African serial killers. The themes underlying these observable differences can help us understand the nature of these offences. Crime scene data was obtained from police records, and structured, in-depth offender interviews. 73 offences, committed by 13 offenders, were analysed. The analysis used Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), a Multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) procedure. This analysis revealed systematic patterns of behaviour in the offences. It was found that the focus of these offences is an impersonal, hostile, and act-focused murder where the victim is treated as a depersonalised object. Empirical support for an underlying thematic structure to these offences was also provided. The offence themes identified relate to the nature of the actions committed during the offence, and the function these actions had for the offender. These findings thus support the hypothesis that these offences will display meaningful behavioural variation. These findings have direct utility in the investigation and study of serial killing in South Africa. They also provide the basis for comparison with previously suggested typologies of serial killing, and indicate directions for future research into this phenomenon in the South African setting.

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“Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death’s other Kingdom,  
Remember us - if at all - not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men.”

- T.S. Eliot  
‘The Hollow Men’  
(1925)

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of serial killing is increasing world-wide (Pistorius, 1996, p.1).

The FBI Uniform Crime Report notes that so-called motiveless murders of this type have increased by 14% over the seventeen-year period between 1965 and 1981. These types of murder also pose investigative problems not traditionally found in other homicide cases (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). Furthermore, although serial murder is believed to represent a relatively small number of all homicides (Hodge, 2000) it has consistently attracted inordinate amounts of attention from the law enforcement and psychological communities, as well as from society at large (Holmes & Holmes, 1998). Thus a case of serial murder has the potential to create great social disruption (Davis, 1998). Therefore extreme pressure is placed on law enforcement to resolve a serial murder case. This makes the effective investigation of these cases all the more imperative.

However, the investigation of serial murder cases remains problematic and difficult (Geberth, 1996; Holmes & Holmes, 1998). Such investigative problems could be eased with careful monitoring of these types of homicide. This would allow for differing allocations of resources to solve the specialised problems associated with them (Zahn, 1980). However, in order to implement Zahn's (1980) suggestion, accurate research and analysis of serial criminals and their crimes is needed. Investigative psychology offers an effective approach for tackling this need.

Investigative psychology introduces a scientific and systematic basis to previously subjective approaches to all aspects of the detection, investigation, and prosecution of crimes (Canter, 1998).

Investigative psychology can be thought of as operating at all stages of a criminal investigation. Furthermore, Investigative psychology is based on empirical research and its application to criminal investigations. Thus this approach places investigations on an empirical and scientific basis: from an analysis of the offence itself, through the gathering of information during the investigation, to apprehending and prosecuting the offender. This approach has yet to be applied, on a large scale, to the study of serial killers. Much of the

present research and information on criminals, serial killers in particular, is based on typologies and classification system (Hodge, 2000).

However the typologies and characteristics offered for serial killers are contradictory and problematic (Pistorius, 1996). There is also limited consensus around the relationships between these characteristics and their offences (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996, Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). Furthermore, the relationships between the characteristics of the offender and those of his offence that have been suggested appear often to be based on vague, untested, theoretical premises (Canter, 1994). These factors limit the possibilities for more efficient investigations of this type of offender. This is even truer where it relates to investigative tools such as offender profiling, where typological systems are directly utilised (for example Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). These problems are especially pertinent in this country, where differing socio-economic, crime, and cultural factors render these typologies even more problematic. This points towards the urgent need for research into serial killing in this country that has an empirical basis (Canter, 1994; Maree, 1995; Pistorius, 1996) as advocated by Investigative Psychology. This research will be directly applicable to investigation of serial murder in South Africa.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The worldwide increase in serial killings is reflected in South Africa, where the occurrence of serial murder has more than tripled since 1986 (Maree, 1995; Pistorius, 1996). Since the creation of the Investigative Psychology Unit of the South African Police Services (SAPS) in 1991, the number of serial murderers investigated by them increased from one in 1991 to 10 in 1995. Presently, there are approximately 14 serial killers committing murders in this country (Pistorius, personal communication, 1998). This marked increase is unlikely to be merely the result of the more efficient detection of serial killers by the SAPS. Rather, this increase is an indicator of changes in society itself.

As pointed out by Ndabandaba (1987) there is a clear relationship between the nature of a society and the crimes that occur in it, citing Quetelet's (1835) observation that "society contains in itself the germs of all future crimes" (p.18). Ndabandaba asserts that there is a strong link between the structure of South African society, and the high rates of crime that occur in it. A major contributor to this crime problem is the clash between traditional indigenous and western culture, and the consequent political history of South Africa. This is coupled with a large population of migrant labourers and widespread population migration in general. This, he asserts, "contribute(s) directly or indirectly to crime by creating disorganization and conflict" (1987, pp.18-19). This disruption of social groupings, coupled with a profound lack of resources or opportunities, acts to feed the growth of crime (Ndabandaba, 1987). An increase in the rates of violence in society has been associated with normalisation of interpersonal violence, violent role models, unmotivated blaming of others, and the anonymity and depersonalisation in over crowded areas (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). These conditions can be observed in the widespread poverty, violence, and alienation of South Africa. Thus South Africans are currently threatened by marked economic, psychological, and political pressures; along with overpopulation and an increasingly violent society (Steyn, 1993).

The effect of these factors in South Africa is best expressed by a

move in the direction of sexual, violent sexual, and motiveless violent offences in society. (Maree, 1995, p.ix).

Currently, the South African murder rate is nine times higher than the international average, with a serious assault rate six times that of the international average, and rape statistics that are unparalleled in developed nations. Overall, these crimes account for 15% to 20% of police dockets – as opposed to 3% in other developed countries (SECAP Launch Document, 1999). As Maree (1995) indicates, many of these violent crimes can be considered ‘motiveless’. That is, these crimes lack the extrinsic motives, such as financial gain, jealousy or revenge, which are typically found in other crimes (Pistorius, 1996). It is the seeming ‘lack of motive’ that remains the greatest enigma surrounding serial killers (*ibid*, p.1).

Furthermore, this lack of extrinsic motive makes the serial killer investigation especially problematic for the police (Pistorius, 1996; Ressler, Douglas & Depue, 1985). This investigative problem is exacerbated in South Africa, where the increase in serious crimes means that less time can be devoted to each investigation. Furthermore, a ratio of 2,5 police personnel per 1 000 members of the population (one of the lowest internationally) further limits the manpower that can be assigned to any criminal investigation (Maree, 1995). This is coupled with a highly mobile population that often remains hostile towards police investigations (*ibid*, p.3). This results in large amounts of time being wasted in the course of investigations, and high police casualties in the line of duty (Servamus, July 2000). Furthermore, the large number of missing persons in South Africa, coupled with a mobile population and a high murder rate, mean that many victims of serial killers are not found, identified, or seen to be the work of one person (Holmes & Holmes, 1998). Added to these pressures is the increasing public awareness of violent, serial, and sexual crimes (Maree, 1995). Overall, the effect these constraints have on the efficacy of police investigations is demonstrated by figures for 1992/3, which indicate that 40% of murders, 20% of serious assault, and 26% of rapes remain unsolved (*ibid*, p.1). These constraints, and the hindrances they entail, make the task of the serial killer investigator extremely difficult.

Both Maree (1995) and Pistorius (1996) indicate that a lack of extensive quantitative research into the phenomenon of serial killing further limits the efficacy of this type of investigation in South Africa. Research on serial killers has tended to be limited to case studies (Maree, 1995), which fail to supply the normative data that can aid criminal investigations. Also, existing research on serial killers has been conducted, almost exclusively, in the USA and UK. The marked differences between these countries and South Africa with reference to cultural, social, economic, and criminal factors mean that the present theories of serial murder may be invalid (or of limited utility) in the local context. It is therefore clear, given the criminal and socio-economic conditions, the lack of police resources, and the escalating number of serial killers (in keeping with the general increase in violent crime), that large-scale research into the phenomenon of serial murder in South Africa is essential (Maree, 1995; Pistorius, 1996). This research will allow for the more effective, and less costly, investigation of serial killings in this country.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**PAST RESEARCH ON SERIAL KILLERS**

**3.1 DEFINITION OF SERIAL KILLERS**

**3.1.1 Definitions of Multiple Murderers**

There are a number of frameworks for the categorisation of individuals who commit multiple murders. However, not all perpetrators of ‘multicide’ can be termed serial killers (Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Pistorius, 1996). Primarily, a differentiation needs to be made between serial, mass, and spree murderers. The latter two categories refer to individuals who kill two or more people in one explosive event, with no emotional ‘cooling-off’ period in between killings (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). Holmes & Holmes (1998) further differentiate between the categories of spree and mass murderers by asserting that spree killers commit their murders in at least 3 locations, in 3 separate events, with other felonies (such as robbery) also being committed in the course of the ‘spree’.

Table 1  
**Holmes & Holmes’ (1998) Multicide Classification**

	<i>Mass Murder</i>	<i>Spree Murder</i>	<i>Serial Murder</i>
<b>Victims</b>	At least 3	At least 3	At least 3
<b>Events</b>	One event	At least three events	At least three events
<b>Location</b>	One location	At least three locations	At least three locations
<b>Cooling-off period</b>	No	No	Yes

However, the classifications proffered by Holmes & Holmes (1998) are problematic. For example, the insistence that a serial murderer commit their murders in at least three

locations immediately excludes those serial killers who kill all their victims in the same location (such as Jeffery Dahmer in the USA, and the Capitol Hill killer in this country). In fact, Leibman (1987) asserts that serial killers usually murder all their victims in the same area. Furthermore, by requiring that the offender commit at least three murders, Holmes & Holmes (1998) are excluding individuals who have been captured before they could commit further murders. Therefore, overall, the central differentiating criterion used in this classification is that of time: with serial murders being committed over a protracted period, and spree/mass murders occurring over a far shorter time (“one explosive event”) (Leyton, 1986, p.18). However, as Pistorius (1996) indicates, the definition of serial killers cannot focus only on the element of time in the killings. As the above discussion shows, there are numerous ‘grey areas’ in the categorisation of multiple murderers, and these remain problematic in the study of serial killers. These issues need to be accounted for in any study of this sort of crime.

### **3.1.2 Definitions of Serial Killers**

The central elements of serial killing can be seen to be:

- Repetitive homicide that will not stop unless prevented.
- Usually one on one murders.
- Usually stranger murders, seldom occurring between relatives or intimates.
- No extrinsic motive, and seldom victim precipitated.

(Holmes & Holmes, 1998, p.30)

These are central assumptions in all definitions of serial killers. The final point (referring to the lack of ‘extrinsic motive’) asserts that the serial killer’s motive for committing murder is not immediately apparent. Thus serial killers do not kill for monetary gain, jealousy, or revenge; nor does the victim precipitate their murder (as would be the case, for example, in a wife killing her abusive husband) (Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Pistorius, 1996). Holmes, Hickey & Holmes (1991) are more specific and assert that while persons may kill for different reasons, serial murderers are typically intrinsically motivated and are killing for “psychological gain” (p.61). This ‘psychological gain’ usually includes such factors as

sexual pleasure, aberrant hedonism, or the sense of complete power over another person. Thus, the serial murderer's motivation is "intrinsic, an irresistible compulsion" (Pistorius, 1996, p.6). While individuals who kill due to hallucinations (auditory or visual) do exist, these are rare in comparison with most serial killers (Holmes, 1997; Hickey, 1991).

However, Holmes & Holmes (1998) feel that paid assassins and 'hitmen' are a variation of serial killers. Pistorius (1996) criticises this in light of the clear extrinsic motive - monetary gain - that these individuals have to commit their crimes. They therefore lack the intrinsic psychological motivation that is typically found in serial killers. This critique is even more relevant in the South African context where politically motivated murders, or killings occurring in the course of other crimes, are rife. Thus for the purposes of this research the presence of an obvious external motive for murder (such as politics or payment), in the absence of a simultaneous psychological motive, will preclude the individual from being classified a serial killer. Therefore other crimes committed in the course of a serial killer's offences must be secondary to the murder of the victim.

As mentioned above, the serial killer will kill unless prevented. That is, they will not stop killing until apprehended, institutionalised, or killed themselves (Lane & Gregg, 1992). Finally, while these types of murders are usually 'one-on-one' (that is, involving only the offender and the victim), it is not unknown for serial killers to commit murders in tandem, or with an accomplice. Thus, for our purposes, a person who commits multiple murders need not operate alone in order to be classified as a serial killer. Similarly the murders studied in this research can be victim precipitated, and need not be 'stranger' murders, to be considered the acts of a serial killer.

However within these basic guidelines there are a number of competing and contradictory definitions of serial killers. A number of other factors have previously been considered in the definition of serial killers. These factors are usually related to the explanatory framework and system of classifications employed by the researcher. For example: 'fantasy' is posited as a pivotal factor in the definition, aetiology, planning, and continuation of a serial killer's murders (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996; Ressler &

Shachtman, 1993). In addition to this, a number of theorists insist, often implicitly, that a serial killer is purely a variation of sexual offender (Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Ressler et al., 1993). However the above perspectives, suggesting that either fantasy or sexual elements are central to serial killing, are often contradictory and marred by vague definitions. Firstly, it is unclear whether reference is being made to the motive for the crime, or the behaviour on the crime scene. Secondly, it is not made explicit what behaviours, or criminal actions, these definitions regard as 'sexual' or 'fantasy-driven'. It is thus difficult to assess what these definitions are referring to, and so apply them in either investigations or research. Finally, certain multiple murderers (who cannot be seen as either 'mass' or 'spree' killers) may not exhibit any of these behaviours. Therefore these perspectives do not offer frameworks that fit all the observed phenomena. Consequently, for the purposes of this research, no assumptions will be made as to the role played by sexual elements in either these murderers or serial killing more generally.

Thus, in this research, the definition of a serial killer will be as inclusive as possible, with minimal relationships to explanatory, or other, classifications. Serial murder is:

two or more separate murders where an individual, acting alone or with another, commits multiple homicides over a period of time, with time breaks between the events (Geberth, 1996, p.438).

The inclusion of a 'cooling off' period excludes mass murderers from the sample. The use of "two or more murders" as the defining number allows for the inclusion of those killers who, although being responsible for only two known murders, may still exhibit the traits of serial killers who are known to have killed more than twice (Hodge, 2000). The above definition has been widely used in previous research on serial killers. It has been used in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) research into serial killers, and is virtually identical to the definition used by most academic researchers (such as Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). It is thus appropriate for this exploratory research.

Finally it should be added that while female serial killers do exist, an overwhelming majority of this type of offender are male (Pistorius, 1996). Holmes & DeBurger (1988) identified only three female offenders in a list of forty-seven serial killers. Research also

suggests that the aetiology and nature of female serial murderers differs markedly from that of their male counterparts (Holmes, Hickey & Holmes, 1991). Given these factors, only male killers will be referred to in this thesis, and the masculine form will be used in reference to them.

## **3.2 THEORIES ON THE AETIOLOGY OF SERIAL KILLERS**

The aetiology of serial killers remains an enigma. While the resolution of this issue is not the focus of this project, these aetiological issues are entwined with the typologies offered for serial killers. They thus, often, play a role in the investigation of these offenders, especially in the construction of offender profiles (Pistorius, 1996). Similarly, aetiological concerns are often reflected in the suggested general characteristics of serial killers. The aetiological frameworks applied to serial killers will therefore be outlined below. They will be discussed with two related issues in mind: firstly, with reference to their ability to adequately explain the origin of serial killing. Secondly, with reference to their utility in investigations and offender profiling.

### **3.2.1 Medical and Psychiatric Theories**

This perspective enquires whether the serial killer's actions can be explained through medical or psychiatric perspectives and diagnoses. However, as Carlisle (1993) observes, psychiatric and medical explanations for serial killers tend to be both inadequate and contradictory. Thus while biological, neurological, and genetic disorders (as well as head injury) have been cited as possible causes of a serial murderer's behaviour (Jeffers, 1993; Money, 1990), these causes cannot be universally applied to all serial killers. Physical explanations for serial killers are thus of extremely limited utility. As noted by Holmes & DeBurger (1988) biogenic factors, with rare exceptions, can never be regarded as the cause of serial homicide. The cause, they therefore insist, is psychogenic.

#### **3.2.1.1 *Schizophrenia & psychotic disorders***

Put simply, this perspective posits that the serial killer is not in touch with reality at the time of his offence, and it is this psychotic break that motivates his killings. This perspective is

obviously linked to the 'disorganised', 'visionary', and 'psychotic' categories of killers proposed by various theorists (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Leibman, 1989; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). There is evidence that a number of serial killers do suffer from schizophrenia or psychoses at the time of their offences (Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Geberth, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). However, Carlisle (1993) and Pistorius (1996) observe that a relatively small number of serial killers are criminally insane, or psychotic, at the time of their offence. Furthermore, most serial killers do not exhibit the general lowering in global functioning typical of these types of mental illness. Ultimately finds that the majority of serial killers are not psychologically ill, and do not differ from the norm in terms of their psychological traits (Wilson, 1988). However, it is difficult to assess the exact proportion of psychotic illness in serial killers. This is due to the majority of research into psychoses in serial killers taking the form of either case studies or anecdotal evidence. The explanatory power of 'madness' with reference to serial killing is therefore limited.

### ***3.2.1.2 Anti-social Personalities and Sadism***

Anti-social personality disorder and sadism are the other major psychiatric concepts utilised in explanations of serial killers. They are linked to the category of 'organised', as well as 'comfort', hedonistic', and 'power-oriented' killers (Geberth, 1996; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). The label of Anti-Social Personality (APA, 1994) is closely linked, and practically interchangeable, with that of a 'psychopathic' personality. The term 'psychopath' refers to an individual who:

has a clear perception of reality, but who seems to lack feelings of guilt, and commits criminal acts for his own gratification, having little regard for the pain and suffering caused by his acts. In other words, a person who has no conscience (Carlisle, 1993, p.87)

In addition to these amoral and asocial characteristics, the psychopathic or anti-social personality is characterised by a cluster of related symptoms. These consist of both distinctive personality characteristics and socially deviant behaviours (Hare, 1993). These characteristics and symptoms include:

a) Emotional / Interpersonal factors

- Glib and superficial.
- Egocentric and grandiose.
- Lack of remorse or guilt.
- Lack of empathy.
- Deceitful and manipulative.
- Shallow emotions.

b) Social Deviances

- Impulsive
- Poor behavioural control
- Need for excitement
- Lack of responsibility
- Early behavioural problems
- Adult anti-social behaviour

(from Geberth, 1996, p.724)

These characteristics translate into the pervasive egocentricity, disregard for others, and anti-social behaviours observed in the psychopathic personality (Geberth, 1996). However this syndrome does not explain why an individual kills repeatedly; nor why some psychopaths kill and others do not (Carlisle, 1993; Pistorius, 1996).

The anti-social, or psychopathic, personality is often linked with the diagnostic category of 'sadism' in the study of serial homicide offenders (Geberth & Turco, 1997). Sexual sadism is diagnosed if there are:

recurrent, intense, sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviours involving acts (real, not simulated) in which the psychological or physical suffering of the victim is sexually exciting to the person (APA, 1994; p.530).

These fantasies, urges and behaviours must intrude on, and interfere with, the psychological and social functioning of the individual. This category (with the fantasy-element it implies) has clear correlations with Ressler, Burgess & Douglas' (1993) model of motivations. This motivational model will be outlined in subsequent sections. Significantly, as the Diagnostic

and Statistical Manual (DSM)-IV (1994) notes, when sadism is 'coupled' with anti-social personality disorder the victim may be seriously injured or even killed. Furthermore, sadistic murderers display distinct crime scene patterns (Warren, Hazelwood & Dietz, 1992) often with high levels of violence and aggression (Fedora et al, 1992). Sadism, and the sexual pleasure gained from aggressive acts, also offers an explanation for the repetitive nature of serial murder.

However, 'sadism' only relates to sexually oriented (and motivated) crimes. And, as asserted by Pistorius (1996), not all serial murderers display sexual foci either in their lifestyles or in their offences. Therefore, there are clear limits to the explanatory power of diagnostic categories such as sadism and anti-social personality. While a number of disorders of personality and sexual behaviour have been offered as explanations for serial killings (Carlisle, 1993; Cameron & Frazer, 1987; Lane & Gregg, 1992; Schwartz, 1992), none have proved to be universally applicable, or sufficiently explanatory (Carlisle, 1993; Pistorius, 1996). Thus, overall, a majority of serial killers are neither clinically insane nor do they differ significantly from the norm in terms of their psychological traits (Carlisle, 1993; Wilson, 1988). Given that large-scale descriptive studies of the occurrence of mental disorders in serial killers are unavailable, it is best to view serial killing as the result of a number of 'overlapping syndromes' (Money, 1990).

### 3.2.2 Socio-cultural Theories

Sociogenic forces, especially in the form of violence-associated learning, are undoubtedly present in the cultural and behavioural background of the serial killers. However, sociogenic theories are also unable to account *directly* for the appearance of serial homicide (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988, p.48).

These sociogenic forces include forces and influences within the familial context and the societal setting at large (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). The latter aspect is linked to the continuous change in the relationship between the individual and his environment. This is coupled with an ongoing culture of violence in society. Holmes & DeBurger (1988) identify these as the pivotal socio-cultural factors in the aetiology of serial killing. These authors identify the following aspects of American society that lead to an increase in violence:

- Normalising of interpersonal violence.
- Extensive violence.
- Excessively violent role models.
- Unmotivated hostility and blaming of others.
- Normalising of impulsiveness.
- Emphasis on thrills and personal comfort.
- Emphasis on immediate and fast gratification of needs.
- Anonymity and depersonalisation in over-crowded areas.
- Extensive and accelerating geographic mobility

(p.65)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is clear that many of these factors are applicable in the South African context with its widespread poverty, rootlessness, violence and its history of disruption (Ndabandaba, 1987). These societal factors are related to, and reflected in, the familial culture and upbringing of serial killers (Holmes & Holmes, 1998). Leibman (1989) states that the developmental years of serial killers were marked by:

- Rejection by parents.
- Childhood marked by cruel and violent patterns.
- Rejection by a member of the opposite sex during adulthood.
- Confrontation with the law during youth or adulthood.
- Admittance to psychiatric hospitals

(p. 42)

Ressler & Shachtman (1993, pp. 116-130), in a quantitative study of 36 serial killers, found the following general characteristics in the familial histories of serial killers. However they warn that these characteristics are generalised, and thus may not be present in all serial killers:

- In 50% of cases there was either pathology in the family of the serial killer, or parental involvement in crime.
- These psychiatric problems mainly involved the mother's institutionalisation.

- The criminal activities of the family were usually of a sexual nature.
- In over 70% of the cases, substance or alcohol abuse was present in the family.
- All serial killers were exposed to extensive emotional abuse during their childhood years. In 40% of the cases, this occurred along with physical abuse.
- 70% of serial killers witnessed, or were victims of, sexually stressful events in the course of their childhoods.
- 43% of serial killers were sexually abused before the age of 12, 32% during adolescence, and 37% after the age of 18.
- In more than half the cases, the father was physically absent.
- The relationship with their mothers was described as cold and distant.
- Parental discipline was usually slack, inconsistent, alien, and abusive.
- Two-thirds of those interviewed belonged to families that can be described as nomadic.
- However, not all serial killers come from broken homes or poverty stricken families.
- These traumata lead to ineffective, weak, and superficial interpersonal relationships. Defective or lacking role models exacerbate these traumata.
- All serial killers grew up lonely and isolated, lacking close emotional bonds.

