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# Levels and Variations of Violation in Rape.

DAVID CANTER\*, STEPHEN REDDY, LAURENCE ALISON & CRAIG BENNELL

## Synopsis

**This chapter investigates the variations in crime scene behaviour revealed in a sample of victim statements in cases of stranger sexual assault. Building on previous findings by Canter and Heritage (1990), and Canter (1994), it was hypothesised that there existed a scale of differing levels of violation by the offender. This scale, based upon actions in the offence, ranged from personal violation, through to physical violation and finally, at the most extreme level, sexual violation. Offences could also be differentiated at the personal and physical levels in terms of *hostile, controlling, stealing* or *involving* thematic emphases to the criminal's actions.**

**To test these hypotheses, crime scene data from the first detected offences of 112 British rapists were analysed using a multi-dimensional scaling procedure to explore the relationships amongst crime scene actions. The results provided empirical support for the four action themes as different expressions of various intensities of violation. The implications that these findings have for the investigation of stranger sexual assault and treatment of victims are discussed.**

The core feature of sexual assault is sexual violation. The significance of the actual penetrative act and subsequent feelings of having been totally invaded are well documented by those studying the effects of rape on victims (Cohen & Roth, 1987). Numerous studies have explored the impact of this violation. De Clerq (1995) found social and personal upheaval, homelessness and divorce. Foa and Riggs (1995) reported victims<sup>1</sup> suffering post traumatic stress disorder, and victims in a study by Kilpatrick et al (1985) discussed the initial violation and the resultant anxiety, fear and suspicion it precipitated. However, though sexual violation may be the central identifying feature of rape, other physical and personal forms of violation are also suffered at the hands of the offender. In their chapter on 'Loss and Mourning in Victims of Sexual Assault', Hopkins and Thompson (1984) describe how victims discuss feelings associated with the loss of trust, freedom and at a deeper level, identity: 'What impressed me most was the loss...of a sense of identity. They knew who they were; they had a personal identity. But it was as if, subjectively, their lives no longer hung together - and never would again' (Erikson, 1969, p.37). Individual's who experience life-threatening danger, fear, pain and humiliation, retain their personal identities, but in most cases, their sense of identity is extremely disturbed: '...rape is a crime against a woman's very being - her self. It tears away the very fabric of being, of one's essence' (Sanders, 1980, p.156).

Bard and Ellison (1974) describe a spectrum of reactions confronting victims of crime depending on the extent of the interpersonal violation. Burglary, for example, is seen as violation of the home and to some degree, the self. Armed robbery intensifies the stress by the added dimension of an encounter between victim and offender. Here the violation is compounded by a coercive deprivation of independence and autonomy. Actual physical assault further stresses the victim for whom the injury to the body serves as concrete evidence of the forced surrender of autonomy. In stranger sexual assault, the victim is also subjected to sexual violation; invasion of her most private space. Additionally, she is also subjected to personal humiliation. Rape depersonalises victims, particularly since, in our present culture, sexual identity constitutes such an important part of our personal identity.

That there are levels of violation has also been recognised by those researching the significance of interpersonal space. For example, Sanders (1976) found that personal space correlated with body-image boundary. Body-image boundary refers to an individual's perception of their physical boundary. Their personal space is that significant area that surrounds them. Intrusion of this personal space by strangers causes anxiety. Anxiety is heightened by the further intrusion of the physical boundary. These findings echo sentiments of those studying human territoriality. For example, Edney (1974) explains the levels of territorial boundaries as starting with the self, moving outwards to the body, then personal space, then the individual's home and so on. With regard to sexual assault, the analogous levels of violation may be hypothesised as ranging from the highly intrusive sexual penetration, through degrees of physical assault, to the less invasive forms of verbal assault and assault on aspects of the victim's property.

These levels of violation are not considered explicitly in any current typology of rape. The most popular of the current theories is that developed by Groth et al (1977a). They argue that sexual assault relates to sexual behaviour in the service of non-sexual needs and propose a four-fold classification system. In essence, this is based on the offender's perspective. However, as interesting as this is, no reliable test of it has been reported. As

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, offenders are male and their victims female (see Hodge & Canter, 1998 for a discussion of rape of male victims).

a consequence, many of the ambiguities in the classification system remain unresolved. Similarly, the Crime Classification Manual (Douglas et al, 1992), which integrates components from classification schemes proposed by Groth (1979), Lanning (1987), Prentky, Cohen & Seghorn (1986) and Hazelwood (1987), also emphasises the offenders' experience and loses important distinctions that are apparent when the victims' perspective is taken into account.

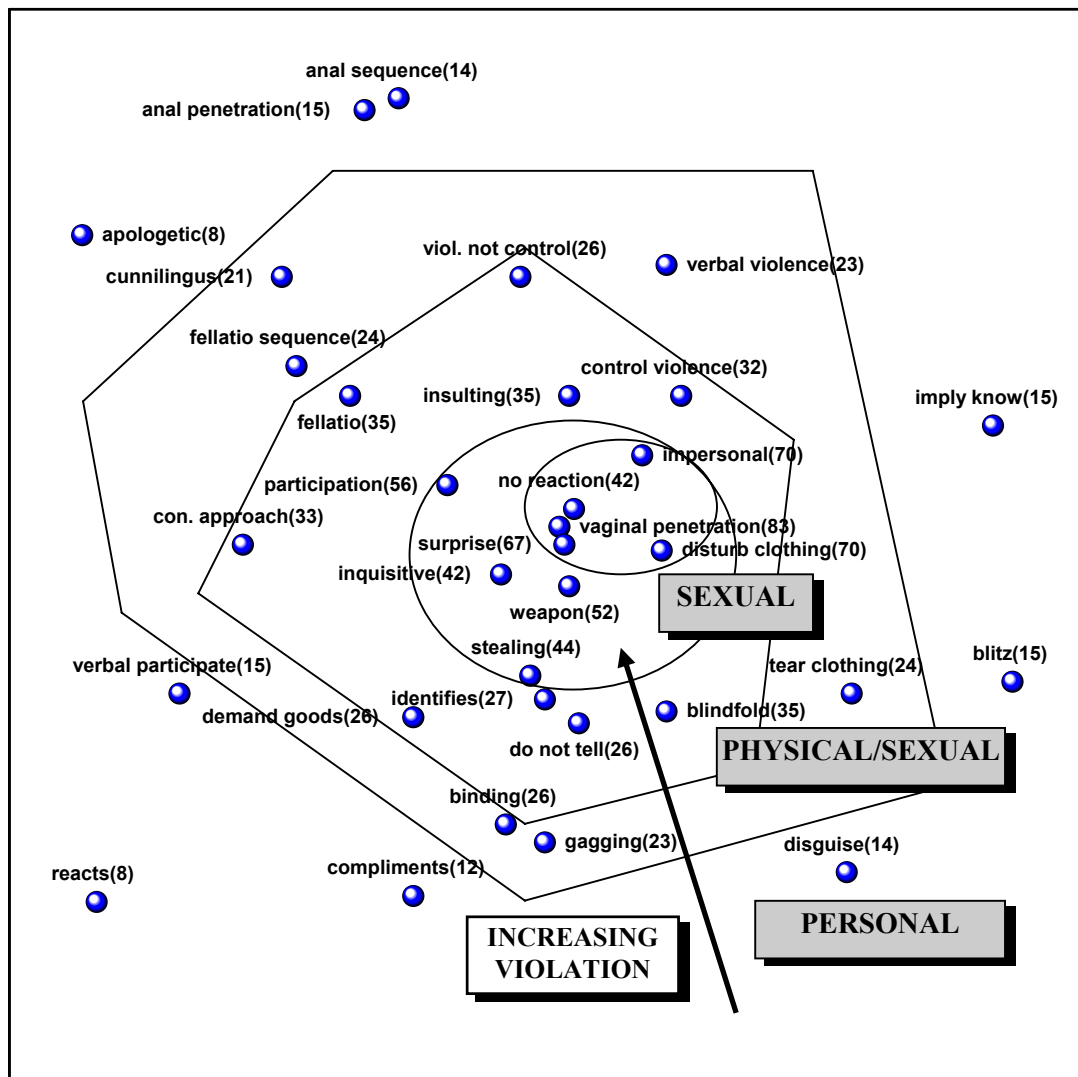
In contrast to these descriptive classification schemes derived, in the main, from summaries of clinical or investigative experience, a new direction for understanding sexual assaults is emerging. Studies are being carried out in which empirical examinations of the actions that occur in crimes are used to determine the actual variations that do distinguish between offences.