Finally, in this study of 36 serial murderers, it was found that academic achievements were weak. This is despite the high intelligence of some serial killers, whose IQ scores ranged from above 120 to below 90. Poor academic achievement also translated into generally unstable and poor work records for those studied. Similar dysfunctional upbringings and developmental patterns have been observed by other theorists, such as Lane & Gregg (1992). Leibman (1989) asserts that these social factors can lead to the development of serial killers. However Pistorius (1996) criticises this assertion on two grounds. Firstly, not all people who are exposed to the above-mentioned socio-cultural factors become serial killers. Secondly, a socio-cultural perspective cannot explain the idiosyncratic elements in each serial killer's crimes. That is, actions such as torture, necrophilia, and extreme sadism, cannot be seen as socially conditioned or modelled actions. Therefore while the socio-cultural perspective supplies useful insights into the serial killer's aetiology, it is insufficient taken in isolation. A further problematic factor with these is that the terms used (such as 'emotional abuse' or 'isolation') have been insufficiently defined. This means that

they could be used to refer to an individual or situation where they are not applicable, or could be so inclusive as to be rendered meaningless. As Holmes & Holmes (1998) indicate, it is this lack of clarity and definition of terminology that hampers the validity of such general studies.

Thus the social factors and influences listed above cannot sufficiently explain the development of serial killers. They relate to observed characteristics, not suggested aetiologies – although these findings have been utilised in aetiological frameworks (for example: Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1993). Furthermore it must be remembered that no normative information on the prevalence of such characteristics, or life-events, is given for the community from which the serial killer is drawn. Therefore it cannot be said with any certainty whether these background characteristics are prevalent in certain segments of society, or unique to those who become murderers. Finally, while certain characteristics and dysfunctions (be they familial, developmental, or behavioural) are found consistently in a sample of serial killers, these cannot be generalised to apply to all such individuals. Therefore serial killers are a more heterogeneous group than these listings would lead us to believe. This will be shown in more depth in the following section.

### ***3.2.2.1 Ressler et al's (1993) Motivational Model***

Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1993) offer a more detailed account of the social aetiology of serial killers. This model views the ways in which five dimensions of social setting, development, and interpersonal interaction can potentially lead to the creation of a serial killer. These five dimensions are:

- Ineffective social environment.
- Formative years.
- Patterned responses.
- Action towards others.
- Feedback

(p.67)

The first two of these five aspects refer to the variables outlined above. That is, there are chaotic and abusive family backgrounds, coupled with a history of poor adjustment and

violent behaviour (Myers, Burgess & Nelson, 1998). As mentioned earlier, these dysfunctional factors lead to weak, shallow relationships with others and marked emotional disturbances (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). These researchers observed that most serial killers avoided both peer and social interaction. They were characteristically loners. Similarly, none of the serial killers studied were able to commit to a long-term emotional relationship with a partner. Thus most serial killers, according to Ressler & Shachtman, (1993) and Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1993) come to favour autoerotic activities over other forms of sexual exploration. 19 of the 36 serial killers studied were punished for masturbation as children. Voyeurism, fetishism, and extensive fantasising often accompanied this masturbation. As shall be shown, these masturbatory fantasies play a central role in Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1993) and Ressler & Shachtman's (1993) explanatory framework.

The third factor in the list is that of 'patterned responses'. As Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1993) point out, the traumatic life events the child has experienced shape his developing patterns of thought. These patterns, or cognitive maps, aid in the generation of daydreams and fantasies. And, as Leibenberg & Henning (1995) indicate, these fantasies (sexual and other) have a direct influence on human behaviour. This is particularly pertinent in serial killers since a high prevalence of aggressive material, often coupled with sexual elements, has been found in their fantasy material (Prentky et al, 1989). This is linked to the concept of sadism and its expression in the criminal behaviour of the serial killer (MacCulloch et al, 1983). Overall, they have found that serial killer's thought patterns are characterised by:

- An intrusive fantasy life (with prevalent sexual and violent themes of dominance, rape, violence, revenge, molestation, power, control, mutilation, inflicting pain on others, and death).
- Violent thought patterns are accompanied by high levels of kinaesthetic arousal.
- Internal dialogues which rationalise his own aggression.
- Daydreams, nightmares, and fantasies with strong visual concepts.

(Fedora et al, 1992; Prentky et al, 1989; Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1993). Therefore, the serial killer's adolescence is characterised by an intense fantasy life and compulsive masturbation. In addition to this, there was a high prevalence of nightmares and enuresis

(bed-wetting) in the adolescent development of serial killers. Leading from this, various authors (Geberth, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993) postulate a 'behavioural triad' of developmental variables that are found in a majority of serial killers, and are indicative of pathology. This 'triad' consists of enuresis, fire setting, and cruelty to animals.

As indicated in these actions, anti-social tendencies also surfaced early in activities such as the use of dangerous weapons, fighting, arson, and the abuse of animals. Thus the negative and fixed cognitive maps developed by the offender are then expressed in the behaviour of the individual ('actions towards others') and, later, in his crimes (MacCulloch et al, 1983; Prentky et al, 1989; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). Thus the solipsistic and self-involved world of the serial killer is broken as he moves into criminal behaviour. The fantasies are thus acted out in reality, setting up a 'feedback filter' whereby the killer (in his actions and his murders) actively and consciously works towards the fulfilment of his 'perfect fantasy' (Achenbach, 1991; Geberth, 1996; Ressler Burgess & Douglas, 1993). This explains the continuation and evolution of the serial killer's crimes.

Pistorius (1996), while recognising the value of this approach, notes that it does not take into account the fact that serial killers may not be conscious of their motives. These motives may lie on a deep unconscious, not cognitive, level. This observation is borne out by the dissociative defences employed by some serial killers, and their claims that they murder due to an 'urge' or 'impulse' that they cannot explain (Carlisle, 1993; Pistorius, 1996). Ressler, Burgess & Douglas's (1993) model does, however, emphasise the link between the social and psychological levels of explanation, and is thus valuable in demonstrating how both influence the development of the serial killer.

Further, the above model demonstrates the way in which violence develops through the process of social learning, throughout the killer's development. Toch (1969) postulates that violent episodes (such as murder) can be traced to systematic, learned, strategies of violence that some individuals have found effective in dealing with interpersonal conflict. These violent strategies are learnt at a young age, are resistant to change, and remain consistent across time and situations (Huesman & Eron, 1989). Thus, as pointed out by

Salfati & Canter (1999), the interpersonal interactive strategies (in this case, violence) individuals adopt are likely to stay thematically consistent across an individual's life span. On the basis of these observations, it is hypothesised that offenders will not only act consistently across crime scenes, but that the behavioural theme displayed in their crime scenes will link with the behavioural theme for the rest of their lives. Thus an offender's crime scene behavioural theme may be linked to the characteristics in evidence in their background (Salfati & Canter, 1999).

Therefore, it is possible that an offender shows consistent, thematically similar, patterns of behaviour throughout life and these patterns/themes are apparent in their crimes. Thus the challenge as it relates to this project (and the investigation of serial killings) is to link the behavioural themes expressed in the crime scene to those in the lifestyle, and habitual modes of interaction, of the offender. However Ressler, Burgess & Douglas's (1988) theory on the social development of the serial killer is inadequate for these purposes. Firstly, the theory is vague on how, precisely, the fantasy of the offender is expressed in his crime scenes. That is, it is unclear on what actions should be noted in a crime scene as the 'product' of fantasy. Secondly, and more importantly, this theory does not provide a reliable framework for linking the fantasy expressed in the crime scene with the offender responsible for it. Thus this theory remains an explanatory model with limited utility in investigations. This is especially true in South Africa, where the role played by fantasy in a serial murderer's crimes has not been widely researched or explained.

This section has given a brief overview of the diagnoses and causal models that have been offered as aetiological explanations for serial killers. However two final points relating to these aetiologies need to be made. Firstly, a number of the aetiological frameworks, as a whole, overlap and are interdependent. For example: Ressler, Burgess & Douglas's (1988) motivational model depends heavily on psychiatric and psychodynamic concepts of 'fantasy', as well as assumptions of socio-cultural origins to an individual's behaviour. Therefore problematic aspects of one explanation for serial killers may affect other suggested aetiologies. Secondly, as mentioned in the introduction to this section, these aetiological suggestions have effected the construction of typologies of serial killers. To

expand on the above example: the assumption that fantasy motivates the killers' offences (as proposed by Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1988) forms the explanatory basis for the typologies suggested in the following section. However, as mentioned, this proposal has not been empirically verified. Therefore a problematic aetiological framework may adversely effect the accuracy and utility of the typologies based upon it. It is this theoretical dependence that limits the utility of these typologies when applied to criminal investigations (Canter & Heritage, 1990). This will be outlined in more detail in the following section.

### **3.3 TYPOLOGIES OF SERIAL KILLERS**

To date, no universally accepted typology for violent serial offenders exists. There is no common language that both the law enforcement community and the mental health community use to describe violent criminal behaviour, or to discuss motives and means... This is largely because everyone in the field has their own idea about the criminal mind, and none of the professionals involved like to be told how to think about criminal behaviour by someone else (Turvey, 1995, p.1).

This quote indicates a central problem in the study of serial killers. That is, there has been little co-operation between mental health practitioners, academics, and law enforcement agencies with reference to serial offender studies. This has not only hampered a more effective and complete understanding of serial killers, it has ensured adversarial relationships between the various authors in this field (be they psychologists, academics, or detectives) (Turvey, 1995). This, as Turvey (1995) continues, has created a mutual lack of understanding and respect between them. More particularly this has lead to a number of competing, even contradictory, typologies being formulated and little consensus being reached.

Thus this conflict has implications, which go beyond the construction of theories and typologies to effect the investigation of these offenders. The confusion caused by this conflict is exacerbated by the large amount of popular 'pulp' literature generated around serial killers. These works often portray an inaccurate and misleading image of both these offenders and their crimes (Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Pistorius, 1996). It is therefore even more difficult to obtain a clear image of serial killing and what it entails. This is

exacerbated by the substantial areas of 'overlap' between typologies or characteristics proffered for serial killers, and various explanatory (or aetiological) frameworks. The implications of these tensions, and critiques, for these typologies will also be explored in this section.

As previously mentioned, serial killers should not be seen as a homogenous grouping. Thus, while they commit similar crimes, there is consensus in the literature that serial killers should be classified into several different categories (Holmes & DeBurger, 1989; Holmes & Holmes, 1998; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993; Pistorius, 1996). It is thus suggested that serial killers be divided according to a system of classifications, and typologies. Holmes & DeBurger lay out the need for classification of serial killers:

Careful study and classification of pertinent data is one of the most fundamental steps in developing adequate knowledge about criminal behaviour patterns such as serial murder...The purpose of a 'model' is to list and demonstrate how major components of a specific phenomenon - serial murder, in this case - are interrelated. The intent of a 'typology' is to provide an inclusive set of categories for describing a particular behaviour or phenomenon (1988, pp 46-47).

Typologies have traditionally been used in the study of criminal behaviour to create theory. By determining how different 'types' of offender differ from one another, factors that contribute to their particular behaviours and development can be identified. Theory can then be built on these factors. More recently, typologies have been used to link types of offence behaviour to background (offender) characteristics as an aid to the investigative process. This is demonstrated in the practice of offender profiling (Hodge, 2000).

These typologies attempt to classify serial killers according to a number of personal and behavioural factors evident in the history and criminal behaviour of the killer. These typologies imply a range of historical, behavioural, and personal characteristics (for example: marital status, employment history, education, and criminal histories) specific to each category of serial killer (Canter & Heritage, 1990; Geberth, 1996; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Pistorius, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). The categories suggested by these theorists are, however, the source of much debate. This is due to each author, in the

construction of their typological system, having different emphases and areas of concern. The factors taken into account in each system thus vary, having significant similarities and differences between one another. This will be demonstrated below.

### 3.3.1 Organised – Disorganised Typology

Ressler et al. (1986) propose a typology whereby serial killers are categorised according to whether they are “organised” or “disorganised” in their crimes and personal lives. The crime scene itself is the primary focus of this typological system - with the characteristics of the offender being extrapolated from this (Holmes & Holmes, 1998). They therefore assume that an individual who commits a crime exhibiting ‘organised’ characteristics exhibits similarly ‘organised’ life-style and behavioural qualities. Thus this approach has the primary objective of aiding law enforcement in apprehending offenders through the use of typologies, rather than theory development. This typology has been widely used by, and associated with, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) in the USA. Salfati & Canter (1999) also point out that this was the first proposal to draw attention to the thematic links between the offender’s criminal behaviour and the offender’s background characteristics. That is, it demonstrated that offenders displaying certain behavioural themes in their offence behaviour display similar behavioural traits in their backgrounds.

However, this Organised-Disorganised typology refers to serial *sexual* murder (Ressler et al., 1986). This reflects the widely held belief, within both law enforcement and clinical bodies, that a majority of serial murders are sexual in nature (Lunde, 1976, Ressler et al., 1986). Due to this belief, this typological system has been widely applied to all ‘types’ of serial murder, both in theory construction and investigations (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996). Hence despite this research not making similar assumptions as to the sexual nature of serial murder, the Organised-Disorganised typology will be reviewed here.

From an investigation of 36 incarcerated serial sexual offenders, Ressler et al. (1986) divide serial killers into two categories: “organised” and “disorganised”. However, Geberth (1996) warns that in some cases serial killers may present as a ‘mixture’ of these categories. A key differentiating factor, which will be expanded upon later, is that the murders of organised

offenders remind of 'psychopathy', while the crime of disorganised killers tend to display psychotic characteristics (Geberth, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). That is, organised serial killers reveal the pervasive lack of regard for others and 'guiltless' nature associated with an anti-social or psychopathic personality (Davis, 1998; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). Meanwhile, disorganised killers display characteristics that demonstrate a loss of contact with reality and an attendant deterioration in intellectual, cognitive, psychological, and social functioning (Douglas & Burgess, 1986; Hickey, 1991; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). Thus the organised offender's murders speak of a calculated act, engineered for maximum psychological gain for the killer. While those of the disorganised offender demonstrate the content, and compromised functioning, of a psychotic disorder (such as schizophrenia).

#### **3.3.1.1 *The Organised Serial Killer***

According to Geberth (1996), this type of offender is most likely to possess normal to superior intelligence, and have completed high school with perhaps some tertiary education. Ressler & Shachtman (1993) note however that these offenders may have been considered disciplinary problems at school, with a tendency towards senseless acts of aggression, and may be academic underachievers. Geberth (1996) asserts that this type of killer is likely to be a middle class individual, with no mental health record. He will further be able to hold down employment, but his work record will be unsatisfactory and erratic. Furthermore, the organised serial killer would possibly have a criminal record for violent or sexual crimes, and a reputation for a violent and uncontrollable temper (Geberth, 1996). These factors will be 'masked', however, by a socially acceptable facade. He will present as a socially competent, outgoing, and gregarious individual with good interpersonal skills. He dresses well, generally 'looking after himself'. He owns a well-maintained, reasonably new model vehicle and is therefore mobile. He is also sexually competent, and will either be married, have a relationship with someone, or have multiple sexual partners (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). He is a consummate actor and utilises this to hide his deep narcissism. He is ultimately:

Irresponsible, indifferent to the welfare of society, only cares about himself and....(he) feels no guilt or remorse for his actions. He is an amoral person.  
(Geberth, 1996, p.734).

Overall, Ressler et al. (1986) found that organised offenders are more:

- Intelligent,
- Skilled in occupation,
- Likely to think about and plan the crime,
- Likely to be angry or depressed at the time of the murder,
- Likely to have a precipitating stress,
- Likely to have a car in decent condition,
- Likely to follow crime events in the media,
- Likely to change job or leave town following the offence.

The murders of the organised serial killer are planned, and “the fantasy is the blueprint for the murder” (Pistorius, 1996, p10). He fantasises about the murders prior to the event, and will plan the offence (and select victims) to conform to this fantasy (Geberth, 1996; Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1993). He goes over details of the offence repeatedly, and will correct previous mistakes in order to create the ‘ultimate fantasy’ (Achenbach, 1991). His modus operandi is thus adaptable, and he will bring necessary ‘props’ (such as weapons or restraints) to the scene with him (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). Overall, the planning and conducting of murders by the organised killer reveals his need to ‘control’ and ‘dominate’- in both the victim he selects and in the murder itself:

It’s the ultimate power of life and death over a human being that the organised killer is interested in (Krueger, 1993, p. B2).

Ressler et al. (1986) found that, in their offences, organised killers would be more apt to:

- Plan,
- Use restraints,
- Commit sexual acts with live victims,
- Show or display control of victim,
- Use a vehicle.

Sexual acts and torture committed on the victim usually occur pre-mortem, and the victim will not be depersonalised by the killer (Geberth, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). The victim’s body will usually be hidden, destroyed, or transported by the offender to avoid arrest (Geberth, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). The offender may collect a “trophy”

from the victim (such as the victim's jewellery, or some other personal item) that will heighten subsequent fantasies and help the offender re-live his crimes (Miller, 1990). This killer is likely to follow, even participate in, the police investigation and may communicate with the authorities (Geberth, 1996). Ultimately, this killer will plan his crime, select the site, stalk his victim, correct previous mistakes, and generally 'get better at what he does' (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996).

### **3.3.1.2 *The Disorganised Serial Killer***

As mentioned above, this type of killer shows evidence of psychotic disturbance, and generally lowered functioning, in his crimes (Douglas & Burgess, 1986; Hickey, 1991; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). He is generally of below average intelligence, and a high school dropout. It's unlikely that he attended a tertiary educational institution, and he is probably middle to lower socio-economic class (Geberth, 1996). He may have a history of mental disorders, especially psychotic or schizoid-type behaviours (Ressler et al, 1988). He is not likely to be employed, or if he is, this employment is unskilled. Furthermore (in marked contrast to the organised offender) he has a societal aversion, and is a withdrawn loner with no close personal friends. Interpersonal interactions are difficult for this offender, and he is likely to be single, and sexually incompetent. Furthermore, he may seem strange and unkempt in both appearance and behaviour (Geberth, 1996). This offender is 'asocial', while the organised offender is 'non-social' (Holmes & Holmes, 1998). In the background of the disorganized offender, Ressler et al. (1986) found that they were more likely to:

- Be low in the birth order,
- Come from a home where the father's work is unstable,
- Have been treated in a hostile manner as a child,
- Be sexually inhibited and ignorant, and to have sexual aversions,
- Have parents with a history of sexual problems,
- Have been frightened or confused at the time of their crimes,
- Know the victim,
- Live alone,
- Have committed their crime close to their home or work

The murder scene of the disorganised offender is likely to be chaotic. Unlike those of the organised individual, the murders are usually committed opportunistically, in a 'blitz-style' frenzy, with the victim usually killed quickly. There is little regard by the offender for the clues left behind, and the crime scene is 'sloppy' (Geberth, 1996; Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1988). This offender does not bring a murder weapon to the scene; rather he finds it there (Douglas & Burgess, 1986; Hickey, 1991; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Ressler, Burgess & Douglas, 1988). Ressler et al. (1986) found that these offenders were likely to:

- Leave weapon on scene,
- Position dead body,
- Perform sexual acts on the dead body,
- Keep dead body,
- Try to depersonalise the body,
- Not use a vehicle.

Therefore the disorganised killer is more likely to engage in necrophilia, anthropophagy (consumption of the victim's blood or body parts), post-mortem mutilation, or masturbation onto the victim. Sexual acts are more likely to be post-mortem and the victim may be depersonalised (Geberth, 1996). The victim's body is likely to be left where the murder occurred. The offender may also take "souvenirs" from the crime scene: some object, article, or even body part as a 'remembrance' of the victim (Krueger, 1993; Geberth, 1996). Finally, the disorganised offender is more likely to commit his crimes close to his home or place of employment, thus operating within his "comfort zone" (Davis, 1998). He does not share the mobile characteristics of the organised killer. He, also unlike the organised killer, has little interest in the police investigation (Geberth, 1996).

Additionally, Ressler, Burgess & Douglas (1993, p.123) and Jeffers (1993, pp. 88-89) offer the following tables summarising the differences between organised and disorganised offenders.

*Summary Tables for Differences between Organised and Disorganised Serial Killers***Table 2****Differences in Personality Characteristics**

<b>Organised</b>	<b>Disorganised</b>
Average or high intelligence	Below average intelligence
Socially competent	Socially incompetent
Prefers schooled labour	Unschoolled labour or unemployed
High order of birth	Low order of birth
Father: stable employment	Father: unstable employment
Inconsistent discipline	Strict discipline
Controlled mood during murder	Anxious mood during murder
Uses alcohol during murder	Minimum use of alcohol
Precipitating stress	Minimal stress
Abides with partner	Lives alone
Reads news on case	Minimum interest in news coverage

**Table 3**  
**Differences at the Crime Scenes**

<b>Organised</b>	<b>Disorganised</b>
Offence planned	Spontaneous offence
Victim is a targeted stranger	Victim taken from location known to offender
Personalises victim	Depersonalises victim
Controlled conversation	Minimal conversation
Crime scene reflects overall control	Crime scene random and sloppy
Demands submissive victim	Sudden violence to victim
Restraints used	Minimal use of restraints
Aggressive acts prior to death	Sexual acts after death
Body hidden	Body left in view
Weapon or evidence absent	Weapon or evidence often present
Transports victim or body	Body left at death scene

### **3.3.1.3 Critiques of the Organised-Disorganised Typology**

Fox (in Schwartz, 1992, p146) does not agree with this the differentiation between organised and disorganised offenders. He opines that most serial killers torture or rape their victims before merely dumping them. Pistorius (1996) refutes Fox's claim, asserting that it is insufficient to explain the wide range of behaviours observed in the crimes of serial killers. Ressler et al. (1986) also found, while developing this typology, that there were no situations where organised and disorganised offenders were mutually exclusive. Burgess, Burgess, Douglas & Ressler (1997) state that the majority of crime scenes, and offenders, will present somewhere on a continuum between the two extreme classifications of 'organised' and 'disorganised', not as simply one or the other.

However, as Hodge (2000) points out, if there are no examples of a 'pure' organised or disorganised offender, then it can be argued that this typology does not distinguish between the two types. This implies that these two proposed 'types' of offender do not, in fact, exist. In order to accommodate this critique, Ressler & Shachtman (1993) later added a third category to the original dichotomy to accommodate those offenders that did not fit in either category – the "mixed" offender. It was suggested that these offenders would display characteristics that are a combination of those found in the first two categories. The necessity for the addition of a third category to the original two, due to certain offenders not 'fitting' into the existing categories, clearly illustrates the problems of using rigid systems of categorisation (Hodge, 2000). Similarly, rigid classifications may fail to take the evolution of criminal behaviour over time into account. Furthermore, the characteristics proffered for these categories may not be applicable in the South African context. Finally, Holmes & Holmes (1998) argue that this typology's failure to attempt to explain the aetiology of serial killers makes it inadequate. They therefore feel that the terms 'organised' and 'disorganised' should be applied to the crime scene only, and not to the personalities and characteristics of the offenders themselves.

### **3.3.2 Holmes & DeBurger (1988)'s Typology**

Holmes & DeBurger (1988) propose a further descriptive model of serial killers. Unlike the above typology, this classification system is not limited to sex or lust murderers. Similarly, the motives and anticipated gains of the offender are taken into account in this system of classification. It combines these motivational factors with an analysis of the crime scene. This typology is thus more focused on the generation of theory, rather than utility in investigations. Overall, it is based on four interdependent classification factors and four basic typologies (Pistorius, 1996). The four categories used for classification are:

- Psychological, sociogenic, and biological aetiology: the background to the behaviour of serial murder.
- Characteristics of the victim ('victimology'): their characteristics, habits, and relationship to the offender.

- Pattern and method of the murder: including planning versus spontaneity, organised versus disorganised, and process versus act focused.
- Location of the murders: whether they are concentrated or dispersed with reference to one another (Pistorius, 1996), as well as whether the killer is geographically stable or transient (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985).

The last point refers to whether a killer kills in the general region in which he lives (“geographically stable”), or whether he travels continually throughout his “killing career” (“geographically transient”) (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). Holmes & DeBurger (1985) believe that most serial killers belong to the latter category. The third point in the above list, referring to the pattern and method of the murder, includes a differentiation between an ‘act’ and a ‘process’ focused murder. An ‘act’ focused murder is one in which the act of killing the victim is of central importance to the killer - the death of the victim is central to the offence. The offence is thus directed toward accomplishing this goal. However a ‘process’ focused murder is one in which the actions occurring prior to the victim’s death are the focus of the offence. The process of the killing, rather than the kill itself, becomes central. Thus sadistic torture and actions such as pre-mortem sodomy and rape are expected in this category. The scene itself will reflect great planning and attention to detail, so that the offender’s pre-crime fantasies are fulfilled. Therefore actions such as mutilation and dismemberment also reflect a ‘process-focused’ murder (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1988).

Using these categories as a basis, Holmes & DeBurger (1988) offer a typology of four types of serial killers: ‘visionary’, ‘mission’, ‘hedonistic’ and ‘power / control’ types. These types of serial killers will be explained in more detail below.

### **3.3.2.1 *The Visionary Type***

These individuals kill because they hear voices, see visions, or believe that they have received instructions from a supernatural force to do so (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988; Pistorius, 1996). The locus of motives for this type of killer is outside himself. The killings are thus ‘outer-directed’. That is, the motive is extrinsic to the

killer. Both it and the rationalisations for the murder came from 'outside' the offender (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1988). The visionary type of serial killer has typically very little involvement in the selection of his victims, and the killings are act focused (Holmes, 1997). They also tend to be spontaneous. This type of killer can therefore be seen (atypically for serial killers) as psychotic (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). He has little conception of the criminality of his act due to this mental illness, and would thus usually be considered unfit to stand trial (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985).

### ***3.3.2.2 The Missionary Type***

The motive for this type is the elimination of a certain identifiable group of people (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). He does not do so due to visions, voices, or supernatural mandates (as the visionary killer would). He is thus neither psychotic nor criminally insane (Holmes, 1990). Rather, he has taken a decision to eliminate all those members of a group that he deems to be unworthy, 'undesirable', or dangerous (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1988). He thus selects victims according to strict criteria, non-randomly, and the killings are act-focused (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). The locus of motives for this killer is therefore intrinsic, and the murders are 'inner-directed' (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1988).

### ***3.3.2.3 The Hedonist Type***

This type of serial killer kills for the personal pleasure that they gain from the murders (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). They are not psychotic. There are three sub-categories to the hedonistic type of serial killer: 'lust', 'thrill' and 'comfort' killers. In the case of the lust killer, murder is motivated by the sexual enjoyment experienced in the homicidal act (Hazelwood & Douglas, 1980). Anthropophagy, dismemberment, necrophilia and other forms of paraphilia are prevalent in this form of serial killing (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985). The second subcategory of hedonistic serial killer is the 'thrill' killer. Holmes & DeBurger (1985) express the motive of this type of killer bluntly: "They kill because they enjoy it" (p.13). Here, the thrill of committing the murder becomes an end in itself. The above two categories of serial killer tend to commit process focused murders - since it is the murder (rather than the victim's death, specifically) that brings them pleasure. As a serial killer told

the author: "When you murder, you feel like a giant...you feel strong, great" (Author's files). This person can be viewed as a hedonistic serial killer.

The final sub-category is the 'comfort' killer. These individuals kill because it enhances their personal or social status (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1997). That is, the motive for the murder is the material gain, or improvement in position, that can be gained as a result of it. The murder committed by a comfort killer is thus act focused. This contrasts with the process focused killings of the lust and thrill sub-types. An example of a comfort-oriented serial killer would be someone who kills relatives in order to get their life insurance money. Holmes & Holmes (1998) also place the paid assassin, or organised crime 'hit-man', in this category. Pistorius (1996) criticises this on the grounds that these individuals have a clear extrinsic motive for their murders. The act, or process, of the murder becomes secondary to the material gain that results from it. As previously mentioned, this would be a problematic category in this country, with the number of murders that occur in the course of materially motivated crimes (such as robbery or hi-jacking). This author therefore agrees with Pistorius (1996) that the murder whose *primary* motive is financial gain should not be seen as a serial killer.

Holmes & DeBurger (1985) state that the hedonistic serial killer is typically intelligent, with those who are less so possessing 'street smarts'. The pleasure afforded to the killer by these murders ensures that they will attempt to avoid capture for as long as possible. This makes the investigation of a case involving these serial killers particularly difficult, especially if the killer is geographically transient.

#### **3.3.2.4 The Power / Control-oriented Type**

The gratification received by this sub-type of killer is related to the complete power that they hold over another individual (Holmes & DeBurger, 1985):

By exerting complete control over the life of his victim, the murderer experiences pleasure and excitement, not from sexual excitation or the rape, but from his belief that he does indeed have the power to do to whatever he wishes to another human being who is completely helpless and within his total control (pp13-14).

Similarly to the hedonist type, the power / control oriented killer exhibits psychopathic rather than psychotic characteristics. However, while most hedonist killers (apart from the 'comfort' sub-type) receive sexual pleasure from the murder of the victim, this sub-type gains his pleasure from the total subjugation of the victim (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1985). The murder is therefore clearly process focused, and the killer is not psychotic (Holmes & DeBurger, 1988). A serial killer told the author that he killed because "I wanted to control, to say 'I'm the president, now you're dancing to my tune'." (Author's files). This shows clearly the power orientation in a serial killer. The table below, from Pistorius (1996), summarises Holmes & DeBurger's (1988) system for the classification of serial killers.

**Table 4**  
**Holmes & DeBurger's Typology of Serial Killers**

SERIAL KILLER TYPE:	Vision	Mission	Hedonistic			Power
			Lust	Thrill	Comfort	
<b>FACTORS:</b>						
<b>VICTIMS</b>						
Specific / Non-specific	X	X	X	X	X	X
Random / Non-random	X	X	X	X	X	X
Affiliative / Strangers	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>METHODS</b>						
Act focus / Process focus	X	X	X	X	X	X
Planned / Spontaneous	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organised / Disorganised	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>LOCATION</b>						
Concentrated/ Dispersed	X	X	X	X	X	X

### **3.3.2.5 Critiques of Holmes & DeBurger (1988)'s Typology**

On the basis of the above, Holmes & DeBurger (1988) suggest that there are clear differences between the various categories, and that these differences have implications for both serial killer investigations and theory. However, as for the previous typology, no attempt is made to quantify the occurrence of the traits outlined above in each group. Furthermore, no indication is given of the number of characteristics needed for an offender to be categorised as one type or the other (Hodge, 2000). Thus both these classification systems do not take the frequencies of the different crime scene behaviours into account. However frequency affects the inherent ability of behaviours to differentiate between 'types' of offender (Salfati & Canter, 1999). Put simply, any behaviour that occurs in a majority of cases is unlikely to aid in differentiating between offenders. This is not taken into account in the construction of the above typologies.

These shortcomings, as Hodge (2000) indicates, are exacerbated by the absence of any statistical analysis between the groups. She raises the concern that, due to these factors, it is unclear how different the types of serial murder proposed here are. This is especially pertinent in light of the fact that (as shown in the above table) a number of the characteristics given are shared by many of the types. Similarly, many of the factors listed above are merely opposites of one another, and thus unnecessary additions to a typology (Hodge, 2000). Many of the variables used in these typologies (such as stated 'motive' in Holmes & DeBurger's typology) come from the offender's testimony. They thus cannot be used by police in an investigation, since they are not visible at the crime scene (Salfati & Canter, 1999) nor accessible through police enquiries. These factors limit the utility of this research, especially in the investigation of serial murder.

### **3.3.3 Summary and General Critique of Typologies**

The categorisations mentioned above, although not the only ones proffered for serial murders, are by far the most widely used - both within formal academic study and serial killing investigations. A further useful typology is Leibman's (1989), which places serial killers in three categories: psychotic, ego-syntonic, and ego-dystonic killers. The psychotic

killer murders as a result of a loss of contact with reality, a mental disorder. The other categories observed do not suffer from a psychotic disorder. The ego-syntonic killer views the murder as rational and acceptable (even positive). There is no disruption of his ego-function - unlike the ego-dystonic killer. He dissociates himself on a conscious level from his killings.

Leibman's (1989) typology illustrates some factors that are common to all the typologies outlined here. Firstly, the typologies given here are interrelated and (to an extent) interdependent. For example: Leibman's (1989) 'psychotic' killer could be interchangeable with Holmes & DeBurger's (1988) 'visionary' and, to an extent, Ressler & Shachtman's (1993) 'disorganised' killers. Similarly, Holmes & DeBurger (1988) make use of the organised/disorganised dichotomy in describing crime scenes - thus basing an important aspect of their typology on that of Ressler et al (1986). These examples illustrate that these typologies, and the characteristics they imply, should be viewed together in the study of serial killers. Thus the shortcomings of one potentially affect, or can be applied to, the others. A second factor shared by all these typologies is that they are linked, to a greater or lesser extent, to explanations that are proffered for serial killers. Aetiological perspectives influence typological assumptions.

There are further general critiques around the development of typological systems. Firstly, (and perhaps unavoidably in this case) any typology is limited in applicability by the sample from which it is drawn. Thus any sample should be from as broad a section of the population as possible. Secondly, the typologies given above make use of rigid systems of classification. Thus an offender who 'fell' across the boundaries of types, or who changed from one 'type' to another as a result of any number of factors, would be unclassifiable using these systems (Hodge, 2000). In light of these factors Hodge (2000) asserts that any system of classification must not make use of mutually exclusive categories, rather:

Any system of classification generated, then, must allow for...classification on the basis of dominant themes of behaviour...More than one theme may be present, but one may be significantly more so than others (p.252).

Thus overall these typologies tend to be contradictory and problematic. There is limited consensus around the characteristics of serial killers and the relationship between these factors and their offences (Geberth, 1996; Pistorius, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). A further factor contributing to this situation is that the construction of typologies and profiles has tended to be based on vague and untested theoretical premises rather than the empirical rules of evidence (Canter, 1994). As Burgess, Burgess, Douglas, & Ressler (1997) themselves admit, in reference to the widely used Organised-Disorganised classification:

at present there have been no systematic efforts to validate these profile-derived classifications (p.22).

This has implications for both the study and successful investigation of serial killers, especially as it relates to the practice of offender profiling (Canter & Heritage, 1990). Canter & Heritage (1990) go on to state that the above typologies, used in investigations, make little distinction between the actions that occur in the course of an offence and the explanations that are given for it. The offender's motives and life style are confused with his "offending behaviour" (1990; pp. 187-188). This implies that each classification cannot be separated from the explanatory framework underlying it. And the links between characteristics of the offender and his offence remain unverified by empirical evidence (Canter, 1995). These typologies are thus dependant on the theoretical presuppositions of the researchers concerned. They are therefore risky to apply in investigations. This is even more pertinent in the South African context, where the theoretical assumptions underpinning the typologies may be inapplicable or irrelevant.

### **3.3.4 Implications for Criminal Investigations and Offender Profiling**

The above typologies are often applied to the investigation of serial killers. As mentioned above, the Organised-Disorganised Typology was been derived from experience in criminal investigations (Ressler et al., 1986). Given this, the accuracy of these typologies may have a direct effect on the efficiency of serial killer investigations. Therefore the validity of research, as it relates to the construction of typologies, can have a direct result on criminal investigations. This relates especially to offender profiling, which is often employed in serial murder investigations. Offender profiling is the "extrapolation of characteristics of

criminals from information about their crimes” (Canter & Heritage, 1990, p.417). Profiling is thus based on the assumption that offenders differ in their actions when committing a crime and these differences reflect, and thus correlate with, aspects of the offender available to the investigator (Bull & Carson, 1995; Canter & Heritage, 1990; Canter, 1995). Research carried out by Canter & Heritage (1989; cited in Canter, 1995) indicates that this assumption is valid, and that structured variations do exist between the crimes of different offenders. It has also been shown that, as a technique, offender profiling is generally more effective in cases where an offender has committed more than one offence (Bull & Carson, 1995). Thus offender profiling has been widely (and almost exclusively) used in serial murder investigations. Furthermore, the existing typological systems of serial killers are, to a large extent, both the product of offender profiling and utilised in profile construction (for example, Ressler & Shachtman, 1993).

However the critiques of these typologies in the previous section demonstrate that these classifications may not be adequate for use in criminal investigations and offender profiling. Furthermore, in these previous typologies, the actions carried out by an offender in the course of a crime tend to be confused with aspects of his lifestyle and motivations (Canter & Heritage, 1990). The actions that occur during a crime are confused with the explanations proffered for them. This leads to a “confusion of action and person” (*ibid*, p.420). This, in turn, obscures the primary aim of investigation and profiling, which is the identification of variations of offence behaviour that can be reliably identified without any knowledge of the person that committed them (*ibid*, p.420). This confusion in investigation is reflected in the typologies that, as previously mentioned, both inform and are the product of profiling. Pistorius (1996) notes that the typologies, characteristics, classifications, and explanations of serial killers tend to be contradictory and problematic. Consensus around the characteristics of serial killers and the relationships between these factors and the characteristics of their offences is thus limited (Geberth, 1996; Holmes & DeBurger, 1988, Lane & Gregg, 1992; Pistorius, 1996; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993; Schwartz, 1992).

As mentioned, drawing inferences about an offender on the basis of his/her offences forms the basis of offender profiling (Turvey, 1999). There is thus a need, in offender profiling, to

differentiate between offences and between offenders within classes of crime (Canter, 2000). This will allow for reliable inferences to be made about an offender based on information on the offence committed by him/her. It should be remembered that the material on which these inferences are based is limited to that which is available during an investigation. This excludes much of the data that is typically available to the researcher in the course of psychological research (Canter, 2000). Thus the need for systematic and empirical studies into the relationships between the offence and the offender is even more marked. Studies of this type will have direct utility in criminal investigations.

### 3.4 AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO OFFENDER PROFILING

Historically, offender profiling and criminal investigations have been based on deductive processes. That is,

their processes of inference derivation were...based upon common sense as might be the basis of judicial decisions (Canter, 1995, p.485).

This implies that these investigative decisions (and offender profiles) are dependent on the common sense and experience of the investigator (Hodge, 2000; Canter, 1995). They are thus a combination of "brainstorming, intuition, and educated guesswork" (Geberth, 1996, p.310). As Canter (1994) observes, this may lead to highly erratic and unreliable profiles and investigative decisions. Thus the inference system used here is problematic, with the claims of 'profilers', or investigating officers, often unsupported by scientific evidence (Canter, 1994). As Salfati & Canter (1999) note, there is a lack of empirical studies on the psychological processes underlying investigative decision making. This may limit the reliability and validity of current profiling methodologies.

The question therefore which has been pertinent to the study of the profiling of offenders' actions at crime scenes is whether the process that leads to the classification of these actions is clear and stable enough for application to police investigations (Salfati & Canter, 1999, p.392).

This critique can also be applied to the decision-making procedures used in investigations more generally. Ultimately Canter & Heritage (1990) assert that profiling, in order to have

true utility in the prevention of crime, must be a marriage between criminal investigations and "traditional" psychological research. This synthesis between investigations and research is a fundamental part of the science of Investigative psychology.

There is therefore a need to combine traditional, deductive processes with the inductive processes offered by scientific investigation (Canter, 1995). This will aid in overcoming the above-mentioned shortcomings of previous typologies, and place both offender profiling and criminal research on an empirical basis. Furthermore, as Canter (2000) points out, the inferring of general characteristics of a person on the basis of limited information on them (as occurs in offender profiling) has long formed part of psychological practice in areas such as psychometric testing. Traditional psychological research can thus enrich the intuition used in traditional profiles and investigations (Canter & Heritage, 1990). This means that further research is needed to explore and validate, empirically, the relationships between an offender's actions and his overt characteristics (Canter, 1994). This requires that the salient features and patterns of this material be identified (Salfati & Canter, 1999). Then the challenge is to prove that the salient features of a crime and the distinguishing characteristics of the criminal relate in a systematic way (Canter, 1995; Salfati & Canter, 1999). The establishment of these links requires that research address the following investigative problems:

1. ***The selection of behaviours.*** What are the important behavioural features of the crime that may help identify the perpetrator?
2. ***Distinguishing between offenders.*** What are the most appropriate ways of indicating the differences between crimes and between offenders?
3. ***Inferring characteristics.*** What inferences can be made about the characteristics of the offender that may help identify him/her?
4. ***Linking offences.*** Are there any other crimes that are likely to have been committed by the same offender?

(Canter, 2000, p.9)

Previous typologies have attempted to answer these questions. However, as mentioned, they tend to emphasise the psychological function of the crime, not what behaviours the offence

actually consists of (Hodge, 2000). This makes these typological systems difficult to apply in investigative profiling (Canter & Heritage, 1990) and leaves the above questions only partially answered. Thus, overall, very little research has attempted to answer the above investigative questions. That which has been done tends to be an item-by-item correlation between offence and offender characteristics (for example Davies, Wittebrod & Jackson, 1997; cited in Salfati & Canter, 1999, p.394). The utility of this type of research is limited since it does not attempt to establish themes of co-occurring offence behaviours, thus not identifying the pattern of relationships between these variables. Similarly, these studies do not correlate the background characteristics of the offender with themes present in the crime scene behaviours (Salfati & Canter, 1999). Hodge (2000) thus proposes that themes of behaviour be established to help in identifying and explaining the links between offender characteristics and offence consistencies. Therefore different styles of crime, to distinguish between offences and offenders, also need to be identified.

Canter (1994, 1995, 2000) advocates the use of advanced statistical techniques to verify, empirically, the relationships between offence and offender. Recent developments in computer-based analytical procedures have led to the recognition that it is possible to correlate with a high degree of precision elements of the facets of the offence with elements of offender facets. 'Facets' can be defined as exhaustive, mutually exclusive categories used for the classification of the activities being studied (Canter & Fritzon, 1998). Canter (1989, 1994, 1995) has made the most progress in this field by utilising facet analysis in the form of Multi-Dimensional Scaling (MDS) procedures, especially Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), to identify structured relationships between offence and offender variables. Essentially these procedures calculate the correlations between a set of variables, and then represent these correlations as proximities in a notional mathematical space. The consideration of the facets that differentiate any offender's actions requires that the way every action is related to every other in some notional space be examined (Canter, 2000). Thus these procedures make it possible to determine the distribution and significance of specific variables across a group of offenders. These procedures thus allow for the empirical formation of hypotheses concerning the relationships and interactions between the variables under examination (Canter & Heritage, 1990). This has enabled the

identification of types of criminals to be placed on a scientific rather than intuitive basis. Furthermore facet theory, as employed here, supplies a firm methodological and metatheoretical basis for carrying out the process of research. Even more so, it is an approach to research that is oriented towards practical applications in a 'real world' setting (Canter, 1983).

These methodologies allow for the classification of offence behaviours and offender backgrounds according to dominant themes and patterns of behaviour (Salfati & Canter, 1999). This thus avoids the use of rigid classification schemas and the problems inherent in them (Hodge, 2000). Further, through the use of these statistical methods, it was found that the themes present in the crime scenes are also identifiable in the offender's personal and criminal history (Salfati & Canter, 1999). For example, Canter & Heritage (1990), using SSA techniques, have found clear correlations between the offence and offender variables of a sample of rapists, allowing for the identification of empirically valid types of rapists according to clearly defined patterns of offence behaviour (sexuality, violence, criminality, impersonal, and intimacy related). From these findings, it has been possible to posit a perspective stating that these crimes reveal the offender's style of interpersonal action. This perspective suggests that the role an offender assigns his victims in his crimes will be reflected in the way the offender (more generally) deals with people (Canter, 1994). These styles of interaction, or narrative, will be consistent over time, and reflected in his behaviour. Thus there will be links between how an offender acts during an offence and his personal characteristics. That is, the offender's occupation, social relationships, and past criminal history will all be affected by the narrative he holds (Hodge, 2000).

This perspective has since been expanded to aid the identification of those criminal behaviours that are most salient for differentiating between offenders and making inferences about their characteristics. This is due to MDS not considering any action in isolation from the other actions that co-occur with it:

Any single action may be so common across offences or so ambiguous in its significance that its use as a basis for investigative inferences may suggest distinctions between offenders where none exist (Canter, 2000, p.21).

Thus in order to identify the salient aspects of a crime, an understanding of the processes that give rise to the co-occurring patterns of offence behaviour needs to be gained. The forms of salience, in this perspective, derive their meanings from the psychological themes they reveal (Canter, 2000). And, as mentioned, this has been tested in various studies on the modes of interpersonal transaction that the offender uses in the commission of his offence. Canter (1994), drawing on the above-mentioned rape study by Canter & Heritage (1990), proposed a three-fold model of modes of interpersonal interaction, centred on the role assigned the victim in the crime:

1. Where the offender treats the victim as an object (something to be just used and controlled through restraint and threat, often involving alternative gains in the form of other crimes such as theft).
2. Where the subject sees the victim as a vehicle for the offender's own emotional state, e.g. anger and frustration (the victim is subjected to extreme violence and abuse).
3. Where the offender sees the victim as a person (some level of pseudo-intimacy with attempts to create some sort of rapport or relationship).

(Canter, 1994, from Hodge, 2000, p.263)

Evidence for the structure proposed by this model has been gained by studies on rapists (Canter, 1994) and paedophiles (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). This thematic structure has been used in a study of 88 sexual serial killers (Hodge, 2000). All these projects made use of MDS procedures. It was found that where the victim was perceived as an object, there would often be extreme forms of violence with little interpersonal interaction and few emotional elements. Post-mortem sexual acts and injuries, along with mutilation, are more likely to occur. Here, the offender acts according to a personal 'script' in which the victim is not regarded as a human being. The victim's responses are thus unlikely to influence the offender. In these cases the victim will represent an inanimate object to be used to fulfil the offender's objectives / fantasies. As Hodge (2000) points out, this form of murder is thus similar to sadistic or lust murders with disorganised elements.

In cases where the victim is regarded as a 'vehicle' for the offender's emotional state, the crime scene will reflect more overtly emotional elements, and there may be more interpersonal interaction. Associated behaviours were found to include the victim's being kept alive for longer periods of time, and the use of restraints. The offender may subject the victim to a similar degree of violence as that found in cases where the victim is regarded as an object. However in this theme, who the victim is, as a person, is more important to the offender. The victim has some significance to the offender and "may represent some significant aspect of the offender's self-identity" (Hodge, 2000, p.274). Finally, in cases where the victim is viewed as a person, Hodge (2000) found that the offender desires some level of intimacy with the victim. This, she states, is shown by the style and degree of interaction between the two. This may include more 'normal' sexual acts (such as full sexual intercourse) before death, and the victim being more likely to influence the course of the crime. Similarly, excessive violence is rare and the victim's 'personhood' is more likely to be acknowledged through violence directed, specifically, at the victim's facial area. These themes were then linked to findings on the background characteristics of the offenders. These findings have potential utility in the profiling of unknown offenders.

Salfati & Canter (1999) presented an analogous three-fold model in a study of stranger murder where stylistic distinctions between the roles played by aggression in the offence formed the basis for differentiation between crimes and criminals. These distinctions centred on the thematic distinctions between more 'expressive' (emotional, reactive and impulsive) and more 'instrumental' (cognitive and planned) crimes. Again, these crime scene themes were productively linked with offenders' characteristics. Expanding on these findings in a study of arsonists, Canter & Fritzon (1998) employed a consideration of the instrumentality / expressiveness of criminal acts with an analysis of the 'focus' of the criminal action. They found that the target of arson might represent two things. Firstly, a search for a particular reward on the arsonist's part, thus making the offence essentially 'instrumental'. Secondly, the target may be a modification of the offender's feelings, making the offence 'expressive'. This thus study demonstrated that it is the overlay or elaboration of criminal actions that gives them their investigative salience and significance. This interaction between themes in an offence should be combined with an analysis of the

overall frequency of actions that occur in a class of crimes. This will allow for investigative salience to even more precisely determined (Canter, 2000). These findings thus demonstrate that no action (or theme) in a crime scene should be taken into account in isolation when assessing the salience of that action, as this would be misleading. This realisation is a central part of MDS and facet analysis.