### **Levels of Violation**

Canter and Heritage (1990), for example, developed a multivariate model of sexual assault based on the premise that any such model should encapsulate and explicate variations in the offender's mode of interaction with the victim. They conducted a study of 66 offences committed by 27 offenders. The sample consisted of both serial and non-serial offenders. Thirty-three variables, which related directly to the behaviour of the offender at the crime scene, were drawn by content analysis from the statements of the 66 sexual assault victims. They employed facet theory and a multi-dimensional scaling technique - Smallest Space Analysis (SSA-I) (Lingoes, 1973) - to explore the relationship between the offence variables. Canter and Heritage examined the frequency of occurrence of each variable and found a hierarchy of frequencies. High frequency variables were found at the centre of the SSA plot and lower frequency variables radiated outwards from the centre. The location of the higher frequency actions in the centre of the plot indicates that these behaviours are central identifying features of sexual assault.

Figure 1 is the summary of the SSA-I results from Canter and Heritage's (1990) study. As would be expected, vaginal penetration is at the core of sexual assault, occurring in 83 per cent of cases. Less obvious, but in keeping with the idea that they are conceptually less focal to the offence, are the variables towards the edges of the plot. These include implies knowing, compliments, verbal participation (by victim) and apologies. These variables represent personally violating aspects of the offence. These are lower frequency variables and are less likely to co-occur as is shown by their being spread around the plot. Between these two extremes there are a mixture of physical and sexually violent actions. This pattern is not perfect, however. A number of variables do not conform to the conceptual interpretation - notably anal penetration and verbal insult. Nevertheless, the general pattern of frequencies suggests that sexual assault is essentially a crime of violation which can occur at distinctly personal, physical, and sexual levels.

**Figure 1. SSA of behaviour in 66 sexual assaults with frequency contours (adapted from Canter and Heritage, 1990). Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories. Values in brackets are percentage frequencies.**



Therefore the scale of violation is summarised as follows:

**Personal > Physical / Sexual > Sexual**



**Increasing Level of Violation**

In a further development of this model, Heritage (1992) analysed 209 cases of stranger sexual attacks committed by 76 individuals. The sample contained serial and non-serial offenders. This study also revealed a central core consisting of vaginal penetration and vaginal penetration from the front which represented the most frequently occurring

behavioural variables across this sample of sexual assaults. A similar radial structure as had been identified by Canter and Heritage (1990) was present. Examination of the lower frequency variables revealed that generally they represented the more personally violent aspects of the offence: implies knowing, demeans, reassures, apologises, con approach and victim sexual comment. Again, between the two extremes of sexually and personally violent actions, there existed a mixture of physically and sexually violent acts. Although, again a number of actions do not fit the hypothesis perfectly, the general pattern of frequencies supports the proposed three levels of violation.

More recently, in a study of 105 sexual assaults, Canter (1994) has shown that, as in previous studies, results of an SSA revealed a frequency pattern of common core variables at the centre of the plot with decreasing frequency contours towards the outer margins of the plot. Canter argued that the lower frequency actions are most characteristic of a particular mode of offender-victim interaction. Examination of that SSA (see Figure 2) reveals that the act of sexual violation forms the core of the rape. The low frequency actions include demand for goods, reassures, implies knowing victim, victim comment (sexual) and verbally violent. These are situated around the edges of the SSA plot constituting a more personally violating set of behaviours. Between these two extremes are the majority of the physically violent behaviours.

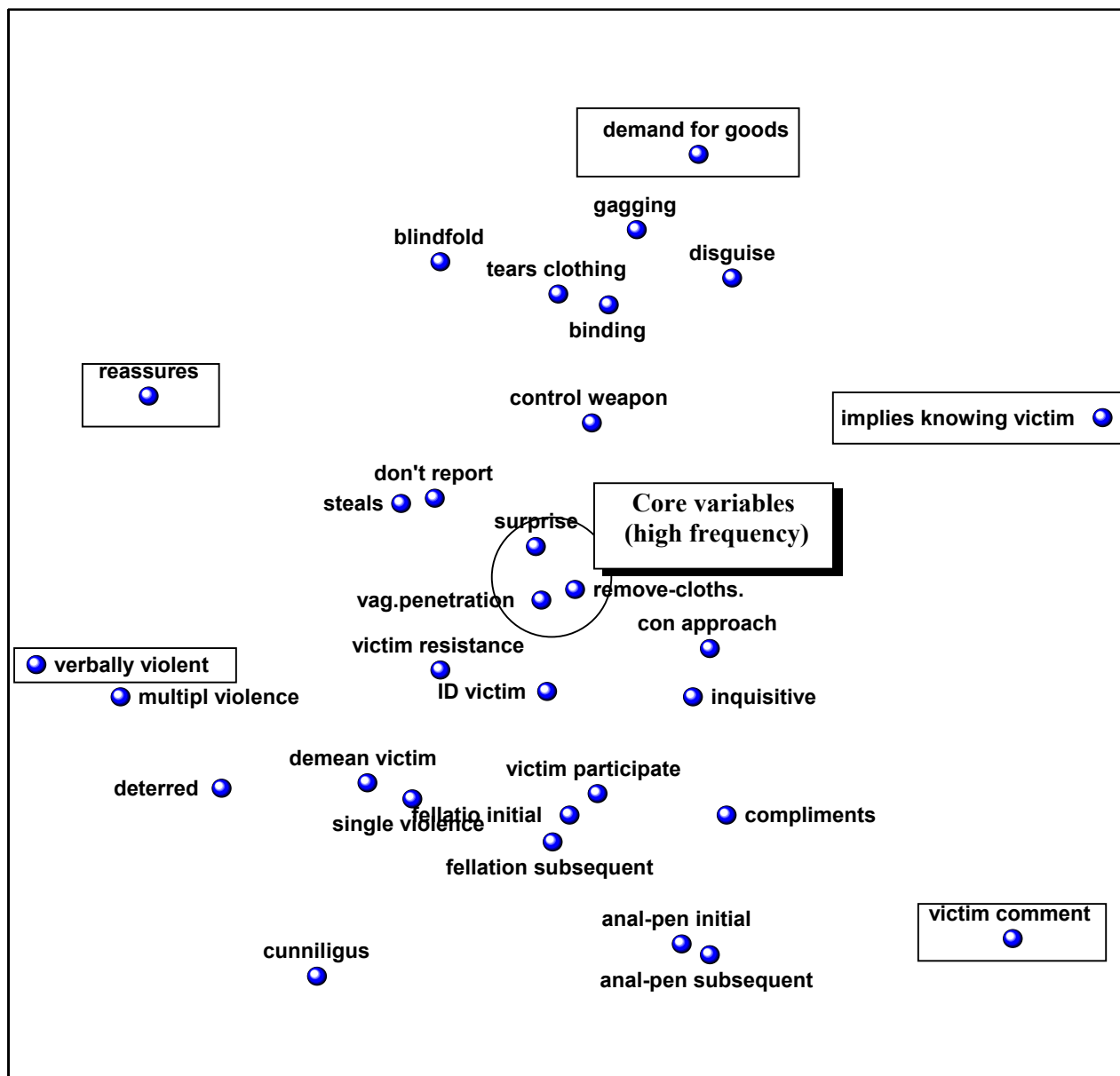
The actions on the periphery are the most distinct ones. They are spread out indicating less likelihood of their happening in the same offence. They are therefore the aspects of the offence that most readily distinguish between offenders. In both data sets they have a more 'hands-off' quality - commenting, demanding, reassuring - than the physically and sexually intrusive actions towards the centre of the configuration. It would therefore seem that these interpersonal aspects of the assault discriminate between offenders rather than the directly sexual and violent aspects that define the offence.

There are, however, some differences between the pattern of variables shown in Figure 1 from that in Figure 2. This can be understood from the differences in the two samples as well as the differences in the set of variables used. Indeed, detailed direct comparison is extremely difficult without very close consideration of the actual actions coded in each study and what the specific coding categories mean. Similarities can be seen by the fact that similar variables are close together in each configuration. For example, the points associated with anal penetration, cunnilingus and fellatio as well as violent control are all in a contiguous region in both SSAs. Similarly, blindfold, gagging, demand for goods and tearing of clothing also are one region in both plots, as are participation, con-approach and inquisitive. It is against this backdrop of similarity that two variables stand out as being in different regions in each configuration.

One is the variable that records the offender complimenting the victim. In Figure 1, this is in the same region as gagging, blindfold, etc. In Figure 2, it is more a part of the participation, inquisitive region. This variable certainly makes more sense in its location in Figure 2 and could be a product of coding error and/or a rare incident that produced the location in the smaller sample that gave rise to the Canter and Heritage results. The other variable noteworthy for its different location is the one that records the offender implying some knowledge of the victim. In both cases it is a rather rare variable with no other variables close to it, but in Figure 2 its closest neighbours are disguise and con-approach. Figure 2 makes more sense than Figure 1 where blitz and control with violence are its neighbours.

The location of rare variables is very sensitive to the particular incidents in which those variables occur. The smaller the sample the more possibility that some peculiarities of a particular situation give rise to the location of that variable in the configuration. The more intuitively sensible structure of Figure 2 therefore does make sense. The larger sample, and probably the clarification of the coding framework from the initial Canter and Heritage study, has led to the later analysis in Figure 2 being a somewhat more valid representation of the patterns of actions in rape.

**Figure 2. SSA of behaviour in 105 sexual assaults with regional interpretations (adapted from Canter, 1994). Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories.**



Personal violation (low frequency)

We have argued that in taking account of the victim's perspective of the offence, the behavioural structure revealed in previous multivariate studies is comprised of levels of violation. In facet theory terms, this structure is referred to as a modulating facet, defined by Levy (1985) as a simply (or partly) ordered facet made up of concentric bands around a common origin. In relation to rape the hypothesis arises of an ordered modulating facet comprised of three levels of violation - personal, physical and sexual.

### Varieties of Violation



As well as differences in levels (or degrees) of violation there are likely to exist qualitative differences (variation). Consequently, any distinction between such assaults are likely to be related to variation at the physical and personal level of violation. As stated by Canter and Heritage (1990), and Canter (1994), variation in sexual assaults can be identified through examination of the crime scene variables of lower frequency, i.e. those not central to the sexual violation.

Whilst drawing heavily on the multivariate structure presented by Canter (1994), there is a need for an interpretation that focuses on actions the offender carries out on the victim rather than proposing labels reflecting the variety of roles a victim might assume for an offender. The rationale behind this involves the need to develop a model that classifies groups of crime scene actions as different behavioural themes. In doing this, making any inference from behaviours about what the victim might represent to the offender is avoided. Instead, the only inference made is based on an assessment of the nature of the behaviour. Therefore, in the four modes of offender-victim interaction that are hypothesised, the labelling focuses exclusively on behaviours. These are: hostility, control, theft and involvement. Evidence for these four behavioural themes can be drawn from the diverse literature on sexual assault.

### **Hostility**

This general theme of aggression and violence occurs consistently in a variety of forms within the literature on sexual assaults. In the Crime Classification Manual, Douglas et al (1992) cite 'anger' as a central motivation inferred by certain offence behaviours. In previous studies by Canter and Heritage (1990) and Heritage (1992) a region can be interpreted as reflecting an overtly aggressive offence style. Behaviours typical of this offending style include: verbal violence, insulting/demeaning language, tearing victim's clothes and gratuitous violence. Similarly, in Canter (1994), the actions interpreted as reflecting more overtly aggressive behaviour, such as multiple and single violence, and demeaning the victim are defined by Canter as the 'victim as vehicle'. He describes the assigned role as one where the victim must carry the load of the offender's desires, serving as a vehicle for him to use. In this regard, the victim has some human significance and there is a characteristically exploitative quality to the relationship between offender and victim. Within the general criminological literature, a theme of aggression or violence is noted as one distinct type or set of behaviours in many forms of crime. For example, Feshbach (1964) and Bartol (1986) propose that it may be possible to differentiate homicides in terms of whether they are predominantly 'expressive' or 'instrumental'. Bartol outlines this split as 'hostile aggression' (expressive) and 'instrumental'. The hostile aggression type, Bartol contends, accounts for the majority of homicides, rapes and other violent crimes. A related term is hostility, which Buss (1961) confined to negative evaluations or attitudes of resentment, mistrust or hate. 'Hostility' is used in this study because it describes both the physical aggression and violence represented by the behaviours within this theme and also the general approach to the victim where the offender attempts to humiliate and demean her.