In essence, the research reviewed above demonstrates that although there are certain actions that will be common to a number of offenders who have committed similar crimes, any one criminal will typically operate within a sub-set of actions. The crime scene will reflect this behaviour (Hodge, 2000). Hodge (2000) goes on to indicate that this conceptualisation begins to prove two further hypotheses:

1. There will be subsets of behaviour that are committed within crime.
2. There will be a correlation between the characteristics an offender possesses and the themes they exhibit.

(from Hodge, 2000, p.262)

As mentioned, these hypotheses are of central concern in the investigation of crime and profiling of criminals. Hodge (2000) observes that one of the strongest aspects of this approach is that individuals are not expected to fit neatly into any one 'theme'. Rather, offenders will have overlapping sets of actions associated with them, with a dominant theme nevertheless being identified. However, these themes are neither independent dimensions nor pure 'types' (Canter, 2000). This approach therefore avoids the drawbacks associated with the rigid typological systems of classification previously used in the study and investigation of crime. Canter (2000) thus proposes a multivariate conception of criminal behaviour based not on rigid 'types', but rather on the idea of a 'radex' (or 'colour circle'). Here, a criminal's actions are seen as different emphases on a shared spectrum of all the possible criminal behaviours and 'themes'. This in turn proposes the existence of a hierarchy or continuum of criminal behaviour, transcending rigid criminal 'types'.

These procedures also avoids the theoretical dependence that, as mentioned, has restricted the utility of previous studies of criminal behaviour and previous profiling methods (Canter,

1995; Canter & Heritage, 1990). Furthermore, MDS procedures have repeatedly proven to be successful in researching criminal behaviours cross-culturally (for example Saether, 2001; Taguchi, 2001). This methodology is therefore especially suitable for use in the South African context. This is particularly pertinent given the lack of both research and theory on South African criminals. This lack of research means that previous theories and typological systems may be inapplicable in this country. This thesis will therefore make use of MDS techniques to identify the dominant themes in the offence styles of South African serial killers. Identifying offence themes forms the first stage in the creation a complete model of South African serial killing. MDS thus allows for both the testing and generation of hypotheses relating to criminal behaviour and action. The research process employed in MDS will be outlined in more detail in the following section.

## CHAPTER FOUR METHODOLOGY

### **4.1 AIM OF PROJECT AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

This project aims to identify behavioural themes in the offences of South African serial killers. The results will contribute to the construction of theories relating to these offenders, and will have direct utility in criminal investigations.

### **4.2 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.2.1 Participants and Sample Selection:**

The subjects used in this research were convicted serial killers. The sample was limited to South African offenders. As mentioned, a serial killer is defined as:

- 1) A male who has committed two or more murders.
- 2) There was an emotional "cooling down" period between murders.
- 3) These murders were committed alone or with an accomplice.

This definition has been widely used in previous research into serial killing, and was thus deemed suitable for this exploratory project. Those offenders with purely political or financial motives for committing murder were excluded from the sample. Given the ongoing debate around the role played by sexual motivations in a serial killer's crimes (and the lack of research in South Africa on sex-related murders), the sample was not selected on the basis of the presence or absence of sexual elements in the offender's crimes. Similarly, no assumptions were made about the relationship between the victim and the offender.

For the purpose of the research interviews, only convicted and sentenced offenders were approached. Awaiting trial offenders, or those appealing their sentences, were excluded from the interview sample. Similarly, no offenders who had been found unfit to stand trial were included in the sample. Thus no psychotic offenders were included in the current sample. The sample for the research interviews was selected on the basis of availability and

convenience, rather than representivity. This selection procedure was deemed suitable for the purposes of this preliminary exploratory research. The eventual research sample consisted of 13 offenders, 5 black and 8 white. The interview participants were informed that participation in the research, and the results obtained, would not influence parole, prison privileges, or sentence length. An interview consent form, outlining the above (Appendix B), was signed by the offender before the interview began. If an offender refused to give his permission for an interview he was excluded from the research sample. Permission to carry out these interviews was also obtained from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). These interviews were carried out in the East Cape and Gauteng regions of South Africa.

#### **4.2.2 Data collection:**

The material for each case comprises:

- 1) Summaries of the serial murder cases.
- 2) Structured interviews with the offender.

These sources were used to gain complete information on the offence and offender variables of the sample. They were also used to corroborate the data gained and ensure their reliability. The case summaries were also used to guide interview administration (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993).

The specifics of this procedure are as follows:

##### **4.2.2.1 Case Summaries:**

These case summaries consist of the specific details of each offence and the circumstances leading to the murder, along with details of the police investigation and murder victims. These summaries were used to aid sample selection, inform questions to be asked in the interview (Cartwright, 2000; Ressler & Shachtman, 1993), and to corroborate data used in the final interview analysis (Cartwright, 2000). Using these summaries as a corroborative source of data avoided the dependence on offender self-report that, as Salfati & Canter (1999) point out, has hampered previous research on serial killers. The summaries were compiled by members of the Investigative Psychology Unit of the SAPS who were often

directly involved in the investigation of the serial killer concerned. Permission for their use was obtained. A number of these summaries included IMAGO Autobiographical Questionnaires (see below) carried out by Dr. Pistorius. She was director of the Investigative Psychology Unit of SAPS, and is extremely experienced in the interviewing and interrogation of serial killers.

The case summaries were further supplemented where necessary with case dockets, and other legal documents (such as court transcripts and charge sheets). However, as Canter & Heritage (1990) note, police documents are not collected for research purposes, and not collected using a careful research protocol. Thus it can be expected that the data is not error free and may contain considerable 'noise'. Further, certain information may, simply, not be recorded. These problems were taken into account through the use of corroborative sources, including offender interviews.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Structured Interviews***

The interviews were carried out using the IMAGO Autobiographical Questionnaire. The IMAGO Autobiographical Questionnaire, created by Criminological and Psychological Services in Austria, was designed for use in interviewing apprehended homicide offenders. Dr. Micki Pistorius of the South African Police Services and The Centre for Crime Prevention Studies at Rhodes University modified the IMAGO for use in South Africa. The IMAGO contains over 500 items that investigate the killers' psychiatric, criminal, institutional, sexual, and developmental history, as well as family background. Furthermore, the IMAGO format entails the detailed recording of each crime and crime scene. The items in the IMAGO focus especially on factors that have been found to be useful in the identification and apprehension of suspects. The IMAGO is a complete and highly structured form of clinical history taking, rather than a psychometric instrument. Any IMAGO interviews administered by the SAPS Investigative Psychology Unit were also obtained from them.

As mentioned, the administration of these interviews (although structured) was guided using information gained prior to the interview. Ressler & Shachtman (1993) recommend

this technique in interviewing this type of offender. This technique fulfils a dual purpose: first, to demonstrate the interviewer's knowledge of and interest in the offender's case. This also facilitates greater rapport by demonstrating the interviewer's non-judgemental attitude towards the actions committed by the offender (Ressler & Shachtman, 1993). Secondly, this technique was used to ensure an adequate, non-superficial exploration of the pertinent themes in the offender and offence variables. The researcher has experience in the use of the IMAGO in interviewing incarcerated offenders. The interviews in this research took between 4 and 8 hours, each. They often took place over two consecutive days. The Psychological Services of the DCS recommended this 'two day' structure since it builds better rapport, while simultaneously taking the suspicion of others that may be the result of long-term incarceration into account (L. Bergh, personal communication, 2000). All interviews were carried out in either English or Afrikaans.

If there were significant discrepancies between these two sources, the offender's case was eliminated from the sample. As indicated by Canter & Fritzon (1998), in an interview situation an individual may not be able to adequately explain their actions and motivations. This is especially true in this case, where the offender may attempt to rationalise their actions. Secondly, it cannot be assumed that people who have generally shown a lack of regard for human life (and thus societal norms) will tell the truth about their behaviour. Thus multiple corroborative sources of data are used to increase the likelihood of the data used being accurate and valid, with any bias being non-systematic (Hodge, 2000). Given the centralised nature of the SAPS Investigative Psychology and Serious Crimes Units, the Case summaries and IMAGO's obtained presented a reasonably representative sample of South African serial killers apprehended over the past decade. It must be remembered that prior to 1994 these types of offenders were executed, thus limiting the size of any potential sample. The sample size was dependent on the number of offenders for which complete and reliable offence and offender data was available (see following section). Offences, rather than offenders, formed the basis for analysis.

### 4.2.3 Procedure

#### 4.2.3.1 Data coding

The offence variables obtained from the IMAGO interviews and Case summaries were identified through a process of content analysis. These variables then formed the basis for subsequent statistical analyses. 73 offences, committed by 13 different offenders, were analysed. 57 variables drawn from the crime scenes of these offenders were used. Each offence being analysed was coded in dichotomous form, with 1 representing the presence of a particular variable and a 0 representing its absence. Care was taken to ensure that only those offence behaviours that would be evident from an examination of the crime scene and its surrounds were used in the analysis. This criterion was used since it was important to only examine those behaviours that would be available in a real-life investigation (Hodge, 2000).

Given the practical constraints on data collection it was not possible to conduct inter-rater reliability tests. However, care was taken in the definition of the variables to ensure that clear decisions as to their absence or presence could be taken in each case (Canter & Fritzon, 1998). This dichotomous (“all or nothing”) approach ensures maximum clarity and reliability in creating coding variables from what may, as mentioned, be potentially unreliable data. This approach has previously produced reliable and interpretable results (Canter & Fritzon, 1998, Canter & Heritage, 1990) Previous research has also indicated that content analytic procedures any more refined than presence / absence dichotomies are likely to be unreliable (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). The full list of variables used in this study, along with operational definitions and explanations, is given in Appendix A.

#### 4.3.3.2 *Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) of Behaviour Matrix:*

These variables were analysed using Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), developed by Lingoes (1973, cited in Canter & Heritage, 1990). SSA is one of many non-parametric multidimensional scaling procedures based upon the assumption that:

the underlying structure, or system of behaviour, will most readily be appreciated if the relationship between every variable and every other variable is examined. (Canter & Heritage, 1990, p.444).

The null hypothesis of SSA is that the variables have no comprehensible relationship to each other (Salfati & Canter, 1999). This allows for the creation and testing of hypotheses about the components of the behaviour being studied and the relationships between those components (that is, the system of behaviour). This analysis thus may be regarded as both hypothesis-generating, in indicating if the results demonstrate directions that can be used to focus further research, and hypothesis-testing (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998).

Thus, SSA procedures calculate correlations between and co-occurrences of variables. This is done through the creation of an association matrix using Jaccard's co-efficient of association, which only takes positive co-occurrence into account. Thus if two variables are both absent from the data, their association is not increased (Canter & Fritzon, 1998). This method is appropriate given the potentially problematic nature of the data used in this study, where it is uncertain whether absent data was simply not recorded. Thus similarity between variables is assessed by the degree of co-occurrence in the matrix, as determined through the use of Jaccard's co-efficient (Hodge, 2000). However, it would be difficult to interpret the raw mathematical relationships between all the variables. Thus, as for other MDS procedures, a visual (geometric) representation of the relationships is produced (Canter & Heritage, 1990). The variable relationships within an association matrix form the basis for this geometric plot. The associations between variables are thus represented as distances in a statistically derived geometric space. Smallest Space Analysis is so called because when compared to other MDS procedures, it produces a solution of smallest dimensionality. This is because it operates on the basis of the original correlation's rank orders rather than their absolute values (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998).

Thus the SSA programme computes the coefficients of association between all variables and then rank orders these. This transforms the original rectangular data matrix into a triangular matrix consisting of association coefficients for each variable with every other variable. These coefficients are then used to form a spatial representation of items, with points representing variables and the rank order of the associations being inversely proportional to the distances between the points (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). Thus the SSA algorithm attempts to find the best representation such that the higher the correlation



between any two variables, the closer together the points representing them will be. SSA operates on the ranks of the association coefficients and the ranks of the distances between points. Thus it captures the relative size of the associations (Canter & Fritzon, 1998) and does not rely on scales or continuums to measure behaviour (Canter, 1983). This is due to the configuration of points being developed in respect to the relationships between variables, not from their relationships to some 'dimension' or 'axis'. The orientation in space of the axes of the resultant geometrical representation is thus arbitrary, even though the relationships between the points are replicably determined. A clear picture of the structure of the relationships between the variables is thus created, where the patterns of points (regions) can be directly examined without the need to assume underlying orthogonal dimensions (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). This method is therefore the most appropriate for this preliminary exploration of the dominant themes in the present data.

Iterations are then performed to compare the rank order of the associations with the rank order of the distances while adjustments are made to the geometric representation. The better the 'fit' (or, in technical terms, the lower the 'stress') between the original association matrix and the geometric representation, the closer the two rank orders will be. The iterations will continue until a minimal change in 'stress' is achieved, within the pre-designated number of dimensions (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). The 'coefficient of alienation' (Borg & Lingoes, 1987) is an indication of how well the visual (geometric) representation fits the occurrences found in the association matrix. It is thus a measure of 'stress'. The smaller the coefficient of alienation, the better the 'fit' between the plot and the original matrix is. However, Borg & Lingoes (1987) caution that there is no simple answer to the question of how 'good' or 'bad' a representation is. This depends upon a combination of the logical strength of the interpretative framework, the amount of error in the data, and the number of variables being analysed (Salfati & Canter, 1999). Given potential errors in the data used in this study (outlined in the previous section) a reasonable 'fit' would be acceptable, provided that the plot produced a meaningful interpretation.

Thus, in SSA, variables are allocated regions in space according to the strength of the correlation between them. Using the regional structure of an SSA plot to test the evidence

for ways of classifying variables forms part of an approach to research known as facet theory (Canter, 1983). 'Facets' are the overall classification of the types of variables. The spatial contiguity of the points representing these facets provides a test of the major underlying differences amongst these variables, as revealed through their co-occurrence in actual incidents. The postulation of facets uses the principle of contiguity, which states that since the elements of a facet are functionally related their existence will be reflected in corresponding empirical structures (in this case, the structure of the SSA plot). The principle of contiguity thus moves beyond arbitrary proposals of 'grouping' (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). This approach hypothesises that the closer together two variables are to one another on this plot, relative to all other variables, the greater the amount of similarity between them. More specifically, variables sharing the same facet elements will appear closer together in multidimensional space than variables that do not share the same elements.

The principle of contiguity can therefore form the basis for a more general regional hypothesis: that items in similar regions of space will have facet elements in common. The inverse, that elements appearing in different regions of the plot indicate dissimilarity and no membership of the same facet elements, also holds true. Given these factors, contiguous regionality in multidimensional space is a fairly specific indicator of a facet element, as long as a clear statement can be made of what the variables in that region have in common (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). Overall then, these regional groupings of variables represent meaningful relationships, and can be used to create thematic groupings from within the sample. This is built on the assumption that actions / variables which imply similar underlying themes will be more likely to co-occur than those implying different themes. The spatial contiguity of the points can therefore serve as a test of whether the 'facets' are empirically supported (Canter, Hughes & Kirby, 1998). The SSA plot can thus be used as a basis for the generation and testing of hypotheses relating to the relationships between variables (Hodge, 2000).

Thus it is hypothesised that similarly themed actions will co-occur in the same region of the geometric plot (Salfati & Canter, 1999). Salfati & Canter (1999) point out that this

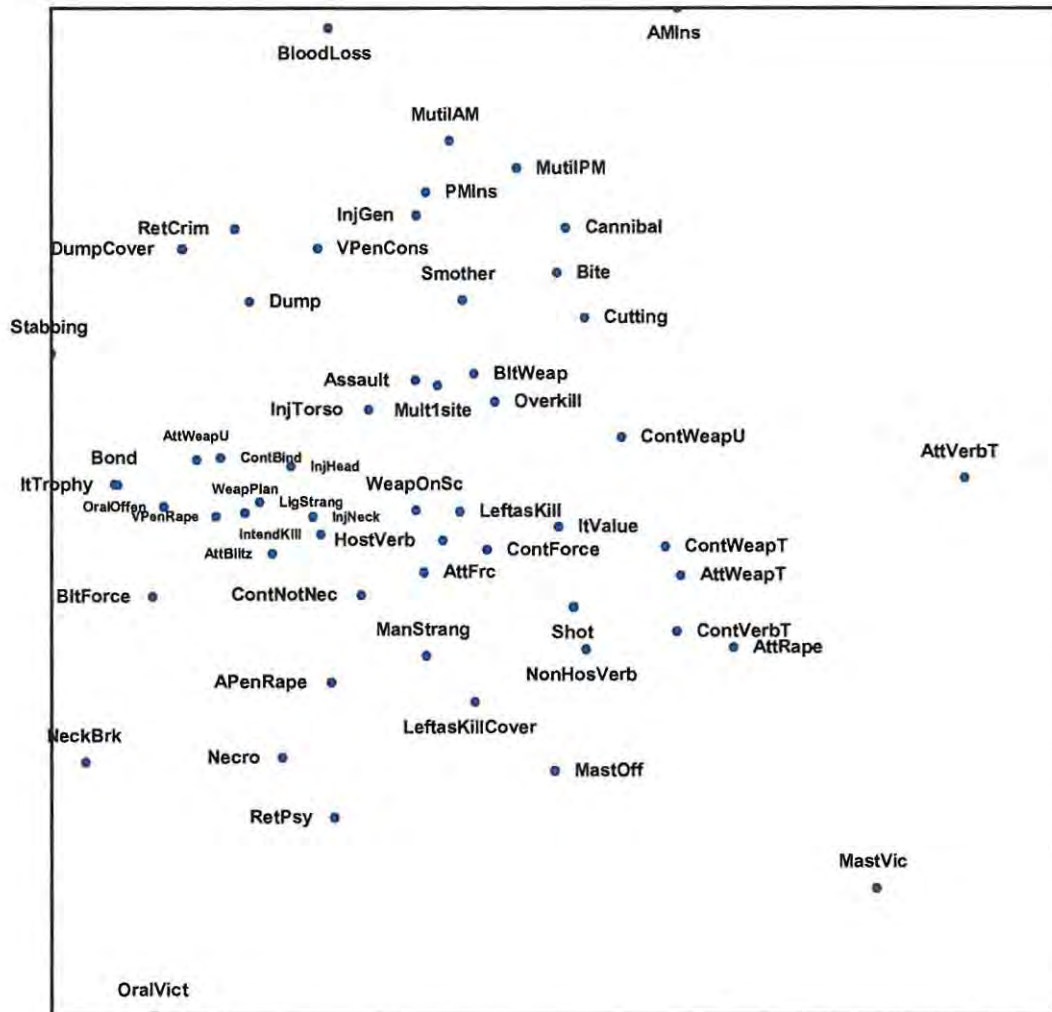
regional hypothesis has been previously, successfully, used as an appropriate way of interpreting co-occurrences of behaviours. SSA is especially appropriate in the current study as this technique avoids the creation of rigid typologies, and does not rely on levels of significance (or similar measures) to reveal patterns in the variables. The use of SSA therefore allows for the identification of the thematic structure underlying the offences of South African serial killers. A model of crime scene behaviour based on co-occurring sets of variables rather than one-to-one item correlations (Salfati & Canter, 1999) can then be created. Professor Canter at the Centre for Investigative Psychology at the University of Liverpool will carry out the statistical analyses for this project. He is extremely experienced in the use of MDS and SSA procedures in the study of crime and criminal behaviours. The interpretations of this statistical analysis will be carried out by the author.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS

#### 5.1 *SSA of Crime Scene Behaviours*

A 2-dimensional SSA solution was found to have a reasonable Guttman-Lingoes coefficient of alienation of 0.27 in 11 iterations. This coefficient is acceptable given the nature of the current data, and the potentially problematic sources of information used. Figure 1 shows the 1 by 2-dimension projection of the SSA. The positions of the points indicate the location of variables in SSA space. For clarity, the variables have been given names on the plot, and these correspond to the variables listed and defined in Appendix A. To repeat, the closer together in space two variables are, the more likely that they will co-occur in the same offence. Conversely, variables positioned far apart on the plot will have less association with one another, and it will be less likely that they will both occur in an offence. For example, it is very unlikely that an offender who inserted an object in the anus or vagina of the victim prior to death (“AMIns”) will also have performed oral sex on the victim (“OralVict”). A relatively wide spread of variables is observed on the plot.



**Figure 1**  
**SSA showing Crime Scene Behaviours**

## 5.2 Frequencies of Offence Behaviours

The first stage of interpreting the themes of serial murder is to examine the frequency with which each variable occurs. As Canter (2000) indicates, the identification of themes in offences should be combined with an analysis of the overall frequency of the actions occur that in the crimes. This allows for investigative salience to be more precisely assessed. Canter, Hughes, & Kirby (1998) state that an SSA configuration has no inevitable link to the frequencies of variables, being derived from the associations between them. Thus any emergent frequency structures are not artifactual, rather being empirical findings with substantive meaning. It is significant that very few high frequency variables were found in this sample. Only 14 variables (of 57) occurred in more than 30% of the offences analysed. Only 5 variables occurred in 50% or more offences. These low overall frequencies, taken in conjunction with the relatively wide spread of variables on the SSA plot, indicate that a wide range of actions were committed across these offences, with a wide range of different 'styles' of offending. This shows that the sample contains highly heterogeneous offences. Given this heterogeneity, it is unlikely that a simple typology (such as an Organised - Disorganised dichotomy) will be sufficient to make sense of the offences of South African serial killers. This heterogeneity also has implications for our conceptualisation of serial killers as part of the criminal population as a whole. These issues will be discussed in more detail later.

It is hypothesised that the SSA plot would show a 'core' region containing those high frequency actions that describe general offence behaviours. This hypothesised region will be placed near the centre of the SSA space (Canter & Fritzon, 1998). These behaviours will thus be common to, and characterise, most serial murders. The behaviours in the central region thus do not distinguish between styles of offending, or themes and subgroups within an offence (Hodge, 2000). Rather, these 'core' variables therefore represent the focus, or essence, of the offence. In previous research on rape, Canter & Heritage (1990) reported a core region consisting of a surprise sexual attack, disturbance of clothing, and penetrative sexual intercourse (with these behaviours occurring in 65% of offences). Similar regions of

general offence behaviours were found in studies of serial murderers (Hodge, 2000) and arsonists (Canter & Fritzon, 1998).

**Table 5**  
**High Frequency Behaviours**  
**(30%<)**

<b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>VARIABLE NAME</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Intended to Kill</b>	IntendKill	<b>81 %</b>
<b>Injury to Neck</b>	InjNeck	<b>75 %</b>
<b>Blitz Attack</b>	AttBlitz	<b>56 %</b>
<b>Killed by Ligature Strangulation</b>	LigStrang	<b>50 %</b>
<b>Injury to Head / Face</b>	InjHead	<b>50 %</b>
<b>Victim Left as Killed</b>	LeftasKill	<b>42 %</b>
<b>Vaginal Rape</b>	VPenRape	<b>40 %</b>
<b>Planned Weapon</b>	WeapPlan	<b>40 %</b>
<b>Weapon Found On Scene</b>	WeapOnSc	<b>40 %</b>
<b>Hostile Verbal Interaction</b>	HostVerb	<b>39 %</b>
<b>Control Using Bindings</b>	ContBind	<b>39 %</b>
<b>Attack Using Weapon</b>	AttWeapU	<b>38 %</b>
<b>Attack Using Force</b>	AttFrc	<b>36 %</b>
<b>No Further Control Needed</b>	ContNotNec	<b>36 %</b>

Figure 2 shows the frequencies of occurrence of every offender-victim transaction in the current data. Figure 2 displays a distribution of variables identical to that of Figure 1.

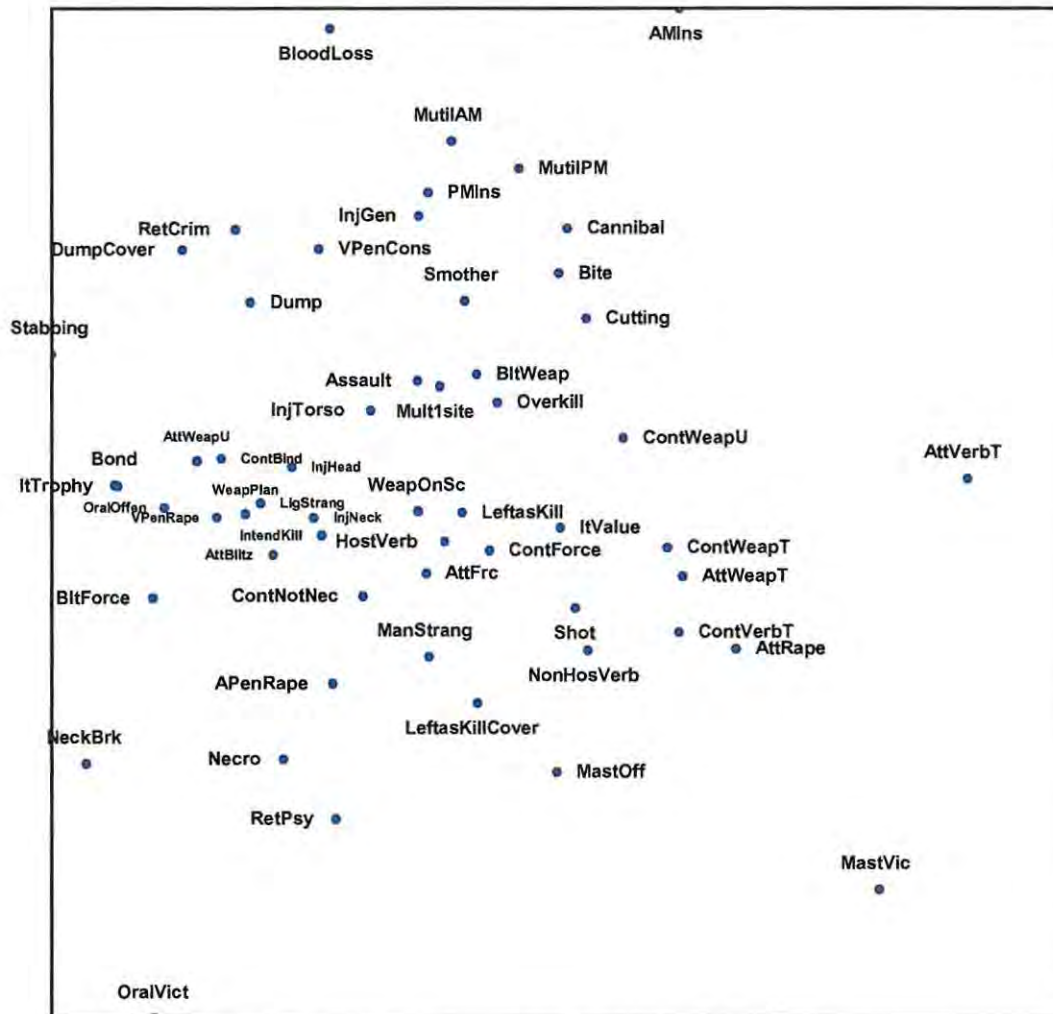


Figure 2

SSA showing Frequency Contours

- A: 50% <
- B: 30-49%
- C: 16-29%
- D: 4-15%
- E: 3% >

An observation of this plot shows, as hypothesised, a clustering of variables near the centre of the plot and a reduction in numbers towards the periphery. This central grouping consists of those behaviours that occur in more than 50% of the cases. Furthermore, clear contours can be drawn encompassing variables that occur in over 50% of the cases, 39-49% of cases, 16-29% of cases, 3-15% of cases, and in less than 3% of cases. The polarising structure of the contours in Figure 2 demonstrates that the common behaviours across offences tend to occur in the centre of the plot, while those serving to differentiate between offences occur towards the edges. Thus these results confirm that the higher the frequency of a variable, the less likely it is to differentiate between offenders. Similarly, the lower the frequency, the more likely that action is to be specific to particular sub-sets of offences. These results are thus similar to those reported in previous SSA research on the offence behaviour of various 'types' of offenders (for example: Canter & Fritzon, 1998, Canter & Heritage, 1990, Hodge, 2000).

### **5.2.1 Focal Aspects of Serial Murder**

It is hypothesised that the modulating facet depicted by the above frequency contours can be conceptualised as the various 'levels' of behaviour that occur in the course of the offence. The modulating facet serves to determine what the essence or focus of the system is, that is:

what gives it its key purpose. The gradations in that focus are what produces the various manifestations of the action (Prof. Canter, personal communication, 2000).

As mentioned the general, characteristic features of a system will be located in the centre of SSA space. In this analysis, the actions that occurred most frequently were positioned in this central region. These most frequent actions are therefore the 'focus' or essence of the offences being analysed here. The various levels of frequency will thus demonstrate the gradations that occur with regard to this 'focal' aspect. These gradations will also affect the meaning attributed to all other variables, as well as interacting with any thematic groupings generated.

It is hypothesised in this research that a modulating facet related to the manner in which the murder is carried out exists. Here a core to the facet structure, consisting of behaviours occurring in more than 50% of serial killers' crimes, was found. This 'core' will be discussed in conjunction with the variables found in the 30 – 49% frequency contour. Given the low overall frequencies found in this sample, these variables are also useful in revealing the focal aspects of the serial killers' offences. The following observations around the focus of these offences were made:

#### **5.2.1.1 Centrality of Act-focused Murder**

The 'core' region of the facet structure reveals, unsurprisingly, that the murder of the victim is the central aspect of serial killing. The finding that in 81% of the cases the killer intended to murder his victim supports this hypothesis. The finding that in 75% and 50% of the cases the victim suffered injuries to the neck and head/face, respectively, adds further support to this conceptualisation. The application of force to potentially fatal areas of the victim's body, as shown by these variables, demonstrates that the offender clearly intended to kill the victim. Similarly, ligature strangulation (50%) is an action that can obviously be construed as having clear murderous intent. That is, it is not very likely that a ligature would be used to overcome resistance or control a victim with death occurring accidentally or unintentionally. The use of a 'blitz' attack by the offender (56% of the time) further demonstrates the centrality of overwhelmingly hostile, and here, murderous intent in the crimes of these offenders.

Thus, the act of murder itself (as opposed to theft, or rape, or other criminal activity) is central to these offences. More specifically, these murders are shown to have a clear 'functional' focus. That is, the main aim of the act is to kill the victim, rather than (for example) to engage in ritualistic behaviours or torture. Thus, the essence of these offences can be construed as an 'act-focused' murder (Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes, 1988). As Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes (1988) state, the commission of the act-focused murder is:

swift, incisive, and directed toward accomplishing the goal – the killing of the victim...The gratification of the act-focused murder lies within the act itself.  
(p.119-20)

The absence of 'process-focused' behaviours (such as sadistic torture, dismemberment, or minute attention to ritualistic behaviours) in this core region supports the hypothesis of an 'act-focused' killing as central to the crimes of these offenders. This conception is supported by statements made by a number of serial killers in the course of the research interviews. They stated that they just wanted their victims dead, and wanted to kill them as quickly as possible.

#### **5.2.1.2 *Victim as Object***

The variables in this core region also demonstrate that the victim is treated as, or immediately rendered, an 'object' during the offence. The victim is simply used, killed, and discarded. The 'core' variables of a blitz attack (where the victim is immediately incapacitated or killed) and attacking the head of the victim (thus stunning them or rendering them unconscious) support this hypothesis. Moving into the next stage, the 30-49% contour, we find that in 42% of cases the victim is left 'as killed'. This further demonstrates the victim's role as an object, simply discarded once killed. This role is further illustrated by other variables in this contour that imply a deliberate avoidance of interpersonal interaction, such as attacking using force or a weapon, and with such force that further control over the victim is unnecessary.

Given that the victims are treated as 'objects' by the offender, it can be posited that their identities and personal interaction with the offender is unimportant. As one serial killer said during an interview, in response to the question whether the victims could have avoided being killed by interacting with him in a different way: "There was nothing they could do once I had them. They would all die...No one escaped". This idea is supported by the further demonstration of the variables in this 'core' region that the offenders did not desire extensive interaction with their victims in situations where the victim is not rendered a helpless, passive, 'non-person'. Again, the variables of a blitz attack and injuries to the head or face demonstrate this. Obliterating the victim's identity (thus rendering them a 'non-person') may also be a motive for attacks to the head or face, where the victim's most recognisable feature is being attacked. This possibility would lend further support to the idea that the killer's victim is perceived and treated as an object during the offence. However in the current study it is difficult to assess whether this interpretation is accurate.

This is especially pertinent given (as will be outlined in the following section) the merging between 'Instrumental' and 'Expressive' actions in high-frequency variables.

Therefore these 'core' variables can be taken to represent a concerted attempt to render the victim a 'non-person', unable to tender resistance. This desire to eliminate the victim's humanity is also demonstrated in the act-focused murderous intent that these variables show. Therefore the variables discussed above reveal that the obliteration and killing of the victim, rather than interaction, is the central and general aspect of serial killers' offences.

### ***5.2.1.3 Merging of 'Instrumental' and 'Expressive' Actions***

This finding also implies that, in these higher frequency variables, there is a merging between:

- those 'functional' actions that are necessary to successfully complete the offence (such as controlling the victim) and,
- those that express the offender's emotional state, such as anger.

These actions have, in previous research, been named 'instrumental' and 'expressive' actions, respectively (Salfati & Canter, 1999). The above definitions for 'instrumental' and 'expressive' actions differ slightly from those used in previous research. However the definitions given above were used consistently throughout this research.

There is a merging between instrumental and expressive actions in the actions that occur in more than 30% of the sample. For example, 'blitzing', attacking with a weapon, or injuring the victim's face can all be thought of as instrumental to the control and murder of the victim. However these can simultaneously be viewed as expressions of the offender's aggression, rage, or hostility. Thus, according to these findings, the murder of the victim is accompanied by an emotional element of hostility and aggression. This element in these offences is shown by the finding that actions causing the victim pain (through injuring them immediately), degrading them (through hostile verbal interactions) or rendering them helpless (through, for example, bindings or 'blitzing') occur often in the first two frequency contours.

Thus overt hostility towards the victim is a further central factor in these offences. It is also worth noting that in 40% of the cases the victim was raped. Rape implies a greater degree of interaction with the victim, for a longer period, than that found in any of the previously discussed variables. This could be taken as a contradiction of the earlier hypothesis that the victim in these offences is treated as a depersonalised and dehumanised object. However, in this context, rape can be viewed as an extension of the offender's desire to use the victim as an object. Rape, perhaps obviously, need not imply that the victim be thought of as an individual. This finding thus supports the idea that in general the victim's role in serial killings remains that of an object. Thus the victim remains a non-person to be used to satisfy the offender's desires or act as a target for hostility.

However, the frequent occurrence of this variable also demonstrates that the sexual nature of serial killers' offences cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, the fact that apart from this variable no other sexual actions occur in more than 15% of the cases points away from the conception that sexual activities are general characteristics of serial murder. Rather it is hypothesised that sexual variables, being more unusual, will reflect the characteristic offending style of sub-sets of individuals. More generally, it is hypothesised (as for previous SSA research) that lower frequency variables will reveal differences in themes of behaviour (Hodge, 2000). On the basis of the most frequently occurring variables in this sample, it can be shown that the offences analysed here are:

- clearly hostile,
- murder-focused events,
- committed against a depersonalised victim. The victim is thus treated as merely an object, a target to be obliterated.

The large number of high frequency variables that demonstrate no interpersonal, or even extended, interaction with the victim was desired or attempted during the offence show this. In fact, these findings point in the opposite direction, where steps were taken to preclude the possibility of any such interaction occurring. This is shown in actions such as using bindings, a blitz attack, or controlling the victim through the use of either a weapon or force.

Typically (as shown in this SSA plot) with increasing distance from the central region of the plot, the frequencies of the actions decrease. It is hypothesised that these less frequent actions, occupying more peripheral regions of the plot, will characterise the different 'styles' and behavioural themes of the offences (Canter & Heritage, 1990; Hodge, 2000). As Hodge (2000) summarises: the central region of the SSA plot serves to describe the general characteristics of serial murder and modifies the difference between themes. In contrast lower frequency variables are more unusual and thus reflect the offending styles, and therefore themes, characteristic of subgroups of offenders.

This finding is reflected in the operation of the modulating facet. This is demonstrated in the frequency contours containing those actions occurring in less than 30% of the sample. However as the frequency drops, the differentiation between 'instrumental' (here, referring to actions performed mainly to attack, control and kill the victim) and 'expressive' actions becomes more marked. These emotional, expressive actions include those that can be construed as sexual (for example: masturbating the victim, and engaging in consensual sex), hostile (for example: assault to a degree in excess of that needed to control the victim) and potentially sadistic (for example: sodomy, ante-mortem object insertion, and mutilation). Similarly, those actions demonstrating a clear instrumental focus are more clearly differentiated from the above emotional elements in these lower frequency variables. Examples of these instrumental variables include: dumping the victim, or returning to the crime scene for reasons that relate to the offender taking measures to avoid capture (such as to move the body or destroy evidence). In addition to this, actions that can be conceived of as primarily instrumental occur with less frequency. Thus clearly 'emotional-expressive' actions are shown more clearly, and in greater numbers, in lower frequency variables.

To summarise: the variables in the centre of the plot can be seen to have a more 'instrumental' focus, and as we approach the periphery variables become more 'expressive'. Given that variables in the peripheral regions of an SSA plot have been shown to be those that are more likely to indicate thematic differences (Canter & Fritzon, 1998, Canter & Heritage, 1990; Hodge, 2000), it can be hypothesised that the differences between the offences relate more to their emotional (expressive) quality, rather than their

instrumental focal purpose.

#### **5.2.1.4 Comparison with Previous Typologies of Serial Killers**

The finding that the focus of these offences is a 'act-focused' murder has implications for previous research on serial killers. Furthermore, on the basis of these behaviours in this core region, some preliminary comparisons between these offenders in the USA or UK, and in South Africa can be made. Firstly, this finding contradicts the conceptualisation in much previous serial killer research (such as, for example, the FBI's Organised-Disorganised typology) that these men are primarily sexual offenders. This research has demonstrated that the act of murder itself, as opposed to theft, sexual interaction, or other criminal activity, is central to these offences. In other typologies of serial killers (such as that posited by Holmes & DeBurger, 1988), the essence of a serial killer's offences remains undefined. Thus the findings in this research help to clarify the nature, or essence, of a serial killer's offences (at least in the South African context).

Secondly, these findings contradict the conception – often implied in previous research – that a large proportion of serial killers are primarily concerned with prolonged interaction with the victim. For example, in both the 'organised' serial killer proposed by the FBI, and the 'process-focused' killer (usually 'hedonistic' or 'power / control' serial killers) proposed by Holmes & DeBurger (1988), a significant period of pre-mortem involvement with the victim is implied. These researchers also note that these serial murders are carried out according to a 'blueprint' of fantasy – thus involving a significant amount of ritualised interaction with the victim. The victim's role is therefore one of a 'plaything' to the offender and the victim's active participation (even if only by reacting to the offender) is required. According to the findings in this research, these findings may be misleading. Rather, the focus of the offence is the act-focused murder of a depersonalised and passive object.

Thirdly, Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes (1988) note that process-focused behaviours are carried out primarily for expressive gain, while act-focused actions are focused on the murder of the victim. In terms of these definitions, these authors are equating 'act' and

'process-focused' behaviours with those behaviours defined here as 'instrumental' and 'expressive', respectively. However the absence of 'process-focused' actions in this focal region indicates that the differentiation between 'act' and 'process' focused murders is not as simplistic as implied by Holmes, De Burger & Holmes' (1988) definition. If their differentiation was accurate, it could be expected that an almost equal division between 'act' and 'process' focused behaviours would be found in the core region of the plot. However, act-focused behaviours predominate. This indicates that the accuracy of the 'act' versus 'process' differentiation must be reassessed.

In terms of the role played by the modulating facet in this sample, we see that as we move towards the periphery of the plot 'act' (or instrumental) and 'process' (or expressive) focused actions become more clearly differentiated. Thus we find that more 'process-focused' variables occur the closer we get to the periphery of the plot. Primarily, on the basis of our SSA findings, it can be hypothesised that 'process-focused' actions will be more useful in differentiating between different behavioural themes (and thus possibly between offenders). Similarly, 'act' focused behaviours are more useful in characterising the focus or essence of the offence in question. On the basis of this both the concept and function of 'act' and 'process-focused' behaviours, as proposed by Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes (1988), should be altered. Rather than the simplistic differentiation proposed by these authors, the operation of 'act' versus 'process-focused' behaviours is seen to be more complex. Specifically, if the 'act' versus 'process' differentiation is looked at in terms of facet theory, we see that the interaction between these behaviours and other factors must be explicitly taken into account to a greater degree than is done in Holmes, DeBurger & Holmes' (1988) presentation. This is illustrated in the effect of the modulating facet, as outlined above, and will be shown further as we inspect the themes present in the offences of South African serial killers.

Lastly, the fact that these findings differ so greatly from those in previous studies indicate either that previous research into serial killers may be inaccurate, or that South African serial killers exhibit markedly different systems of behaviour from those found in similar offenders elsewhere. While it is not the aim of this research to resolve these issues, they

must be borne in mind if an adequate understanding of these offenders is to be reached. These observations also have implications for our overall findings. However it must be remembered that the above findings outline the focus, or essence, of these offences. Thus the full range of behaviours, and these focal aspects' relationships with them, is not taken into account in the above discussion. These factors will be discussed in the following section with reference to the behaviours that occur with lower frequency and occupy the more peripheral areas of the SSA plot.

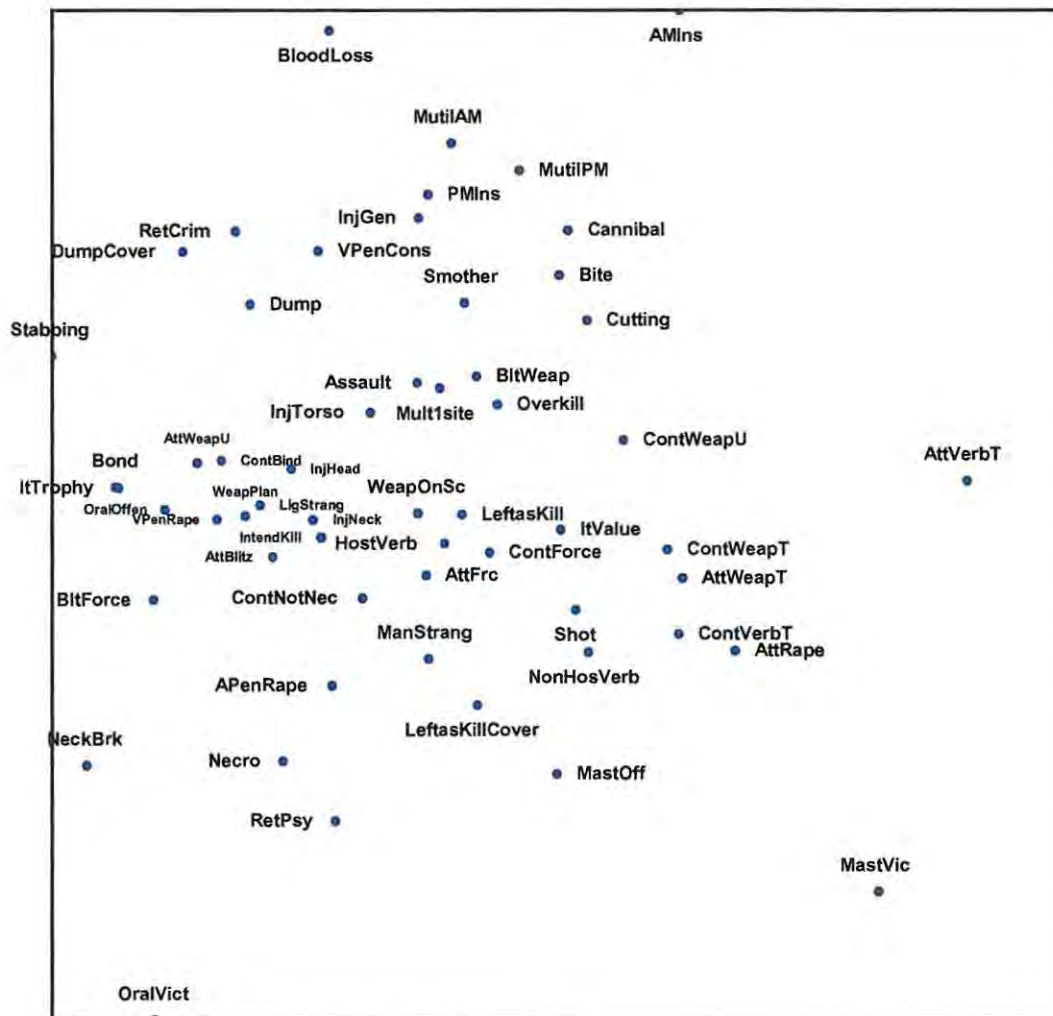


Figure 3

SSA showing Offence Themes

**A: Aggressive-Expressive**  
**B: Sexual-Expressive**  
**C: Criminal-Instrumental**

### 5.3 Themes of Serial Murder

It is hypothesised that those variables occurring in 30% or less of the offences are indicators of the themes, and thematic differences, in the crimes of these offenders. As stated above, these variables will be located towards the periphery of the SSA plot. Also as previously mentioned, those variables representing diametrically different themes will be situated on opposite sides of the SSA plot from one another. The themes of serial murder identified below will therefore be discussed with particular reference to those variables that are positioned closer to the periphery of the SSA plot. They will be discussed with reference to the offence behaviours, as well as the implied role of the victim in the offence.

#### 5.3.1 Aggressive-Expressive Offence

##### 5.3.1.1 *Offence Behaviour*

Figure 3 shows the same SSA configuration as Figure 1. It reveals a collection of behaviours relating to an extremely violent attack on the victim positioned in the top right of the SSA plot. On the periphery of this proposed region we have the variables 'Bloodloss', 'AMIns' and 'MutilAM'. These are variables demonstrating extreme and excessive violence against the victim. The latter two refer to inserting an object into the anus or vagina of a living victim, and the mutilation of a living victim, respectively. Both these actions reveal extremely aggressive, possibly sadistic, intent. Thus, it can be hypothesised that these actions were performed in order to cause humiliation and pain to the victim. The excessive hostility of these actions is also shown by the variable 'BloodLoss', indicating that the victim died due to blood loss. This demonstrates that the victim suffered pre-mortem injuries (as indicated by its proximity to 'MutilAM') of such severity that the blood lost in the course of the attack was sufficient to kill. This lends further credence to a theme focused on the extensive injuring and depersonalisation of the victim.