### **Control**

The behavioural theme of 'control' also has some origins in the literature on offender motivations. Behaviours characteristic of this offence style are referred to by Douglas et al (1992) as expressions of a 'power' motivation. They propose that the offender regards the victim as an inanimate object that must be trussed and coerced, whom the offender will neither attempt to demean or cajole. The offender has no empathy for the victim's reactions and experiences no remorse for his crime. However, the term 'control' is used

here because it describes the behavioural theme these crime scene actions represent more effectively.

### **Theft**

The set of criminal activities that involve stealing from the victim have often been noted in earlier studies of rape (e.g. Canter and Heritage, 1990; Canter, 1994; Heritage, 1992). Often, these behaviours have been considered as part of the control theme, notably by Canter and Heritage (1990). Whilst there is some logic to that, it might be expected that this object oriented focus of offending may be distinguishable from the more general controlling factors of the offence. These are clearly aspects of an offender's style that have parallels with the 'instrumental' classification of offences as suggested by Bartol (1986). The offender is using the opportunities presented by the crime for some future instrumental goal not just for the immediate gratification of the sexual assault. So, although its relationships to control are recognised, 'theft' is proposed as a distinguishable theme.

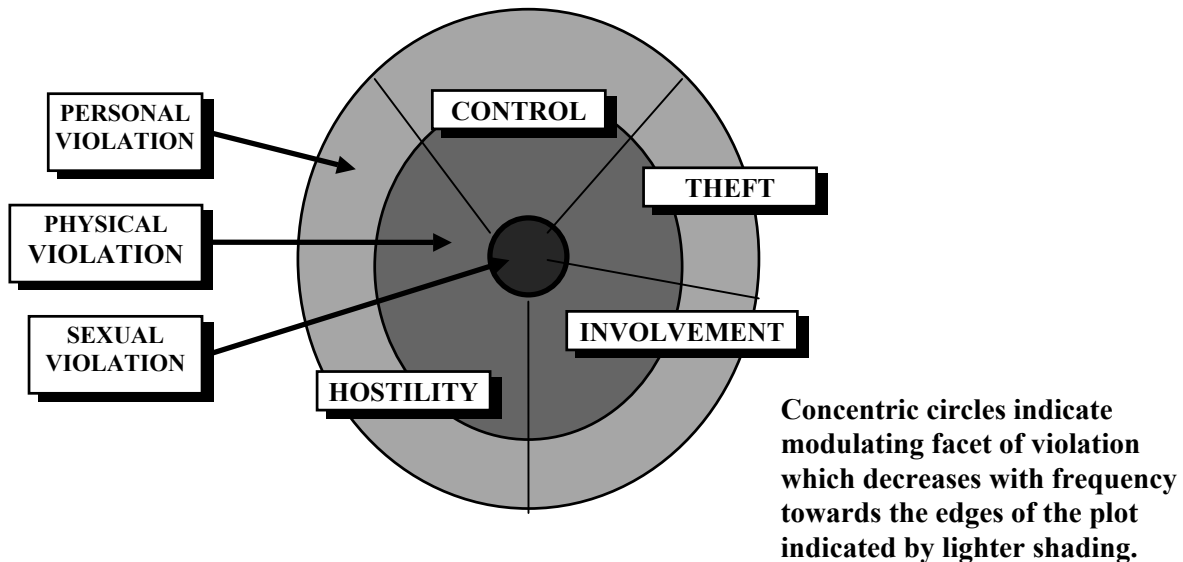
### **Involvement**

This behavioural theme was first defined by Canter and Heritage (1990) as 'interpersonal intimacy' and later, by Heritage (1992), as 'intimacy'. In this case, the victim is treated as a reactive individual rather than a sexual object. Behaviours which, in this instance, reflect the offender's attempt at some involvement with the victim would include verbal interactions, inquisitiveness, revealing information about themselves to the victim, complimenting the victim, and, in some cases, apologising for the attack. Typically, this offender will use a 'confidence trick' approach (e.g. asking for directions). The offender will typically kiss the victim and attempt to 'extend time' by staying with the victim after the assault. The model presented by Canter (1994) refers to a region containing similar behaviours as 'victim as person'. This group of behaviours reflect a bizarre attempt to develop a relationship with the victim, a form of *pseudo-intimacy*. These behaviours include complimenting the victim, inquisitiveness and implying knowledge of the victim. In this case the offender sees the victim as someone who has thoughts and feelings; these are essential to the success of the crime from the offender's perspective. The term involvement is preferred over 'intimacy' or even '*pseudo-intimacy*' as few victims would consider intimacy as having any place in describing sexual assault.

### **The Composite Model of Sexual Assault**

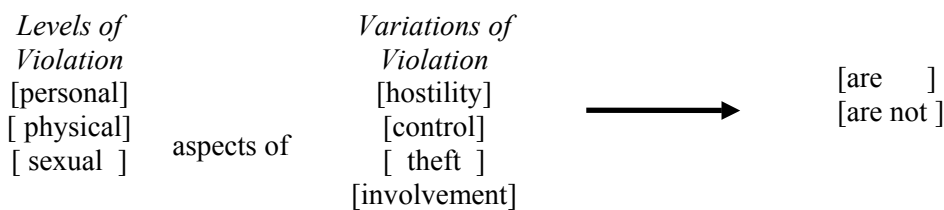
A combination of the proposed modulating facet with a common order of increasing violation and four modes of offender-victim interaction results in a radex - a circular structure made up of several concentric circles which can accommodate varying degrees of a linear characteristic (Shye et al, 1994). This radex structure is summarised in Figure 3. The darker shaded central region represents the core of the sexual assault as sexual violation, the next contour represents behaviours which constitute a physical violation, and the outer region represents behaviours which are associated with the personal violation of the victim. The four modes of interaction (offence styles) are indicated as different expressions of violation in a polar sequence around the central core behaviours.

**Figure 3. Schematic diagram showing proposed model of sexual assault - four modes of interaction (hostility, control, theft and involvement) and the modulating facet of violation.**



The general hypothesis which can be drawn from this model is that sexual assault is an act of violation which can be defined, both in terms of levels - personal > physical > sexual - and varieties - hostility, control, theft and involvement. This hypothesis can be seen as a way of classifying sexual assault behaviours into exhaustive, mutually exclusive categories, known as *facets* (Canter, 1995). The two facets proposed here can be summarised in the form of a mapping sentence (Shye et al., 1994) as follows:

Whether or not sexual assault actions (a) are



Where (a) are actions drawn from a general population (A) of stranger sexual assaults. In terms of the resultant SSA plot, two specific hypotheses can be drawn from the above mapping sentence. These are as follows:

1. The frequency pattern of actions in assaults will reveal a modulating facet with the high frequency focal aspects of assault at the centre (related to the penetrative sex act),

and the remaining actions radiating out from this focal point towards the edges of the plot.

This modulating facet has a common order of increasing violation with increasing frequency of behaviours.

2. Examination of the behaviours as they occur in actual sexual assaults will reveal that subsets of conceptually related items (i.e. blindfold and binding) will consistently happen together indicating a structure that reflects the variety of modes of interpersonal interactions that underlie those offences. This should reveal a composite model of offence behaviour empirically supporting the four-fold model of hostility, control, theft and involvement.