A number of crime scene behaviours displaying similar thematic characteristics are found in a further exploration of this hypothesised region. These include biting, cutting, and cannibalising the victim, as well as injuring the victim's genitals. All these behaviours can be seen as either sadistic, or demonstrating extreme anger or hostility on the offender's part.

The presence of overkill injuries ('Overkill'), multiple injuries to one site on the victim's body ('MultiSite'), and the offender assaulting the victim to a degree in excess of what is required for control ('Assault'), all similarly indicate the extreme violence found in this SSA region.

It is hypothesised that the boundaries to this 'Expressive' region run between 'Stabbing' and 'DumpCover' on the left of the region, and between controlling the victim by using a weapon ('ContWeapU') and attacking using verbal threats ('AttVerbT') on the right. The behaviours in the far left of this region relate to the dumping of the victim's body away from the crime scene ('Dump'), covering a dumped body ('DumpCover'), and returning to the crime scene to either move the body or destroy evidence ('RetCrim'). These may be seen as more 'instrumental' actions, performed to ensure the successful completion of the crime. Previous research into serial killers tends to regard these variables as evidence of extensive criminal planning. For example: in the FBI's Organised-Disorganised typology, the typically well-planned and carefully executed offences of the 'organised' offender are said to be characterised by the offender transporting or hiding the body. However, in this research, the meaning and implications of these variables are very different. This is due to the fact that these variables are close to extremely violent and 'expressive' actions on the current plot. Thus the meaning attributed to them changes. It can be hypothesised that these behaviours represent an offender's attempts to 'cover up' a crime committed impulsively. This is particularly true of the variable relating to returning to the scene for criminal reasons ('RetCrim').

A number of killers whose behaviours fall within this thematic region support this conclusion with statements made during the research interviews. They report that after either unintentionally or impulsively killing one or more of their victims, they were overwhelmed by what they had just done. As one offender reported, he "panicked" after his victim's death. These offenders would then later make attempts to 'cover up' this impulsive crime by dumping or covering the corpse. Another offender reports that after he killed the victim in a burst of rage he, unsure what to do, covered the victim's body at the crime scene and left. Later, after some thought, he returned with his vehicle and moved the corpse,

dumping it by a roadside.

Thus the rage and aggression of the offence, in these variables, is sometimes followed by a calculated attempt on the offender's part to reduce his chances of being apprehended for it. The offender thus either takes care to remove the body from the scene ('Dump'), possibly hiding it ('DumpCover') or returning to interfere with the crime scene ('RetCrim'). Thus, in addition to the expressive nature of the offence, there is evidence for these crimes being committed impulsively, with a lesser amount of pre-crime planning. This is in marked contrast to the above-mentioned implications of previous literature. Similarly, on the right boundary to this region 'ContWeapU' can be seen as simultaneously fulfilling instrumental and expressive functions. That is, the offender can use a weapon to control the victim both to simply maintain effective control, and to inflict pain or injury on the victim.

#### **5.3.1.2 *Victim Role***

These variables all imply little personal interaction with the victim: the victim is treated as an object, merely acting as a target for the offender's rage or aggression. This aggression is further expressed in the excessive use of violence implied in the offender's using a weapon on the victim to control them ('ContWeapU'). Thus the depersonalisation of the victim implied by the modulating facet is expressed particularly clearly in the extreme violence of these behaviours. This treatment of the victim as an object is shown even more clearly in the variables 'post mortem mutilation' ('MutilPM') and 'object insertion' ('PMIns'). These variables show that the victim's interaction is not important to the offender, since even after death violence against the victim continues. Thus the offender is, in this thematic region, using the victim as an inanimate and depersonalised object to express his rage on.

The intense hostility of these offences is reflected in the words of the offenders positioned in this theme. A number of these offenders seemed to be expressing their desire, in both their actions and interview narratives, to not just kill their victims but to obliterate them entirely. A serial murderer whose behaviours are strongly represented in this thematic region reported feeling immense anger and hatred towards one of his victims (who was a stranger). This rage, he reports, resulted in him assaulting and sodomising the victim with a

pistol before strangling them. Other murderers in this region report similar feelings towards one or more of their victims, often referring to them in derogatory or hostile terms (examples include “Ugly old fart”, “Bitch” and “Whore”).

A contradictory finding, perhaps, is the presence of consensual vaginal sex (‘VPenCons’) in this region. This is because this action implies interpersonal interaction to a degree that is at odds with the depersonalising and excessive violence implied by the other variables. This variable also indicates the possibility that there is a prior relationship between the offender and the victim. Similarly, it also implies that the offence may have escalated from an interpersonal dispute. Thus consensual vaginal sex, in this region, is not at odds with the impersonal nature of this offence-theme. Rather, consensual sex is more likely to be a function of the interpersonal precipitation of the offence. As expressed by another offender represented in this region, he beat to death and mutilated his victim because “she was a bitch...who had been causing trouble for me.” However it is unlikely that this ‘interpersonal dispute’ explanation applies to all the offences in a serial murderer’s series. Furthermore, ‘consensual vaginal sex’ can also refer to sex with a prostitute (see Appendix A). This therefore need not be at odds with the depersonalisation of the victim, nor the existence of prior interpersonal interaction and dispute.

Finally, it should be noted that the behaviours present in this region are similar to those observed in ‘rage’ and ‘lust’ murders: extreme violence and depersonalisation, with the victim being treated as an object. This can clarify the links between serial killers and the criminal population as a whole. However, unlike in lust or clearly sex-related killings, there are not a large number of sexual acts present in this region. Rather, physical violence and injury to the victim takes precedence. Overall, aggressive ‘expressive’ actions characterise this region.

**Table 6**  
**List of Variables in Aggressive - Expressive Offence Theme**  
**(N = 20)**

BEHAVIOUR	VARIABLE NAME	FREQUENCY
Multiple Injuries to One Site	MultI site	21 %
Excessive Assault	Assault	19 %
Injury to Torso	InjTorso	19%
Overkill	Overkill	11 %
Killed using Blunt Weapon	BltWeap	11 %
Control Using Weapon	ContWeapU	8 %
Dumped Victim	Dump	8%
Return to Scene for Criminal Reasons	RetCrim	8 %
Injury to Genitals	InjGen	8 %
Killed by Cutting	Cutting	7 %
Consensual Sex	VpenCons	7 %
Dumped and Covered Victim	DumpCover	7 %
Insert Object into Dead Victim	PMIns	6 %
Bit Victim	Bite	4 %
Killed by Smothering	Smother	4 %
Cannibalised Victim	Cannibal	4 %
Mutilation of Dead Victim	MutilPM	4 %
Mutilation of Living Victim	MutilAM	3 %
Killed by Blood Loss	BloodLoss	1 %
Insert Object in Living Victim	AMIns	1 %

### 5.3.2 Sexual-Expressive Offence

#### 5.3.2.1 Offence Behaviour

This thematic region contains a 'mix' of sexual and violent behaviours. It is situated on the left side of the SSA plot. It must be noted that this theme contains fewer peripheral, and thus characteristic, variables than any of the other regions. The implications of this finding will be discussed later.

On the periphery of this region, occurring in 1% of the offences, is the variable 'OralVict' (referring to the offender performing oral sex on the victim). This action requires that the offender engage in more interaction with the victim than is needed for the sexual actions found in the other thematic regions. A number of other variables in this region support this finding. These include sodomising the victim ('APenRape'), forcing the victim to perform oral sex on the offender ('OralOffen'), and the offender engaging in necrophilia with the victim ('Necro'). These variables all require that the offender interact with the living or dead victim for a significant period. For example 'OralOffen' may require that the offender 'script' the victim's actions. This interaction can also include having to control the victim for the length of time and degree required for the completion of the sexual action. The need for control could hold especially true for those actions, such as anal rape, that are sadistic, often being painful for the victim. Engaging in bondage with the victim ('Bond') requires similarly extended interaction, and it reveals a desire for excessive control over the victim, along with a sexual element similar to that noted in the other variables in this region.

None of these extended interactions can be seen as solely instrumental, rather being expressive of the offender's needs. This is also true of the higher frequency action of rape ('VPenRape') found near the 'core' of this region. There are a number of similarly expressive actions in this region, all implying greater degrees of interaction with the victim. These actions include taking a trophy item from the crime scene ('ItTrophy'), and returning to the crime scene for psychological reasons ('RetPsy'). These, unlike the previously discussed variables, demonstrate a greater level of *psychological* involvement with the victim or crime. That is, the offender invests the offence with greater emotional significance. This is revealed by his either taking an article from the scene to remember the crime by, or by returning to the scene to reminisce, engage in necrophilia, or feel regret. This increased level of 'psychological involvement' with the victim can also be seen in the previously discussed expressive sexual actions, as well as variables such as 'Bond'. Thus the offender, in this thematic region, demonstrates greater desire for sexual and psychological / emotional interaction with the victim. As an offender who demonstrated clear Sexual-Expressive behaviours stated:

I killed them because I didn't want them to have the life I had after I was raped.

And as indicated by actions such as necrophilia, this interaction may continue after the death of the victim.

#### **5.3.2.2 *Victim Role***

Despite the number of variables in this theme indicating that the offender desires protracted sexual and emotional contact, the offender treats the victim as nothing more than an object. This is demonstrated by the variables relating to the manner in which the victim was killed. The use of blunt force, stabbing, or a neck-break to kill the victim ('BltForce', 'Stabbing', 'NeckBrk') are all fairly brutal modes of death. They also require that the offender directly apply the force to the victim in order to kill them. This direct application of brutal force appears to contradict the offender's desire for psychological and emotional interaction with the victim. These actions imply, through the clear impersonal hostility they demonstrate, that the victim remains an inanimate object. The variables in the higher frequencies of this region re-emphasise this. For example, attacking using a weapon ('AttWeapU') and using bindings to control the victim ('ContBind') all imply an interpretation of this region opposite to the one in previous paragraphs. That is, these imply that the offender does not desire any emotional, sexual, or psychological interaction. Rather, these variables seem to imply that this interaction is being actively avoided.

These findings are not, however, contradictory. They can be explained in light of the implied role of the victim they reveal. These variables demonstrate that the victim is not required to interact, as a person, with the offender. Rather, the victim is immediately reduced to the role of an object (through, for example, attacking with a weapon or 'blitzing'). Thus the victim's roles remains unchanged from the previous thematic region. While the offender engages in considerable interaction with the victim, as demonstrated by the sexual variables found in this region, this interaction remains that of an active aggressor and a passive object. The peripheral variables relating to the killing of the victim (for example, 'Stabbing' and 'NeckBrk') reinforce this interpretation. Similarly, the victim's role as an object, having no active role in the offence, is also emphasised by the presence of necrophilia ('Necro') in this region. Therefore the offender treats the victim as an object to

be used in a sexual or expressive manner. The victim's individuality or personality remains unimportant. Thus while there are a number of variables indicating the desire for protracted sexual and emotional contact with the victim, this contact only occurs in the context of the victim being reduced to the role of an object. Therefore the offender's expressive actions remain the salient features of this region.

**Table 7**  
**List of Variables in Sexual - Expressive Offence Theme**  
**(N = 10)**

<b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>VARIABLE NAME</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Oral Sex on Offender</b>	OralOffen	<b>28 %</b>
<b>Bondage</b>	Bond	<b>22 %</b>
<b>Taking of Trophy Item</b>	ItTrophy	<b>22 %</b>
<b>Anal Rape</b>	ApenRape	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Necrophilia</b>	Necro	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Return for Psychological Reasons</b>	RetPsy	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Killed by Stabbing</b>	Stabbing	<b>7 %</b>
<b>Killed by Broken Neck</b>	NeckBrk	<b>4 %</b>
<b>Killed by Blunt Force</b>	BltForce	<b>3 %</b>
<b>Oral Sex on Victim</b>	OralVict	<b>1 %</b>

### **5.3.3 Criminal-Instrumental Offence**

#### **5.3.3.1 Offence Behaviour**

The final hypothesised region covers the bottom right quarter of the SSA plot. These variables demonstrate a more 'instrumental' focus. Therefore, unlike the previous regions, instrumental actions rather than expressive or emotional needs take precedence. That is, the majority of variables in this region are carried out to ensure that the offender successfully completes his crime. Thus these behaviours are all performed to effectively attack and maintain control over the victim. This theme's underlying 'functionality' is shown in actions such as attacking and controlling the victim using verbal threats and threats with a weapon ('AttVerbT', 'AttWeapT', 'ContVerbT', 'ContWeapT'). These actions are not

necessarily aggressive or hostile, but can rather be seen as essential for a successful offence (see definitions in Appendix A). The proposed non-aggressive nature of these actions is supported by the presence of the variable 'offender using non-hostile language with the victim' ('NonHostVerb') in close proximity to these variables on the plot.

Thus this region is characterised by functional, instrumental actions being carried out for primarily criminal reasons. 'Criminal', here, refers to actions performed to aid the completion of the crime itself, rather than the manner in which the crime was committed. Therefore it can be hypothesised that this region consists of those behaviours linked by the common theme of instrumental, criminally motivated, behaviours. This hypothesis is supported by the presence of the variable representing the offender taking objects of value from the crime scene ('ItValue'). This is a clearly instrumental behaviour, motivated by direct personal gain. This is illustrated by an offender from this thematic region's report that he regularly stole small items and cash from the scenes of his murders. These items he later either re-sold or used himself.

However it can be observed that the higher frequency behaviours in this region include a large number of physically aggressive and hostile behaviours. Examples of this include attacking and controlling the victim using physical force ('AttFrc', 'ContForce') and using hostile language ('HostVerb'). Thus as we move towards the centre of the plot, in this region, more expressive and hostile actions occur with greater frequency. Rather than being a contradiction of the hypothesis of this region as fundamentally 'instrumental', these actions should be seen as an effect of the modulating facet. The modulating facet, as previously mentioned, denotes a hostile and impersonal, act-focused offence. Furthermore, as found in the earlier analysis of the frequencies of behaviour, those variables near the centre of the plot are less useful in differentiating between themes. Thus these overtly hostile features are characteristics of the system of behaviour being studied, rather than the specific thematic grouping. However the above findings demonstrate that expressive actions are found in this, primarily instrumental, theme. Therefore offenders displaying expressive behaviours should not immediately be excluded from this thematic region. This shows that caution should be exercised in the classification of offences according to these

findings around 'instrumentality' and 'expressiveness'.

This region is therefore fundamentally instrumental and criminal. The actions within it are motivated by the offender's desire to successfully complete the crime rather than, as in the previous region, his emotional or expressive needs. This is borne out by the post-mortem behaviours carried out in this section, where the body is either left as killed or covered ('LeftasKill', 'LeftasKillCover'). These reveal the offender's lack of concern with the victim after the crime (apart from, possibly, covering the body to conceal it). An offender in this theme expressed the sentiment that he was not interested with the victims after he killed them, and just left them as they had died. This is in marked contrast to the expressive post-mortem behaviours found in the previous region, where the offender's emotive state took precedence. The behaviours in this region can thus be seen to be more 'act' than 'process' focused. This is best represented in the centrality of the variable representing the victim being shot dead by the offender ('Shot'). Here, little interaction, effort, or physical contact is needed to kill the victim in a significantly impersonal manner. An offender represented in this theme stated:

She saw my face...so when I was finished [raping her] I just turned my gun 'round and shot her.

#### **5.3.3.2 Victim Role**

These actions thus reveal limited emotional interaction between the offender and the victim. Those 'expressive' actions present (such as hostile verbal interaction and attacking using force) either serve a simultaneous instrumental function, or are near the centre of the plot and thus less characteristic of this thematic region than variables on the periphery of the plot. There are, however, apparent contradictions to the theme of impersonal instrumental action hypothesised for this region. For example: there are a number of sexual behaviours in this region, such as masturbating on the victim ('MastVic'), the victim masturbating the offender ('MastOff') and the offender attempting rape ('AttRape').

However these sexual behaviours demonstrate that the offender was either unwilling or unable to maintain the protracted contact necessary for extensive sexual or expressive

actions. This is best reflected in the offender attempting to rape the victim ('AttRape'). An offender who repeatedly attempted to rape his victims, but failed due to sexual dysfunction, reported that, during these attempts, he "lost interest" in the rape and the victim. Thus these actions do not imply that sexual and emotional interaction with the victim are significant elements of this thematic region. These actions therefore do not demonstrate a desire for more extensive interpersonal interaction, and therefore a more 'expressive' nature (as in the previous 'Sexual-Expressive' section). Rather, these sexual interactions emphasise the fundamentally impersonal and instrumental nature of these offences. This is particularly shown in the offender masturbating on the victim ('MastVic'), an action which implies that the victim's interaction is deemed unnecessary, or is unwanted, by the offender. This interpretation is supported by a statement made by an offender represented in this theme where he reports that he only gained sexual gratification, by masturbating on the victim, once the victim had been killed. Her death had been 'triggered' by her making a sexual advance on the offender, making him feel extremely threatened. This therefore demonstrates the fundamentally impersonal nature of these sexual actions.

Thus this theme of offence behaviours is fundamentally impersonal. This impersonal interaction is highlighted by the variable 'ContNotNec', where the victim is attacked so violently that they can no longer resist the offender. The violence of this attack emphasises the offender's disinterest in extended interpersonal interaction with the victim. This shows that interaction with the victim, similarly to the previous region, is limited to fulfilling the offender's needs. The victim therefore remains an object. However, unlike the violence and aggression of the Aggressive-Expressive region, in Criminal-Instrumental crimes this 'object' role is expressed in impersonal, instrumental behaviours. The victim is an object to be impersonally controlled and killed, without the excessive violence and attempts at psychological and sexual intimacy of the previous thematic regions. Variables relating to sexual interaction also occur less frequently, and the sexual interaction remains superficial.

It may be significant that the Criminal-Instrumental thematic region contains a larger proportion of variables that occur in more than 10 % of cases than any of the other thematic regions. In the Criminal-Instrumental region 10 of a total 13 variables occur in more than

10 % of cases. This accounts for 97 % of the offences in this region. However, in the other regions only 25 % and 40 % (for Aggressive-Expressive and Sexual-Expressive respectively) of variables occur in more than 10 % of the offences analysed. It should also be noted that the percentage for Sexual-Expressive may be inflated due to the low number of variables in this region (N=10). Thus it can be hypothesised that the influence of the modulating facet (denoting an impersonal, act-focused attack) is more marked in the Criminal-Instrumental theme. Therefore the overall characteristics of the Criminal-Instrumental thematic region are possibly influenced by the variables in this regions' proximity to the 'core' of the SSA plot. This effect will be greater here than in the characteristics of the other thematic regions. While this finding should not effect the overall accuracy of these findings, it should be taken into account when assessing the utility of this theme.

**Table 8**

**List of Variables in Criminal - Instrumental Offence Theme**

(N = 13)

<b>BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>VARIABLE NAME</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
<b>Control Using Force</b>	ContForce	<b>25 %</b>
<b>Victim Left as Killed, and Covered</b>	LeftasKillCover	<b>21 %</b>
<b>Taking of Item of Value</b>	ItValue	<b>21 %</b>
<b>Killed by Gunshot</b>	Shot	<b>19 %</b>
<b>Killed by Manual Strangulation</b>	ManStrang	<b>17 %</b>
<b>Control by Threat of Weapon</b>	ContWeapT	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Attack with Threat of Weapon</b>	AttWeapT	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Control Using Verbal Threats</b>	ContVerbT	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Attack with Verbal Threats</b>	AttVerbT	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Non-hostile Verbal Interaction</b>	NonHosVerb	<b>11 %</b>
<b>Masturbation of Offender</b>	MastOff	<b>7 %</b>
<b>Attempted Rape</b>	AttRape	<b>6 %</b>
<b>Masturbate on Victim</b>	MastVic	<b>1 %</b>

Overall, throughout this system of behaviour and all thematic regions, the victim remains an object to be impersonally attacked, controlled and killed by the offender. The impersonal nature of these offences can be seen as a function of the hypothesised modulating facet. Thus, as has been demonstrated above, the salient features in differentiating between the crimes of these offenders relate to the nature of the expressive and instrumental actions committed by the offender. This allows the SSA space to be partitioned into 'Aggressive-Expressive', 'Sexual-Expressive', and 'Criminal-Instrumental' thematic regions.

#### **5.3.4 Thematic Nature of Individual Offenders**

The behaviours displayed by each offender were analysed individually. That is, the distribution of each offender's offence-behaviours on the SSA plot was inspected. This brief inspection of the crimes committed by each offender yielded the following observations. These should be taken into account in any analysis of the offences of South African serial killers. These observations enrich the above research findings, indicate avenues of enquiry for future research, and form further bases for comparison with previous typologies of serial killers. The observations given below are interconnected and complimentary.

##### ***5.3.4.1 No offender is positioned exclusively in one theme***

It was found that no offender's behaviour remained in a single thematic region throughout his series. Rather, an offender's offence behaviours fell in a number of the above-mentioned thematic regions as his series progressed. Nevertheless it was found that one 'theme' tended to be more dominant in his offences. This will be expanded on more in following sections. This is best illustrated by an example: an offender, in his series of 12 murders, exhibited behaviours that occurred in all three thematic regions of the SSA plot. An almost equal proportion of behaviours occurred in each region. However, a closer inspection of the variable distribution on the plot revealed that the offender displayed a slightly larger number of variables from the Sexual-Expressive region. More importantly, the variables in this region were positioned nearer the periphery of the plot. Thus the variables most characteristic of any theme were those found in the Sexual-Expressive region. Thus despite the spread of variables throughout all thematic regions, the Sexual-

Expressive theme was the most characteristic. However, the 'dominant' nature of this theme is less simplistic and clear-cut than presented in previous typologies of serial killers.

#### ***5.3.4.2 External influences on behaviour***

This thematic analysis revealed that offence behaviour can change radically in response to external influences on the offender. For example: factors such as victim resistance, or 'trigger events' occasionally caused massive increases in violence on the offender's part. Returning to the offender used as an example in the previous section: as mentioned, he was characteristically positioned in the Sexual-Expressive category. However, in one offence a large number of Aggressive-Expressive behaviours occurred. Even more unusually, these variables occurred on the opposite side of the SSA plot from his other, more frequently occurring and characteristic behaviours. This, as previously suggested, indicates that these subsets of behaviour are not closely correlated with one another. This also implies that their co-occurrence (in either one offence or a series) is unlikely. In order to explain this unusual finding his interview was inspected. It was shown that the offence displaying these Aggressive-Expressive behaviours occurred after he had had a severe altercation with his wife. It can thus be hypothesised that this sudden change in behaviour was caused by these external factors. Similar examples can be drawn from a number of the individuals in this sample.

#### ***5.3.4.3 Evolution of behaviour***

In this analysis it was found that as the series progresses, the offender's mode of operation evolves. More specifically it was noted that the offender develops a distinct mode of operating as more murders are committed. Here, this means that:

- the offender's behaviour either moves into a distinct thematic region, or
- the offender develops a style of offending based almost exclusively on the high-frequency variables, which denote an impersonal, act-focused, attack.

Referring to the first of the above points: it was found that the behavioural variables of an offender's later crimes were, in comparison with those of his earlier offences, far more likely to be concentrated in a single thematic region. For example: the first murder

committed by an offender in this sample was clearly 'functional', and 'act-focused'. That is, the victim was immediately killed, with little other interaction occurring. However, as the series progressed, the offences became far more aggressive and expressive. The degree of injury inflicted on each victim increased. Finally, the last victim was heavily assaulted and tortured before death. The offender said:

After I killed him [his first victim] I knew well *now*, now I've not just stepped over the edge, I've *dropped* over the edge.

A sentiment displaying a similar expressive violence and loss of control was later expressed, following his third offence:

I decided that every time, after the last murder; that now I'm going to kill everyone I could find under the sun. I was going to kill them. So I was going from over the edge, over the edge right into the fire and further down, you understand. Losing control (Author's files).