For clarification, it is helpful to recognise that these hypotheses imply the *co-occurrence* of sets of activities that are reported in sexual assaults. Actions that share themes and levels of violation are hypothesised to co-occur more often than those that do not. Therefore, these hypotheses are tested most directly by examining the relationship every action has to every other action across all the offences.

## **A Test of the Radex Model of Sexual Violation**

### **Data**

To test the proposed model, derived from earlier studies, a new set of data was collected that only contained one offence by each offender. In total details of 112 offences were made available by a number of British police forces in response to a request for details of sexual assaults against victims unknown to the offender. The data consisted of behavioural information on the first detected offence for serial and non-serial offenders. Therefore, the empirical structure that is revealed by the analysis will not be biased by undue weighting being given to frequent offenders who may be displaying a particular pattern of behaviour in each of their offences as may have been the case in previous research.

Thirty-six variables were identified through content analysis of victim statements which related directly to the behaviour of the offender at the crime scene. The 36 dichotomous variables across the 112 offences provided the data matrix upon which the subsequent analysis was conducted (see Appendix I for a full list of variables and content dictionary).

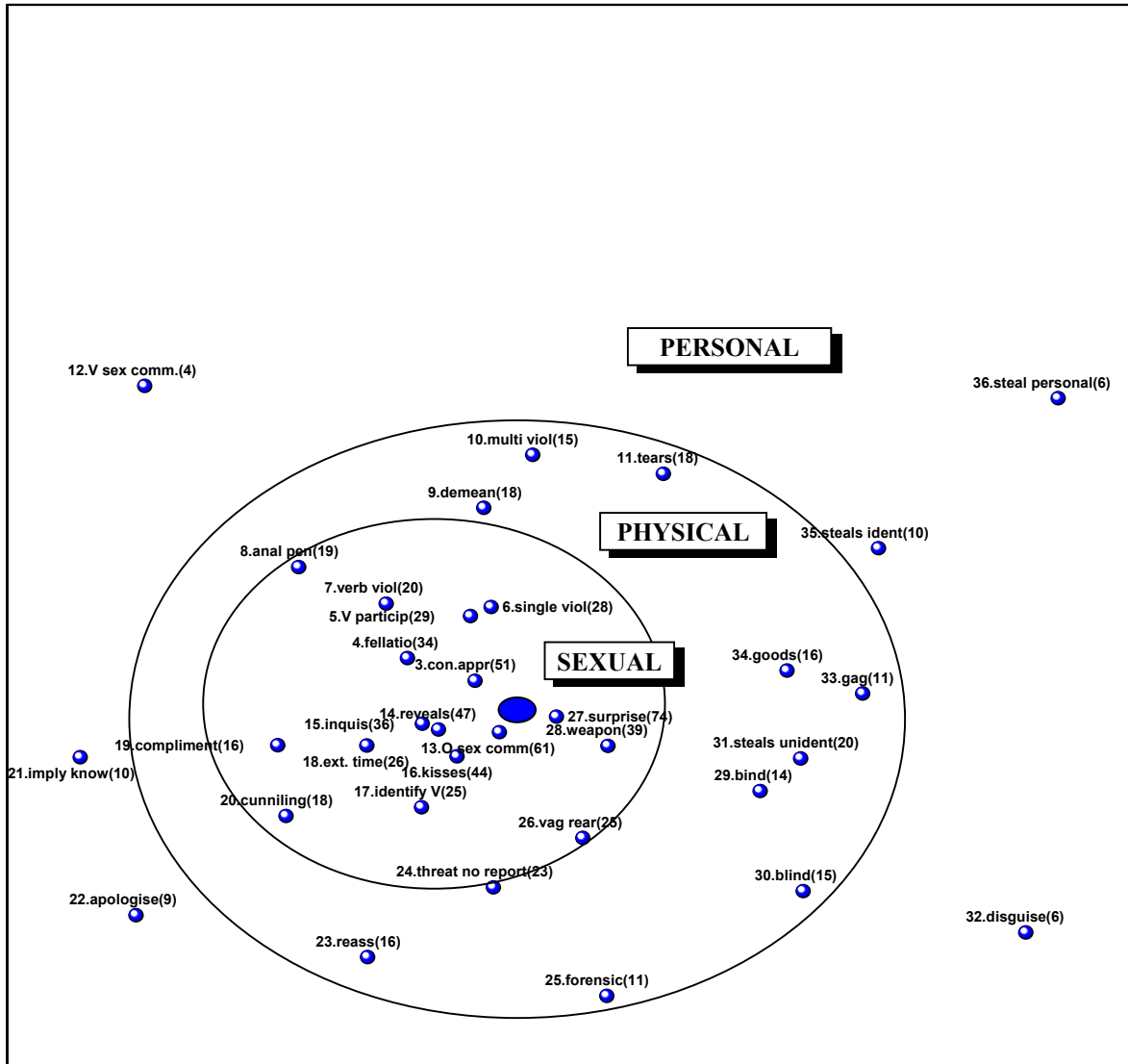
### **Analysis of Crime Scene Actions**

An SSA was carried out on an association matrix of Jaccard's coefficients, these being the most appropriate measures of association for this type of binary data. A value of 1 represents the presence of an action and a value of 0 represents absence. Non-occurrence of an action can never be totally certain when using police data. For this reason, a coefficient which does not take account of joint non-occurrences of variables in a given data set is the most appropriate. The 2-dimensional SSA solution has a Guttman-Lingoes' coefficient of alienation = 0.240 in 37 iterations, indicating a reasonable degree of fit. Figure 4 shows the resulting 2-dimensional configuration. As in earlier figures, each point is a variable describing offence behaviour. The closer any two points are to one another, the more likely it is that the actions they represent co-occur in offences.

## **Levels of Violation**

As indicated in Figure 4, it is possible to draw contours on the SSA which represent general frequency patterns. The pattern of frequencies ranges from high frequency actions - vaginal penetration (92 per cent) and vaginal penetration from the front (80 per cent) - to lower frequency actions that radiate out towards the edges of the plot - steals personal (6 per cent) and victim sexual comment (4 per cent). As found by Canter and Heritage (1990), Heritage (1992), and Canter (1994), the frequencies serve as a heuristic summary of offence behaviour, showing that those behaviours further out from the core are the most distinct, giving any particular offence its specific characteristics. The hierarchy of frequencies indicates that there are certain activities that are conceptually central to rape, in other words at the core of sexual assault, whereas the activities on the edges reflect different aspects of the same overall phenomena. As hypothesised, an examination of the behaviours within these general frequency contours indicates the existence of the modulating facet of violation (see Figure 4 and Table 1).