He also reports that, as the series progressed, he came close to fulfilling some of the violent fantasies he had previously entertained. These various factors may have led to the offender developing a distinct mode of operation as the series of murders progressed.

In the second of the above points the offender's style of offending evolves into an almost exclusively impersonal act-focused attack based on high-frequency variables. The following example of this pattern can be given. This offender's series of murders began with the violent rape and murder of his employer's wife. She was bound, vaginally and anally raped, and there was evidence of her being assaulted before death. This assault thus showed strong 'expressive' elements. The behavioural variables it exhibited would therefore be positioned towards the periphery of the SSA plot. However, in this offender's subsequent offences, this expressive element dissipated. Thus although the offender reports feelings of intense rage towards his victims, his crime scenes do not reflect this. Rather, his victims were quickly strangled with a ligature, in a 'act-focused' manner, before being dumped. Thus his crimes became 'functional' and aimed at the hasty killing of the victim. This, as mentioned, is characteristic of the high-frequency variables on the SSA plot.

Again, a number of similar examples can be drawn from this sample of offences. However, given that the Criminal-Instrumental region contains variables with a higher overall frequency than any of the other regions (as outlined in the previous section), this finding may be adjusted. That is, it is possible that the evolution of the 'act-focused' pattern noted in certain series is rather the development of a 'Criminal-Instrumental' focus. If this proves accurate then, in all cases, the series of offences develop a more exclusive thematic focus as they progress. However no clear conclusions can be drawn on the basis of this limited sample.

### **5.3.5 Comparison of Themes with Previous Typologies of Serial Killers**

A number of comparisons between these findings around the themes of serial killers' offences and previously hypothesised typologies of serial killers (especially those of Ressler et al., 1986 and Holmes & DeBurger, 1988) are possible. It must be remembered that not all the factors addressed in these typologies (such as geographical behaviour and offender characteristics) were addressed in this study. This limits any comparative discussions. However the following observations can be made:

In these thematic findings there is nothing clearly analogous with Ressler et al's (1986) Organised-Disorganised typology. This typology is based, as is the current research, on an analysis of crime scene behaviours. Despite this similarity, the themes identified here all contain various items that can be thought of as either 'organised' or 'disorganised'. For example: necrophilia (in the Sexual-Expressive theme), cannibalism or mutilation (in the Aggressive-Expressive theme), and masturbating on the victim (in the Criminal-Instrumental theme) have all previously been characterised as 'disorganised' behaviours. However on the SSA plot they are far apart from one another, and in peripheral regions (therefore being extremely characteristic of the thematic region they are found in). In terms of SSA, this finding indicates that these items are not highly correlated with one another. Furthermore, this implies that it is unlikely that these behaviours will occur in the same offence.

This finding thus casts doubt on the value of the Organised-Disorganised differentiation, since this typology is based on the presupposition that certain behaviours (such as those given above) will consistently co-occur in a single offence. And, as has been demonstrated, this is not always the case. These observations are similar to those proffered by previous researchers in this field (for example: Hodge, 2000). Similarly, it can be argued that a simple differentiation between 'organised' and 'disorganised' actions fails to take into account the heterogeneity of these offender's offences and the full range behaviours that occur in them. This factor will also limit the utility of this typology in an investigative setting. These findings lend further support to Canter & Heritages' (1990) proposal that themes of offence behaviour, as opposed to rigid classification systems, be used.

Turning to the typology proposed by Holmes & DeBurger (1988), it is clear that this classification (unlike that of Ressler et al., 1986) takes the range and heterogeneity of serial killers and their behaviours into account. This is done through the proposing of a far greater number of categories of serial killers and their behaviour. The categories proposed in Holmes & DeBurger's (1988) typology are not based solely upon an analysis of the offences. While the serial killer's crimes are taken into account (as shown in Table 4, above) the main criteria used for classification in this typology seems to be the offender's expressed motive for, or psychological gain from, their offence. This is shown in the categories of serial killers bearing titles such as "Lust", "Thrill" or "Missionary" murderers. This makes comparisons with the findings of this research difficult, since this research has been based almost solely on offence behaviours. This also makes the utility of this system of categorisation harder to assess than that of the Organised-Disorganised typology. Therefore the critiques below should be treated with caution, given the limited similarities between this research and that of Holmes & DeBurger (1988).

However, a comparison with these findings around the offence themes of serial killers reveals shortcomings in Holmes & DeBurgers' (1988) typology. Firstly, the themes identified in the current research cannot be easily equated with any of the categories proposed by Holmes & DeBurger (1988). For example, it is unclear which 'category' of serial killer an offender displaying a 'Sexual-Expressive' offence theme would belong to, in

terms of this typology. This ambiguity may limit the utility of this typology in the South African context. Secondly, basing categories on factors that may not be explicit in the crime scene itself (such as, for example, a “thrill” motivation) makes it difficult to apply this typology to the crime scene assessment. Finally, the relationships that Holmes & DeBurger (1988) propose between an offender’s expressed motives and the characteristics of the crime scene may not be accurate.

This can be highlighted by an example drawn from this research: an offender, in the course of the research interview, stated that he committed his murders “for the excitement”. Applying this to Homes & DeBurger’s (1988) typology, it could be proposed that he is a “Thrill” serial killer. Using this typology, it could be expected (as shown in Table 4) that he would commit a disorganised, impulsive crime, with more of a ‘process’ focus. However this offender was strongly represented in the ‘Criminal-Instrumental’ theme. His crimes were thus extremely act-focused, and demonstrated clear elements of pre-planning and ‘organisation’. This is in almost direct contradiction to what could be expected on the basis of Homes & DeBurger’s (1988) classification. Similar examples, where the expressed motive seems to contradict, or not be accounted for in terms of, this typology can be given for those offenders displaying both aggressive and sexually expressive crime scenes.

Turning to the thematic analysis of the offence behaviours of individual offenders: it was demonstrated that no offender was positioned exclusively in a single thematic region. This finding is markedly different from what previous findings and typologies imply about a serial killer’s crimes. These typologies, as outlined earlier, assert that a serial killer displays clearly characteristic behaviours which remain largely consistent across all his offences. This assumption leads to previous typologies being presented as rigid systems of classification, based on mutually exclusive ‘types’ of killer. Examples of this include Ressler et al’s (1986) Organised – Disorganised differentiation and Holmes & DeBurger’s (1988) typology. If we apply this premise to a thematic analysis of offences, it would be expected that any offender’s behaviour will remain within a single thematic region, throughout his series of offences. However, in this analysis, this was not found to be the case. Thus these rigid systems cannot take behaviours that ‘fall across’ categories into

account. In terms of these research findings, previous typologies would therefore be unable to adequately account for *any* of the offences in this sample. On the basis of this observation rigid typological systems are practically unworkable. Given this, more flexible systems of classification, better able to account for the full range and complexity of criminal behaviour, are needed. Therefore these findings lend support to the use of 'themes' (rather than 'types' or 'categories') in analysing offences.

Furthermore the fact that external factors, or 'trigger events', can affect crime scene behaviour is often ignored in previous typological systems. While these systems acknowledge the role played by 'trigger events' in precipitating an offence, they generally assume that an offender is consistent in the manner in which his crimes are committed. The results of this research indicate that this assumption may not be accurate. Rather, an offence may not only be precipitated by a 'trigger event', but could have radically different characteristics due to it. The fact that this is not accounted for in previous typologies may have an adverse effect on the investigative procedures, such as crime scene analyses and offender profiling, that draw on these classifications.

The evolution of an offender's behaviour throughout his series is not accounted for, at all, in previous classification systems. Many previous typologies of serial killers state, often implicitly, that the offender has a distinct mode of operation *from the beginning* of his series of murders. And, as stated above, this is coupled with the assumption that this mode of operation will remain largely unchanged throughout the series. The observations here indicate differently.

Overall, a comparison between past typologies and the empirical findings of this research reveals that significant discrepancies between these sources exist. This indicates that the utility of past typologies in the South African context should be re-assessed. Comparisons with the results of this research demonstrate that previous typologies tend to be overly simplistic (such as, for example, the Organised-Disorganised differentiation), and too rigid to adequately account for an offender's behaviour. The latter criticism becomes even more pertinent in light of these classification systems' failure to take the evolution of an

offender's behaviour into account, as well as ignoring the fact that no offender's series occurs exclusively in one 'theme'. These shortcomings may be a result of the rigid nature of the previous typologies, a problem which is avoided in this research through the use of 'themes'.

Furthermore, previous typologies tend to minimise the role played by external factors in influencing the offence behaviours of serial killers. The above comparisons also emphasise the fact that since some previous typologies (such as Holmes & DeBurger's classification) are not based on an analysis of the serial killers' offences, their potential utility in a criminal investigation is limited. Finally, the empirical findings around the thematic structure of serial killer's offences are not analogous to anything found in previous systems of classification. This discrepancy shows that previous typologies of serial killing may not adequately account for the nature and variation of this phenomenon in South Africa.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

#### 6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research revealed the following. Firstly, the low overall frequencies of variables demonstrated that South African serial killers are highly heterogeneous. That is, they display a wide range of offending styles and offence behaviours. Secondly, on the basis of the most frequently occurring variables in this sample, it was shown that the focal aspects of the offences of South African serial killers are:

- clearly hostile,
- murder-focused events,
- committed against a depersonalised victim. The victim is thus treated as merely an object, a target to be obliterated.

The focus of these killers' offences thus remains the impersonal, act-focused killing of the victim. The high frequency variables demonstrate that no extended interpersonal interaction with the victim was desired or attempted during the offence. In fact, these findings point in the opposite direction, where steps were taken to preclude the possibility of any interaction occurring. It was also found that in the high-frequency variables (referring to behaviours that occurred in more than 30% of the offences) there was a merging between 'instrumental' and 'expressive' actions. 'Instrumental' actions are 'functional' behaviours necessary to successfully complete the offence (such as controlling the victim). 'Expressive' actions are those behaviours that express the offender's emotional state, such as anger. These emotional, expressive actions also refer to behaviours that are sexual, hostile or sadistic by nature.

Thirdly, this research demonstrated that with increasing distance from the central region of the SSA plot, the frequencies of the actions decrease. It was also found that low frequency variables (representing less frequent behaviours and occupying the plot's peripheral regions) characterise the dominant themes of a crime. These less frequent actions thus demonstrate the different 'styles' and behavioural features of the offences. Therefore,

overall, the central region of the SSA plot describes the characteristic 'essence' serial murder and modifies the difference between themes. Lower frequency variables, in contrast, are more unusual and thus reflect the offence characteristics, and themes, of subgroups of offenders.

It was also found that the frequency structure of the SSA plot forms distinct 'contours'. This leads to the hypothesis that the above frequency contours depict a modulating facet which can be conceptualised as the various 'levels' of behaviour that occur in the course of the offence. The modulating facet, as defined by Canter (2000, personal communication) serves to determine what the essence or focus of the system is, with the gradations in this focus producing the various manifestations of the action. These findings indicate that it is possible to infer certain operations of the modulating facet in this sample. Firstly, as the frequency drops the differentiation between 'instrumental' and 'expressive' actions becomes more marked. That is, actions demonstrating obvious instrumental foci are more clearly differentiated from emotional elements in lower frequency variables. Secondly, it was found that variables in the plot's centre have an 'instrumental' focus, becoming more 'expressive' as we approach the periphery. Thus primarily instrumental actions occur with less frequency as we move away from the centre of the plot. Hence 'emotional-expressive' actions occur more clearly, and in greater numbers, in lower frequency variables.

On the basis of the above findings it was hypothesised that the thematic differences between offences would relate more to their emotional (expressive) quality, than their instrumental focal purpose. This hypothesis was found to be correct. By inspecting the distribution of variables in an SSA plot, it was shown that both instrumental and expressive behaviours allow us to differentiate between themes. However, a higher proportion of these thematic differences relate to expressive actions. These variations in criminal behaviour allows for the identification of different themes in the offences of South African serial killers. These are:

- 'Aggressive-Expressive': consisting of behaviours involving the infliction of extreme, often excessive, violence to the victim.

- 'Sexual-Expressive': containing those actions demonstrating that the offender invests the crime with a certain emotional or psychological significance. This is expressed in the offender displaying a greater level of psychological involvement with the victim (or crime), including a more sexual interaction.
- 'Criminal-Instrumental': in this theme, instrumental actions take precedence over expressive needs. Thus these offences are act rather than process focused.

Throughout all thematic regions the victim remains an object to be impersonally attacked, controlled, and killed by the offender.

Finally, a brief inspection of the behaviours of each offender, in terms of their distribution on the SSA plot, yielded the following observations:

- No offender's behaviour is found exclusively in one thematic region.
- Offence behaviour can alter markedly in response to external factors.
- The offender's behaviour evolves as the series of murders progress, with a distinct mode of operation developing.

These observations should be taken into account in interpreting this project's other findings. These observations also contribute towards a more accurate understanding of these offenders in the South African context. The overall research findings outlined above represent the first large-scale empirical study of the offences of South African serial killers. These results clarify the focus, behaviours, and interrelationships of these offences. Through doing this, this research aims to overcome the shortcomings of previous typologies of serial killers. This is especially pertinent in light of the differences in the South African context, which may render these typologies inapplicable. Finally, and most importantly, these results represent the first stages in the creation of an accurate model of South African serial killers.

## **6.2 IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS**

The above findings on the offences of South African serial killers bear marked differences from previous typologies of these offenders. While it was not the aim of this research to assess the efficacy or accuracy of previous typologies, the findings here have a number of

implications for these typological systems. The findings relating to the frequencies of South African serial killers' actions demonstrate that these offenders are not a homogenous grouping. This in turn implies that no simple typology can sufficiently account for all variations in both their offending styles and their characteristics. This implication was supported by the other significant differences found between past typologies and the above empirical findings.

As has been previously discussed, these findings also demonstrate that previous typologies are too rigid and simplistic to account for the heterogeneous and constantly changing nature of a serial killer's offences. This is especially worth noting given the findings relating to the evolution of criminal behaviour, and the fact that no offender is positioned exclusively in one theme. In this regard, the Organised-Disorganised typology proposed by Ressler et al. (1986) needs to be treated with extreme caution when applied to the analysis of South African offenders. Similarly, while Holmes & DeBurger's (1988) typology takes better account of the range of possible serial killer behaviour, it is limited by the fact (as mentioned in a previous section) that it is based on expressed motive rather than offence behaviour.

Given the heterogeneity and proven dynamic nature of these offenders' actions, there is a need to move away from rigid systems of classification based on strict 'categories' of offender. These research findings lend further credence to the identification of themes of offence and offender behaviour, using empirical science, as proposed by Canter & Heritage (1990). Moreover, these findings indicate that such a thematic system may yield more accurate and useful research results. This is highlighted by the discrepancies between previous typologies and the themes of the serial killers' offences, which re-emphasises that these typologies may not be able to adequately account for the nature and variation of this phenomenon in South Africa.

Moving away from a discussion of the implications for past typologies, these findings demonstrate that structured themes of behaviour in the offence variables of South African serial killers can be identified. Coherent and structured variations in the offence behaviours

were found. This research also indicated that, despite the fact that all thematic regions contribute to all the offences, it is likely that different combinations of variables will be displayed by different individuals. This was demonstrated by the findings around the offenders' evolution of thematically distinct offence behaviours. This finding could have great utility in the investigation of these offenders. For example: it could be used for gaining a greater understanding of the evolution of criminal behaviour or for determining whether two or more offences were committed by a single offender. Thus this research demonstrated that it is possible to differentiate between different offenders on the basis of an analysis of their offences. This conclusion indicates that a central assumption of 'offender profiling' is valid in the South African context. This re-affirms the potential that investigative support systems, such as profiling, have for criminal investigations in this country.

Furthermore, the success of this attempt at categorising offences according to themes of behaviour reveals a productive avenue of enquiry into South African offenders. Primarily, these findings demonstrate that it is possible to construct a model of criminal behaviour in South Africa based on an analysis of offence behaviours. Such a model may serve to deepen our understanding of both serial killers and the wider South African criminal population. This is especially pertinent given the possibility that similar themes of offending may be found in criminals who commit various other offences. This possibility is made increasingly likely by the heterogeneous nature of South African serial killers' offences.

This possibility is further increased by the fact that the thematic divisions on this SSA plot are similar to those found in previous SSA research investigating the offences of other classifications of offender. Examples here include Canter & Fritzon's (1998) study of arsonists, and Salfati & Canter's (1999) investigation into stranger murder. The findings of this research thus also lend support to the hypothesised 'radex' model of behaviour (Canter, 2000). As has been outlined, this conception proposes that a criminal's actions are different emphases on a shared spectrum of all possible criminal behaviours and 'themes'. This in turn suggests the existence of a hierarchy or continuum of criminal behaviour, transcending

rigid criminal 'types'. As demonstrated in this research, the thematic regions identified here cannot be seen as independent 'types', but rather different emphases of the same overall phenomenon. A multivariate conception of criminal behaviour based not on rigid 'types', but rather on the idea of a 'radex' (or 'colour circle') is thus proposed (Canter, 2000). That is, in direct contrast to the prevalent implications of previous research, it is suggested that the serial killer not be seen as a 'unique' sub-type of criminal but rather part of, for example, a continuum of criminal behaviour. This conception emphasises the need to see serial killers as part of the wider criminal population.

In light of these research results, it would be productive to pursue this avenue of enquiry in future research on criminal behaviour. These results also indicate potential directions for future research, drawing thematic links between other offender populations. Furthermore, these findings indicate the utility of this methodology in exploring criminal behaviour in the South African setting. This methodology may ultimately overcome the flaws in previously hypothesised typologies of serial killers. It may also aid the construction of models of South African criminal behaviour that are both more accurate and more useful than those 'imported' from other countries.

## **6.3 LIMITATIONS**

### **6.3.1 A problematic definition of serial killers**

The offence behaviours of these offenders, as revealed by the low overall frequencies of actions, were extremely heterogeneous. Thus the definition of 'serial killers' used here is potentially problematic, being too broad and inclusive. This problem may be due to the definition making no presuppositions as to the motive behind, or central elements within, a serial killer's murders. Previous research into serial killers often makes use of such assumptions. However given the fact that this research was largely exploratory, this critique does not limit the utility of the findings.

This research also casts doubt on the existence of rigid criminal 'types'. Thus, in light of a 'radex' conceptualisation of criminal behaviour, it is possible that offenders who should

have been included in the sample (such as, burglars who kill those they encounter) have been excluded. Therefore the definition used may have been too limited. This would create a limited conceptualisation of these offenders. Similarly, a too-inclusive definition (for example, one that makes limited presuppositions as to the motives for an offender's actions) could lead to a superficial understanding. Both these critiques could be applied to the definition of serial killers that was used in this research. This lack of conceptual clarity may limit the overall accuracy of these research findings. While this critique can be applied to most previous research on serial killers, it should be remembered when assessing the accuracy and utility of these findings.

### **6.3.2 Potentially unreliable sources of data**

There are a number of potential problems in the data used in this research. As mentioned by previous researchers in this field, for example Salfati & Canter (1999) and Hodge (2000), information drawn from police documents may be problematic when used for research purposes. That is, relevant data may not have been recorded in these documents. For example, while a complete list of injuries suffered by the victim is included in the case summaries, other actions committed by the offender (such as method of control, or physical restraint of victim) are not reported. This is pertinent here because police case summaries were a major source of data for this project. In this case, the possibility that certain items were not recorded in the case summaries may have led to the construction of a system of codes and variables that did not include all the relevant elements of a serial killer's offences. This would lead to inaccurate final results and analysis.

The problem of incomplete police records was, in part, ameliorated by the use of offender interviews to corroborate the data gleaned from the case summaries. While the use of corroboration does increase the likelihood that the data used in the final analysis is accurate, there are problems with offender interviews that may affect the overall validity of the findings. These relate primarily to the fact that, in the interview, the offender is recalling his crimes. There is thus a temporal gap between the offence and the interview situation, which allows time for the offender to reflect on his actions. Therefore rather than an accurate representation of the offence, the statements made by the offender in the interview may

represent his more recent insights, justifications, or lies. Due to these factors in the interview situation it is difficult to assess what the exact details of the offences are, or what the offender was thinking at the time of his crimes. In this research, the severity of the problems in the offender interview is limited by the use of data corroboration. This is added to by the coding of data in a 'descriptive' manner (that is, the codes aimed to describe, rather than interpret, behaviours). However the possibility that the data gained, from both sources, contains inaccuracies must be taken into account when assessing the overall validity of these research findings.

### **6.3.3 Problems with the sample and sampling procedure**

The sample used in this research (consisting of 73 offences committed by 13 offenders) is small. As pointed out by Salfati & Canter (1999), small sample size limits the generalisability of any findings. The conclusions of the research can thus not be reliably applied to all members of the population from which the sample was drawn (in this case, South African serial killers). Furthermore, a small sample may lead to less accurate overall findings. This is due to it being more difficult to make accurate interpretations, with a small sample. Thus the results of the analysis may be superficial, since they were drawn from so few offences.

Sample selection on the basis of availability and convenience, rather than representivity, is also potentially problematic. While the use of this sampling procedure was deemed suitable for this preliminary exploratory research, it carries with it the risk that the sample is skewed. Furthermore, the possibility of a skewed sample is greater when the sample is small. The use of only incarcerated offenders who were willing to be interviewed in this research also increases the possibility that the sample is skewed. This is due to the chance that offenders willing to participate in a research interview may be markedly different from those who refused such an interview, and were thus excluded from the sample. Furthermore, as indicated above, 8 of the 13 offenders in this sample were white. Given the demographics of South Africa, there is a distinct possibility that this sample does not adequately represent the ethnic variety of South African serial killers.

Therefore this research is limited by small sample size, and the possibility that the sample is non-representative or 'skewed'. These factors must be taken into account when assessing the overall reliability and validity of these findings. However it must also be remembered that given the unusual nature of serial killers' criminal behaviour, and the fact that many of these offenders have been executed, a small sample size is an almost inevitable shortcoming in this type of research. The difficulties in gaining access to incarcerated serial killers for interview purposes also inevitably limits sample size. Therefore a number of the above problems with the sample may be generic to this type of interview-based research, rather than a shortcoming of this research project alone.

#### **6.3.4 Shortcomings in proposed thematic structure**

There are a number of limitations to the thematic structure proposed in this research. The highly heterogeneous nature of the sample, coupled with its small size, means that an in-depth analysis of each theme is not possible. Such an analysis is necessary for an accurate and complete understanding of the offences of South African serial killers. Related to this is the issue that certain regions of the SSA plot contain few variables. Here, this refers particularly to the Sexual-Expressive area. The variables in this region are a greater distance from one another on the SSA plot than those found in the other thematic regions. There are also fewer variables, overall, contained in this region. As pointed out by Canter & Heritage (1990), a lack of variables in certain areas of the SSA plot may indicate shortcomings in the research itself. It is thus possible that the themes hypothesised in this research are not entirely accurate.

In this case, the low number of variables in the Sexual-Expressive region of the SSA plot may indicate the following:

- There are 'gaps' in the sample. Thus the sample is either too small, or it is skewed in favour of a certain 'type' of offender. In this case, the sample may contain few offenders who committed an offence displaying both sexual and expressive behaviours. This may be a further indication that the sample of offenders used is not representative of all South African serial killers.

- There are flaws in the proposed system of behavioural themes. That is, the thematic regions proposed do not adequately represent the phenomenon of serial killing. This, it could be hypothesised, would explain the lack of variables in certain thematic regions.
- The data coding procedure and definitions of variables used in this project need to be altered. That is, the lack of variables in the Sexual-Expressive region of the SSA plot could be a function of flaws in the data coding procedure, rather than an empirical finding relating to the nature of these offences.

These potential shortcomings would affect all the thematic regions of the SSA plot. They would possibly also necessitate a re-structuring of the thematic regions identified. Therefore, these limitations must be borne in mind when assessing this project's results.

#### **6.3.5 Lack of previous South African research**

The fact that no research of this type has previously been carried out in South Africa also limits the conclusions made here. Given the absence of guidance from previous South African research, the analysis and interpretation of the offence variables may be inaccurate. Thus the thematic regions to the SSA plot may be similarly inaccurate. While this is an inevitable criticism of exploratory research, being the first of its kind in a new context, this shortcoming should be borne in mind when assessing this research's validity and reliability. Similarly, while it was not the aim of this research, no analyses of the geographical behaviour or offender characteristics of this sample were carried out. This may limit the utility of this project since these factors are not only useful in investigations, but may also influence the analysis of offence behaviours. Therefore the exclusion of these behaviours and characteristics from this research may limit the overall validity and utility of these findings.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.4.1 Re-assess the definition of serial killers**

As pointed out above, the definition of serial killers in this research may be problematic. Given this, it is difficult to assess whether a certain offender, having committed multiple murders, should be thought of as a serial killer or not. However this criticism can also be applied to the definitions employed in previous research on these offenders (see Section 3.1). These contradictory definitions demonstrate that the issues around the basic conceptualisation of serial killers need to be empirically explored, and verified. Given the lack of research into criminal behaviour in South Africa this need is even more pressing. A more reliable definition and conceptualisation of serial killers would result in more accurate and useful research results. It would also ameliorate the problems, as outlined in the previous section, that poor definitions create for research results.

### **6.4.2 Verify the proposed thematic structure of offence behaviours**

The themes of offence behaviour identified here need to be researched in more depth with a larger, more representative, sample of South African serial murderers. This would counteract the limitations of a small sample. Furthermore, a larger sample will guide necessary adjustments to the coding and interpretative procedures used in this research. These adjustments can also be guided either by the results of this research, or by the needs of serial-killer investigations. Further research would thus enable us to verify the veracity and accuracy of the themes found in this project. This repetition of analyses and re-interpretation of results have previously been used productively to yield more accurate findings. An example of this is the re-interpretation of Canter & Heritage's (1990) findings on the offence behaviours of rapists (referenced in Hodge, 2000). This new interpretation indicated a number of viable avenues for future research, as well as informing a more accurate understanding of this type of offender.

### 6.4.3 Construct a more complete model of South African serial killers

The current research has identified the thematic structure of the offences of South African serial killers. However, if this is to be effectively used in criminal investigations, there is a need to empirically link the themes of serial killers' offences with the themes in their background and behaviour. This research will aid in making inferences about offenders on the basis of their behaviour during an offence. This will have great utility in both criminal investigations and profiling. Furthermore, as advocated by Canter (1995), research of this type will help place offender profiling on an empirical basis. As pointed out in a previous section, there is also a need to analyse the geographical and spatial behaviour of South African serial killers. While this is beyond the scope of this research, this type of research is essential to gain a complete and accurate view of these offenders. This is crucial if research is to make an effective contribution to investigations.

The linking of offence, offender, and geographical characteristics would allow for the construction of a more complete model of South African serial killers. Such a model, as mentioned above, will be extremely useful in the investigation of these offenders. It will also greatly improve the efficacy of investigative support practices such as offender profiling. Furthermore, the creation of a model of South African serial killers will counteract the current dependence on foreign typologies of serial killers in academic and investigative circles. This dependence needs to be counteracted because: firstly, these previous typologies have proven to be problematic and, secondly, these typologies have not been empirically verified in South Africa. They may thus prove to be inapplicable in the different socio-economic climate of this country. The current dependence on these typologies may therefore be both counterproductive and misguided. Hence there is an urgent need for the creation of a more complete model of South African serial killers.

The creation of this model would also facilitate comparisons with previous typological systems. This, in turn, would allow for an accurate assessment of these overseas typologies' efficacy when used in the South African context. Such an assessment forms the basis for an empirical verification of these typologies in the South Africa. This is necessary if these typologies are to be used in South African research and criminal investigations. Similarly,

this comparative assessment may demonstrate whether differences exist between South African serial killers and those found in other countries. The presence or absence of these similarities will indicate directions for further research. This would ultimately improve both the understanding and investigation of these offenders in South Africa.

#### **6.4.4 Linking to the wider criminal population**

As mentioned above (in Section 6.2.) the results of this research indicate that serial killers should not be seen as a unique 'subset' of offender. Rather they should be seen as part of the wider criminal population. This is consistent with Canter's (2000) proposed 'radex' model of criminal behaviour. Thus similar research needs to be undertaken across the South African criminal population. This will help link the themes found in serial killers' offences and background characteristics with those of criminals who have committed other offences. This will improve our understandings of both serial killers, and other (so-called) 'types' of offender. More importantly, this research will allow us to create more accurate models of the systems of offending behaviour. These increasingly accurate models will be more applicable to psychologically-based investigative support (such as offender profiling). And this, ultimately, will contribute towards more efficient criminal investigations.

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## APPENDIX A

### OFFENDER-VICTIM TRANSACTIONS

(List of variables used in analysis, with operational definitions)

N=57

#### 1. Method of Attack:

The “method of attack” refers to the way in which an offender initially overpowers (or gains control over) a victim, having made his approach. It must be remembered that the method of attack is not necessarily consistent with the method of approach. The offender may make use of a number of the actions listed below to begin each attack. An “Attack”, for the purpose of this research, is defined as the ‘onset of criminal or hostile intent on the part of the offender.’

##### 1.1 Verbal Threats: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender initially overpowering / controlling the victim through verbal threats or commands. These include:

- Threats of harm to victim.
- Threats of harm to significant others of victim.

Threats can be made in conjunction with a weapon, or on the basis of physical force alone. Offender self-report is the basis for this variable, given that all victims in this study are deceased.

(AttVerbT)

##### 1.2 Threat with Weapon: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender initially overpowering / controlling the victim through the threat of a weapon (see “Weapon Used” section for a definition of “weapon”). This includes:

- The weapon being used as a threat of severe harm to victim (for example: the offender gestures with the weapon, holds weapon to victim, points weapon at victim).

Offender self-report is the basis for this variable, given that all victims in this study are deceased.

**(AttWeapT)**

**1.3 Use of Weapon: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the offender initially overpowering / controlling the victim through the use of a weapon against a victim (see “Weapon Used” section for a definition of “weapon”). This includes:

- The weapon being used directly against victim (the victim is stabbed, beaten or shot). If this injury is severe enough to incapacitate the victim, this attack also must be classified as a ‘Blitz’ (Variable 13.5).

**(AttWeapU)**

**1.4 Physical Force: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the offender initially overpowering/controlling the victim through the direct use of physical force. If the application of this force is so severe as to incapacitate the victim, this attack must also be classified as ‘Blitz’ (Variable 13.5).

This variable includes:

- Beating victim
- Slapping victim
- Throwing victim to ground
- Kicking victim
- Wrestling with victim.
- Using physical strength to restrain victim.
- Grabbing victim violently.
- Strangling / choking victim.
- Striking victim against object (such as a wall)

This variable is not selected if a weapon was used to apply this force.

**(AttFre)**

### 1.5 **Blitz Attack:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

A 'Blitz' attack is defined as an attack where there is an *immediate* application of overpowering, or lethal force (Burgess & Hazelwood, 1995). The intention is to give the offender immediate control of the situation by depriving the victim of any reaction time. Thus a 'blitz' attack will be classified if the:

- Victim is immediately *incapacitated* by the application of extreme force (for example: severe beating, stabbing, ligature strangulation, gunshot). "Incapacitation" will be defined as being unable to render any further resistance to the attacker (by being, for example, rendered unconscious, severely stunned, or killed).
- 'Blitz' does not refer to cases where the victim is initially stunned, but then able to later recover and render significant resistance. This is due to the fact that the victim is thus not 'incapacitated' – as defined above.

This attack can occur with or without a weapon. Offender self-report is the basis for this variable, given that all victims in this study are deceased.

**(Blitz)**

## 2. Method of Control

These variables refer to the ways in which the offender regulated the behaviour of, or maintained control over, the victim for the duration of the offence. These may be congruent with, or different from, the variables in the previous section.

### 2.1) No Further Control Necessary: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to victims over whom no further control needed to be exercised after the initial attack. Thus it refers to:

- Victims of a "blitz" attack.
- Victims who tender no further resistance to the offender after the initial attack.

Offender self-report is the basis for this variable, given that all victims in this study are deceased. This variable does not necessarily exclude the use of other modes of control (such as bindings), even if the use thereof is not necessary.

**(ContNotNec)**

## 2.2 **Verbal Threats**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender who maintains control over the victim through verbal threats or commands. These include:

- Threats of harm to victim.
- Threats of harm to significant others of victim.

Threats can be made in conjunction with a weapon, or on the basis of physical force alone. Offender self-report is the basis for this variable, given that all victims in this study are deceased.

**(ContVerbT)**

## 2.3 **Threat with Weapon**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender who maintains control over the victim through the threat of a weapon (see “Weapon Used” section for a definition of “weapon”). This includes:

- The weapon being used as a threat of severe harm to victim (for example: the offender gestures with the weapon, holds weapon to victim, points weapon at victim).

**(ContWeapT)**

## 2.4 **Use of Weapon**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender who maintains control over the victim through the use of a weapon against a victim (see “Weapon Used” section for a definition of “weapon”). This includes:

- The weapon being used directly against victim (the victim is stabbed, beaten or shot).

**(ContWeapU)**

## 2.5 **Physical Force**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the offender controlling the victim through the direct use of physical force. If force is in excess of what is needed to control or restrain the victim it is *not* classified under this variable (refer to “Physical Assault”/ “Overkill”). This variable includes:

- Beating victim
- Slapping victim
- Throwing victim to ground
- Kicking victim
- Wrestling with victim.
- Using physical strength to restrain victim.
- Grabbing victim violently.
- Strangling / choking victim
- Striking victim against object (such as a wall)

This variable is not selected if a weapon was used to apply this force.

**(ContForce)**

## 2.6 **Binding**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the binding, or tying up, of the victim by the offender in order to maintain control over him / her. This binding can make use of clothing, wire, or similar article. If binding is in excess of what is needed to control or restrain the victim it is *not* classified under this variable (refer to “Bondage”). Binding can either be:

- Opportunistic (that is, found on the scene and used opportunistically to control the victim)
- Brought to the scene by offender i.e. “Planned” (implying an element of premeditation and preplanning).

**Note:** None of the latter type was (unequivocally) present in the sample

**(ContBind)**

## 3. **Weapon Used:**

A “weapon” is defined as: Any item that is used for the purpose of controlling the victim or administering force

### 3.1 **Planned Weapon**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

‘Yes’ is marked if the weapon is:

- Brought to the scene by offender i.e. “Planned” (implying an element of premeditation and preplanning).

**(WeapPlan)**

### 3.2 **Weapon Available On Scene:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

‘Yes’ is marked if the weapon is

- Opportunistic (that is, available at the scene and used opportunistically). This includes weapons, such as penknives, carried by the offender as routine (for example, for work or self-defence purposes).

**Note:** a ligature is defined as a weapon only if it is used for the purpose of strangling the victim. If it is only used for control (as in “Binding”), then it is not considered to be a weapon.

**(WeapOnSc)**

## 4. **Acts Performed by Offender:**

These variables refer to the physical actions carried out by the offender in the course of the offence. These actions are those that *have not* been referred to those in the ‘Method of Attack’ and ‘Method of Control’ sections. Various offender motives, both conscious and unconscious, can be ascribed to these actions. However, for this research, these motives will not be included in the classification of these variables

### 4.1 **Biting:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to whether the offender bit his victim, anywhere on the body, during the offence.

**(Bite)**

### 4.2 **Physical Assault:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This refers to whether the offender struck the victim (with fist, feet, or weapons). This assault must involve violence in excess of that required to gain compliance from, or control over, victim. This assault occurs in the course of the offence, differentiating it that which

may be applied in the course of a “Blitz” attack. Unlike “Overkill”, it is not intended to kill the victim.

**(Assault)**

**4.3 Bondage: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the binding of the victim in an excessive, highly idiosyncratic, or sadistic manner. This variable is used if:

- Bindings used are applied in excess of what is necessary to restrain or control the victim.
- Bindings are applied in a manner that indicates that the offender intentionally wished to cause the victim pain with the bindings.
- Bindings are applied in a highly unusual or unique manner (for example: the use of a distinctive form of gag or knot, or an elaborate system of restraint).

**(Bond)**

**4.4 Mutilation: Pre-mortem: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the mutilation of a *living* victim by the offender. This mutilation can be dealt by hand or by a weapon. “Mutilation” is indicated if:

- The victim has suffered numerous injuries.
- These injuries were not inflicted for “Attack”, “Control”, or “Fatal” purposes.

This mutilation can be inflicted for the purpose of torture, or for the purpose of sexual sadism. This variable includes the severing of body parts while the victim is alive.

**(MutilAM)**

**4.5 Mutilation: Post-mortem: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the mutilation of a *dead* victim by the offender. This mutilation can be dealt by hand or by a weapon. “Mutilation” is indicated if:

- The victim has suffered numerous injuries.
- These injuries were not inflicted for “Attack”, “Control”, or “Fatal” purposes.

This mutilation can be inflicted for ‘curiosity’ / ‘exploratory’ or cannibalistic purposes.

**(MutilPM)**

**4.6 Cannibalism: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the consumption of the flesh or blood of the victim by the offender.

**(Cannibal)**

**4.7 Pre-mortem Object Insertion: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the insertion of an object (such as bottle, knife, or broom handle) in the anus or vagina of a *living* victim in the course of the offence. This includes digital penetration.

**(AMIns)**

**4.8 Post-mortem Object Insertion: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the insertion of an object (such as bottle, knife, or broom handle) in the anus or vagina of a *dead* victim in the course of the offence.

**(PMIns)**

**4.9 Vaginal Penetration: Rape: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the penetration of the victim's vagina by the penis of the offender. This shall occur without the victim's consent, thus constituting an act of rape (Vogelman, 1990). This shall occur in the course of the offence.

**(VPenRape)**

**4.10 Vaginal Penetration: Consensual: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the penetration of the victim's vagina by the penis of the offender. This shall occur with the victim's consent. This variable will *only* be selected if:

- Offender was having consensual sex with prostitute, or intimate other, prior to killing them.

It will *not* be selected if:

- Offender alleges victim gave consent.
- Where consent was obtained under duress, or by using threats.

**(VPenCons)**

**4.11 Anal Penetration: Rape: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the penetration of the victim's anus by the penis of the offender. This shall occur without the victim's consent, thus constituting an act of rape (Vogelman, 1990). This shall occur in the course of the offence.

**(APenRape)**

**4.12 Attempted Rape: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

"Attempted rape" is defined as an attempted act of sexual penetration (anal or vaginal).

This penetration could not be achieved due to any of the following:

- Sexual dysfunction on the part of the offender.
- Victim resistance.
- Offender being disturbed in the course of the offence.

**(AttRape)**

**4.13 Oral Sex: On Offender: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the victim being forced (through physical force or threats) to perform oral sex on the offender.

**(OralOffen)**

**4.14 Oral Sex: On Victim: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the offender performing oral sex on the victim.

**(OralVict)**

**4.15 Masturbation Of Offender: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the masturbation of the offender by the victim. This masturbation can be voluntary (on the victim's part) or committed under duress.

**(MastOff)**

**4.16 Masturbation On Victim: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the victim masturbating onto a living or dead victim.

**(MastVic)**

**4.17 Necrophilia: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the offender had sexual intercourse (anal or vaginal) with a dead victim.

**(Necro)**

**4.18 Verbal Interaction: Hostile: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the offender speaking to the victim in a hostile manner during the offence.

This includes:

- Expressing aggressive intent.
- Threatening the victim.
- Demeaning or insulting language.

This refers to verbal interaction that occurs in excess of that needed for “Attack” and “Control” purposes. This variable must be based on offender self-report.

**(HostVerb)**

**4.19 Verbal Interaction: Non-hostile: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the offender speaking to the victim in a non-hostile manner during the offence. This includes:

- Seeks to reassure or calm victim.
- Compliments victim.
- Enquires about victim wellbeing.
- Engages victim in conversation, with no overtly hostile features.

This variable must be based on offender self-report.

**(NonHosVerb)**

**4.20 Items Taken: Valuables: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This item refers to anything that originally belonged to a crime scene that the offender took with them when they left. Specifically, this variable refers to items taken that have some financial value to the offender (Burgess & Hazelwood, 1995). That is, these items are taken primarily for profit. This would include items such as:

- Cell phones.
- Money.
- Weapons.
- Drugs.
- Motor vehicle or other transport.
- Jewellery (if intended for re-sale, not collection by the offender).
- Clothing (if intended for re-sale, not collection by the offender).

**(ItValue)**

**4.21 Items Taken: Trophy/Souvenir: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to items taken by the offender from the scene for sentimental or remembrance reasons. They can either be taken as a 'symbol of conquest' or a 'token of remembrance' (Burgess & Hazelwood, 1995). The financial value of these items is of secondary importance. This would include items such as:

- Undergarments of victim.
- Hair of victim
- Jewellery and clothing of victim (collected by offender, not for re-sale purposes)
- Victim identification documents.

This item must be corroborated by the self-report of the offender, where the item taken could be classified under either of the previous variables. If the purpose behind taking an item is not clear, it should *not* be classified under this variable.

**(ItTrophy)**

**5. Fatal Attack:**

These variables refer to the manner in which the offender killed the victim. More than one of the variables below can be indicated. This is because:

- A number of injuries inflicted on the victim may have been sufficient to cause death.
- The offender may have tried multiple means to cause death.

- The victim may have died due to factors that are not the direct result of the offender's actions (for example: victim suffocates in own blood after victim beats him / her unconscious).

Thus, both the attack that was intended to kill the victim, and the mechanism by which the victim died, (if they are different) are being classified in this variable.

**Note:** I am aware that methods of Attack and Control may 'overlap' with, or 'overflow' into, a fatal attack. This makes classification here potentially problematic.

#### **5.1 Manual Strangulation: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the offender killed the victim by strangling him / her using his hands.

**(ManStrang)**

#### **5.2 Ligature Strangulation: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the offender killed the victim by strangling him / her using a ligature.

**(LigStrang)**

#### **5.3 Asphyxiation / Smothering: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the offender killed the victim by smothering. This also includes victims who asphyxiated on their own blood after being rendered unconscious; as well as those who are drowned.

**(Smother)**

#### **5.4 Cutting: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the killing of the victim by a cut (or cuts) inflicted by the offender, using a weapon. "Cuts" refer to incisions that are longer than they are deep (Geberth, 1996)

**(Cutting)**

**5.5 Stabbing: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the victim being killed by a stab wound (or wounds), inflicted with a weapon. "Stabs" refers to incisions that are deeper than they are wide (Geberth, 1996).

**(Stabbing)**

**5.6 Blunt Force Trauma: Weapon: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the victim was killed by the application of blunt force trauma using a weapon.

**(BltWeap)**

**5.7 Blunt Force Trauma: Physical force: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the victim was killed by the application of blunt force trauma using only the offender's body (for example: fists and feet), in the absence of a weapon.

**(BltForce)**

**5.8 Gun shot: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the victim was killed by gunshot.

**(Shot)**

**5.9 Neck broken: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the victim died due to having their neck broken by the offender

**(NeckBrk)**

**5.10 Blood Loss: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to whether the victim died due to blood lost in the course of the offence.

**(BloodLoss)**

**6. Intentional Killing:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to whether the offender intended to kill the victim in this offence, or if the death of the victim was 'accidental' or the result of an 'offence gone wrong'. For example: an attempted rape where the offender kills the victim while trying to overcome resistance. This variable is based on offender self-report. 'Yes' refers to an intentional murder.

**(IntendKill)**

**7. Overkill:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This refers to the manner in which injuries were inflicted, as well as the extent of these injuries. These injuries can be dealt by hand or by a weapon. "Overkill" should not be confused with "Mutilation". "Overkill", unlike "Mutilation", is performed with the express purpose of killing the victim. It is defined as: "Excessive trauma or injury beyond that necessary to cause death" (Douglas, Burgess, Burgess, Ressler, 1993, p.354).

"Overkill" is indicated if:

- The victim has suffered numerous injuries.
- There are numerous, repeated, injuries to one area of the victim's body (such as torso or face).
- These injuries resulted in the death of the victim.
- The extent of the injuries is in excess of what can be considered fatal.

**(Overkill)**

**8. Site of Injuries:**

These variables refer to where the sites of injury were situated on the victim. This includes injuries administered for "Attack", "Control" or other purposes (such as mutilation).

**8.1 Head / Face:** Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This refers to injuries to the victim's head or face.

**(InjHead)**

**8.2 Neck: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to injuries to the victim's head or face.

**(InjNeck)**

**8.3 Torso: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to injuries to the victim's chest or abdomen.

**(InjTorso)**

**8.4 Genital: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to injuries to the victim's pelvis or genital region. This does not refer to injuries inflicted in the course of a sexual assault – unless these are particularly severe.

**(InjGen)**

**Note:** The limbs are excluded from the above classification since no offenders in this case specifically targeted the victim's limbs for assault / injury.

**8.5 Multiple Injuries to One Site: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the offender afflicting multiple injuries (such as repeated stabbings or beatings) to one or more of the above sites.

**(Mult1site)**

**9. Disposal / Dump site Aspects**

These variables refer to the manner in which the offender “dumped” / disposed of the victim's body.

**9.1 Left as Killed: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This variable refers to the victim's body being left in the position they were killed in. The body is not moved or covered in any way by the offender after the fatal attack has occurred. This also implies that the “Point of Murder” and “Dump/disposal site” are situated at the same scene.

**(LeftasKill)**

### 9.2 **Left as Killed: Body Covered**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This variable refers to the victim's body being left in the position they were killed in. Here the body is covered with items (such as leaves, grass, blankets). This covering may be due to any combination of the following factors:

- Hiding the body to prevent discovery (this includes hiding bodies for necrophilic purposes).
- Psychological reasons such as 'undoing' – where the offender attempts to symbolically 'undo' the murder (Douglas, Burgess, Burgess & Ressler, 1993)

This variable can also include burying the body of the victim at the place he / she was killed.

**(LeftasKillCover)**

### 9.3 **Dumped**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

Here "dumping" refers to: moving the body of a victim from the "Point of Murder" to the "Dump/disposal site". This variable enquires as to whether the body is dumped "as killed", not bound or covered in any way.

**(Dump)**

### 9.4 **Dumped: Body Covered**: Yes (1) vs. No (0)

This refers to the body of a victim that is moved from the "Point of Murder" to the "Dump/disposal site". The variable enquires as to whether the body (or any parts thereof) was covered / wrapped in material. This may be for the reasons outlined under variable 9.2, as well as for convenience in transporting the body.

**(DumpCover)**

**Note:** In none of the cases included here did the offender 'display' the body.

## 10. **Offender Return to Site:**

This variable refers to whether the victim returned to the "Dump/disposal" site of this offence, on one or more occasions after the offence. This 'return' can be classified as:

**10.1 Return – For Criminal reasons: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the offender returning to the scene for reasons that relate to his trying to avoid capture (or to facilitate his taking forensic counter-measures). This variable includes returning to:

- Observe police processing the scene, or
- To move the body.

**(RetCrim)**

**10.2 Return – For Psychological reasons: Yes (1) vs. No (0)**

This refers to the offender re-visiting the scene for psychological reasons (such as curiosity, sexual arousal, or regret). This includes:

- To reminisce about the crime.
- To murder another victim in a similar area.
- To commit necrophilia

**(RetPsy)**