**Figure 4. General pattern of percentage frequencies with regional interpretations. Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories (numbers refer to variables in Appendix I). Values in brackets are percentage frequencies.**



Coefficient of alienation = 0.240 in 37 iterations

Core variables 

- Vaginal penetration (92)
- Vaginal penetration front (80)

**Table 1. Thirty-six crime scene actions in 112 sexual assaults listed by percentage frequencies. Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories (see Appendix 1). Values in brackets refer to variable frequencies.**

PERSONAL VIOLATION	PHYSICAL VIOLATION	SEXUAL VIOLATION
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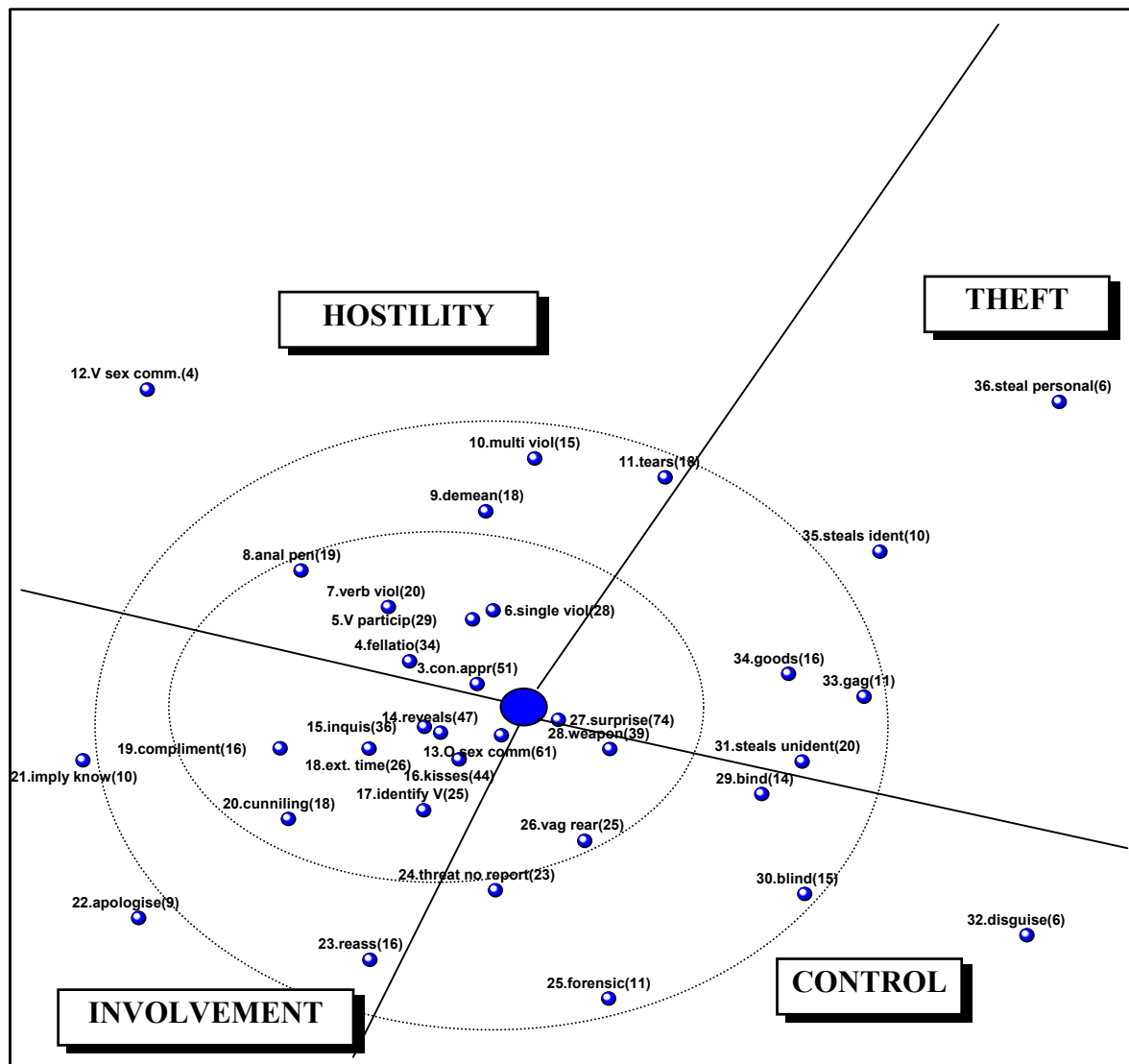
LOW FREQUENCIES	MODERATE FREQUENCIES	HIGH FREQUENCIES
12.victim sex comment (4) 21.imply know (10) 22.apologise (9) 30.disguise (6) 35.steals identifiable (10) 36.steals personal (6)	9.demean victim (18) 10.multiple violence (15) 11.tear clothing (18) 23. reassures (16) 24. threat not report (23) 25. forensically aware (11) 28. binding (14) 29. blindfold (15) 32.steals unidentifiable (20) 33. gag (11) 34. demand for goods (16)	1.vaginal penetration (92) 2.vaginal front (80) 3.confidence approach (51) 4.fellatio (34) 5.victim participate (29) 6.single violence (28) 7.verbal violence (20) 8.anal penetration (19) 13.offend. sex comment (61) 14.reveals self detail (47) 15. inquisitive (36) 16. kisses (44) 17. identify victim (25) 18. extends time (26) 19. compliments (16) 20. cunnilingus (18) 26. vaginal penetration rear (25) 31. surprise attack (74) 27. weapon (39)

As indicated by the high frequency crime scene actions on the SSA plot and Table 1, behaviours which constitute sexual violation - vaginal penetration and vaginal penetration front - are the core features of sexual assault. Other variables which represent the sexual violation include: fellatio, victim participate, anal penetration, offender sexual comment, offender kisses, cunnilingus and vaginal penetration from the rear. Within the moderate frequency contour, the majority of actions reflect physical violation of the victim: blindfold, binding, gagging, tearing clothes, multiple violence and forensic awareness (e.g. cleaning evidence off victim). The victim's sense of sexual violation is therefore compounded by both physical threat and physical harm as defined by these offender behaviours. The majority of the lower frequency actions include behaviours which reflect personal violation: steals personal, steals identifiable, implies knowing victim, apologise and victim sex comment. Through the loss of her possessions, sexual violation is compounded by the victim's realisation that a stranger has presumed intimate involvement with her. Although there are several actions which do not fit within the proposed model (e.g. reassures and demand goods are conceptually a more personal violation), these findings largely support the hypothesised modulating facet with a common order of increasing violation.

### Varieties of Violation

As in previous research, an examination of the clusters of crime scene actions around the central core revealed a coherent underlying structure within the offence behaviour. As hypothesised, the four clusters of behaviours can be interpreted as representing the four-fold model of hostility, control, theft and involvement. Figure 5 shows the 2-dimensional configuration with regional interpretations. Table 2 displays the 36 crime scene actions broken down into the four behavioural themes.

**Figure 5. SSA of behaviour in 112 sexual assaults with regional interpretations. Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories (numbers refer to variables in Appendix I). Values in brackets are percentage frequencies.**



Coefficient of alienation = 0.240 in 37 iterations

Core variables

Vaginal penetration (92)  
Vaginal penetration front (80)

Frequency contours



**Table 2. 36 crime scene actions in 112 sexual assaults listed by behavioural theme. Labels are brief summaries of content analysis categories (see Appendix 1). Values in brackets refer to variable frequencies.**

<b>HOSTILITY</b>	<b>CONTROL</b>	<b>THEFT</b>	<b>INVOLVEMENT</b>
3. con approach (51)	24. threat not report (23)	31. surprise attack (74)	13. offender sex comment (61)
4. fellatio (34)	25. forensically aware (11)	32. steals unidentifiable (20)	14. reveals self detail (47)
5. victim participate (29)	26. vaginal penetration rear (25)	33. gag (11)	15. inquisitive (36)
6. single violence (28)	27. weapon (39)	34. demand for goods (16)	16. kisses (44)
7. verbal violence (20)	28. binding (14)	35. steals identifiable (10)	17. identify victim (25)
8. anal penetration (19)	29. blindfold (15)	36. steals personal (6)	18. extends time (26)
9. demean victim (18)	30. disguise (6)		19. compliments (16)
10. multiple violence (15)			20. cunnilingus (18)
11. tears clothing (18)			21. imply know (10)
12. victim sex comment (4)			22. apologise (9)
			23. reassures (16)

### **Hostility Region**

The hostility region consists of 10 items which predominantly reflect the overtly aggressive interaction between offender and victim. Six variables clearly emphasise what is defined as an aggressive style: tears clothing, multiple violence, single violence, anal sex, demeans and verbal violence. Aggression and hostility is also implicit in the actions which reflect the victim being forced to participate: fellatio, victim sexual comment and victim participate. The offender humiliates and degrades the victim, making her take an active role in the offence. In terms of the conceptual framework, the offender using a confidence type approach is more indicative of an involvement offending style. However, this variable is very central on the plot and close to the hostility/involvement partition. Also, closer examination of cases may reveal that the confidence approach is used to hide later aggressive intent. There is a clear parallel between the actions categorised as hostility here and the ‘victim as vehicle’ theme presented by Canter (1994), and the ‘aggressive’ regions in Canter and Heritage (1990) and Heritage (1992). All of these themes are comprised of actions which relate to an overtly aggressive offender-victim interaction. These findings also concur with Bartol’s (1986) classification of some offences as ‘expressive’ and Buss’s (1961) definition of ‘hostility’.

### **Control Region**

Six variables have been interpreted as offence behaviour which demonstrates the offender’s control of the offence. The offender controls the victim through binding, blindfolding and threats. Several variables in this region suggest some degree of preparation: forensic awareness and control with weapon. Other actions such as vaginal penetration from the rear, blindfold and disguise reflect the offender’s attempt to conceal his identity. These variables, combined with the use of a weapon and forensic awareness suggest an experienced offender. The offender may have planned the offence strategy and may have taken a ‘rape kit’ to the scene based on previous experiences. There is a clear parallel between the actions categorised as control here and the ‘victim as object’ theme in the model of Canter (1994). Both themes are comprised of actions which relate to demobilisation of the victim and suggest preparation on the part of the offender.

### **Theft Region**

Six variables have been interpreted as offence behaviours which directly relate to criminal behaviours beyond the sexual component of the crime. The offender in this case

is clearly using the opportunities presented by the crime for some future instrumental goal, not just for the immediate gratification of the sexual assault. These behaviours include: surprise attack, gagging, demanding goods, stealing personal goods, stealing identifiable goods and stealing unidentifiable goods. These behaviours indicate that the offender may be an experienced criminal. The offender stealing a variety of the victim's possessions also supports the 'instrumental' categorisation proposed by Bartol (1986).

**Involvement Region**

The remaining twelve variables are interpreted as offence behaviour that has distinct involvement components. There is clearly a theme of attempted involvement within variables such as offender sexual comment, offender reveals self detail, inquisitive, extends time, compliments, apologises, identifies victim, kisses victim, implies knowing the victim and reassures. The variables in this region very much support the notion that the offender is attempting to develop some form of pseudo-relationship with the victim. The offender performing cunnilingus could be interpreted as an attempt at making the event pleasurable for the victim. There is an attempt at some information exchange with the offender inquiring about the victim and revealing self detail. Again, there is a clear parallel between the actions categorised as involvement here and the 'victim as person' theme in the model of Canter (1994), and the 'pseudo-intimacy' regions in Canter and Heritage (1990) and Heritage (1992). All of these themes are comprised of actions which reflect an attempt at some form of 'relationship'.

**The Composite Model of Sexual Assault**

The combination of a modulating facet of violation and a polarising facet comprised of the four behavioural themes can be summarised in the following table. Table 3 shows the key variables which are representative of both levels and variations of violation.

**Table 3. Key variables which are representative of both levels and variations of violation.**

	<b>Qualitative Variation</b>
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<b>Levels Of Violation</b>	<b>Hostility</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Theft</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
<b>Personal</b>	<b>victim sexual comment</b>	<b>disguise</b>	<b>steal personal steal identifiable steal unidentifiable</b>	<b>implies knowing apologise</b>
<b>Physical</b>	<b>tear clothing multiple violence</b>	<b>binding blindfold forensic</b>	<b>gagging</b>	<b>reassures</b>
<b>Sexual</b>	<b>anal penetration fellatio victim participate</b>	<b>vaginal rear</b>		<b>cunnilingus kisses offender sex comment</b>

Examination of Table 3 and the SSA plot in Figure 5 indicates that control offences are predominantly physically violating, theft offences are predominantly personally violating, involvement offences are predominantly sexually violating and hostile offences are a combination of all three levels of violation. The clear difference in levels of violation between involvement and control supports Canter's (1994) distinction of the victim as 'person' or 'object'. It is also interesting to note that almost all the involvement actions and a large percentage of hostile actions (those towards the left side of the plot) are verbal, whereas most of the control and theft actions (the right side of the plot in Figure 5) are non-verbal. This further supports the hypotheses that the involvement style reflects the offender's attempt at some form of relationship based on sexual and verbal communication, whereas the control style reflects the offender's treatment of the victim as a sexual object.

### **Practical Implications**

The determination of the dominant themes that distinguish rape has many practical implications, especially for police investigations. Perhaps the most important of these is the recognition that the distinguishing characteristics of rapists are less likely to be found in aspects of the sexual violation, or even in the form of physical assault. They are more likely to be revealed in those styles of interpersonal transaction that are typical of the assault. This is particularly relevant to the task of using the actions of rapists to link a series of offences together. If commonly occurring actions (i.e. those in the centre of the SSA configuration), are used for linking offences, then quite unrelated offences will be spuriously linked to each other.

The establishment of dominant themes in rape also enhances the search for offender consistency in behaviour. It is less likely that an offender will draw on a mixture of themes across a series than that he will have a characteristic theme. That theme may be revealed by different patterns of thematically similar behaviours rather than by the precise reproduction of identical actions in each case. This thematic approach is thus rather more robust than the use of modus operandi that really requires very similar actions in every offence.

A further possibility that the authors have utilised in advice to defence lawyers, is that false allegations of sexual assault are less likely to reflect the structure determined in the present study than are genuine allegations. Some quite precise hypotheses can be derived from this theory of veridicality because allowances can be made for the increased density of actions close to the 'core' of the offence. For example, actions that were widely

distributed around the periphery would be more suspect than those distributed around the 'core'.

The structure found also has relevance for exploring the characteristics that would be typical of a person who carried out particular actions. The lack of discriminating power in the high frequency sexual component, for instance, draws attention to artefacts that can confuse results if only single variables are considered one at a time. If certain actions are common to many offences and certain characteristics are common to many offenders then spurious relationships will be found between the actions and the characteristics. The research task is to demonstrate clear relationships between the distinct theme of an offence and distinct features of the offender. The results of the present study point in productive directions for such a task.

### **Conclusions**

As in previous research by Canter and Heritage (1990), Heritage (1992) and Canter (1994), an examination of SSA results in the current study indicated a clearly defined pattern of frequencies. High frequency crime scene actions were located at the centre of the plot. The frequency of actions then decreased in a generally uniform pattern outwards to the edges. An important clarification in the present study is the specification of the modulating facet. As hypothesised, this was comprised of a central core of actions that reflected sexual violation - notably vaginal penetration. Around this central core were other forms of sexual violation that can be seen as less intensive, although still extremely harrowing for the victim: fellatio, cunnilingus, vaginal penetration from the rear and forcing the victim to participate. Examination of the behaviours in each of the general frequency contours indicated that the level of violation decreases with frequency. The majority of moderate frequency actions were interpreted as reflecting physical violation and the majority of the lower frequency actions as reflecting a non-physical, personal violation. This concurs with the literature on the psychological effects of rape and research into human territoriality in establishing the significance of sexual penetration as forming the core aspect of sexual assault. The general pattern indicates that sexual assault is primarily about violation. In its most extreme expression this involves sexual violation of the victim's genitalia. But, the variations between offences are made up of the more subtle forms of physical and personal violation that are also an inevitable part of sexual assault.

Results indicated that styles of sexual assault offences can be considered in terms of the relationship between offender and victim. This interaction is manifest as hostility, control, theft and involvement. The hostility offence style involves both physical and verbal violence by the offender and an attempt to demean the victim. Offences classified as control are distinguished by the offender's complete domination of the victim. Offences involving theft involve the offender stealing items from the victim for some future instrumental gain. The involvement offence style is characterised by actions which suggest that the offender is attempting to develop some pseudo-relationship with the victim. Combining the modulating and polarising facet revealed that the control style is predominantly a physical violation, the theft style is predominantly a personal violation, the involvement style is predominantly a sexual violation and hostility is a combination of all three levels.

The identification of clear behavioural themes has implications for differentiating offences as predominantly hostile, control, theft or involvement forms of offender victim interaction. Future research could test this model by differentiating individual offences

using a variety of samples. Future research could also investigate the potential for linking series of offences and for linking the four offence styles to sub-groups of offenders, the process commonly referred to as 'offender profiling'. As Canter (1994) proposed, there may be important differences between the lifestyle characteristics of offenders who carry out assaults in the differing styles, particularly in terms of their previous criminal convictions and relationships with women.

The identification of varying levels of violation should also be investigated in relation to treatment of victims of sexual assault. For example, individuals who suffer a largely physically violating assault may require different treatment as compared to an individual who suffers a predominantly sexual violation.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Variables used to describe offender's behaviour during an offence as derived from content analysis of victim statements.**

Thirty-six variables were created from a content analysis of victim statements in order to provide a list of elements common to offences. All variables are dichotomous with values based on the presence /absence of each category of behaviour. A description of the categorisation scheme is given below. Variables are listed under the four headings: core variables (high frequency actions) and four modes of offender victim interaction - hostility, involvement, theft and control.

#### **Core Variables**

**1. vaginal penetration**

This variable covers whether vaginal penetration was achieved or attempted.

**2. vaginal front**

This variable covers whether vaginal penetration was achieved or attempted in the form of a frontal assault on the victim.

**Hostility**

**3. con approach**

Where the style of approach used by the offender involves some verbal contact - questions asked, false introductions, a story told.

**4. fellatio**

This variable deals with forced oral penetration of the victim.

**5. victim participate**

Where the offender forces the victim to physically participate. The acts demanded by the offender may be association to specific sexual demands made of her but are in addition to those sexual acts. For example the offender may force the victim to kiss him.

**6. single violence**

This variable concerns a single act of violence, again this act is carried out for violence itself rather than as a form of control.

**7. verbal violent**

Where the offender uses insults and profanities and threatens the victim at some time during the attack.

**8. anal penetration**

This variable refers to the offender penetrating or attempting to penetrate the victim's anus.

**9. demean victim**

The offender's speech is demeaning or insulting : this would include profanities directed against the victim or women in general, the focus of this variable is insult.

**10. multi violence**

This variable concerns multiple acts of violence perpetrated against the victim, these acts are related to the violence itself rather than used as a form of control.

**11. tears clothing**

This variable refers to the forcible removal of clothing in a violent manner.

**12. vict. sex comment**

This variable relates to the offender forcing the victim to make sexual comments.

**Involvement**

**13. off. sex comment**



Where the offender makes sexual comments during the attack, this is distinct from verbal violence, the sexual comments are not be related to any form of threat.

**14.reveal self detail**

The offender reveals some information about himself which may or may not be true at some time during the attack.

**15.inquisitive**

This refers to the offender asking questions for example about the victim's lifestyle or associates, these questions are of a non-sexual nature.

**16.kisses victim**

The offender kisses or attempts to kiss the victim during the attack.

**17.identifies victim**

The offender takes steps to obtain or attempt to obtain from the victim the details which would identify her. This may involve verbal approaches or the examination of the victim's belongings - purse / identity cards.

**18.extends time**

The offender extends the time spent with the victim after the actual attack this may involve further questioning of the victim or revealing self detail by the offender.

**19.compliments**

Refers to the style of speech of the offender, specifically if the offender compliments the victim, for example on her appearance.

**20.cunnilingus**

The offender performs a sexual act on the victim's genitalia using his mouth.

**21.imply know victim**

Where the offender implies knowing the victim, that is the offender knew the victim before the sexual assault

**22.apologises**

The offender apologises to the victim, usually at the end of the attack.

**23.reassures**

Where the offender makes verbal comments during the attack in an attempt to reassure the victim.  
This may include an attempt by the offender to persuade the victim that he does not intend to do an act.

**Control**

**24.threat no report**

The offender threatens the victim that she should not report the incident to the police or to any other person.

**25.forensic aware**

The offender takes certain steps during the attack or after to ensure that no evidence can be obtained, for examples making the victim wash herself.

**26.vaginal rear**

This variable concerns the offender penetrating or attempting to penetrate the victim from the rear.

**27.control by weapon**

Where an offender is prepared to display a weapon in order to control the victim.

**28.binding**

The use at any time during the attack of any of articles to bind the victim, this variable refers to articles and not simply restraint by the offender's hands.

**29.blindfold**

The use at any time during the attack of any physical interference with the victim's ability to see, this only refers to the use of articles and not simply verbal threat or the offender's hands.

**30.disguise**

Where the offender wears any form of disguise.

**Theft****31.surprise attack**

An immediate attack on the victim, whether preceded by confidence or not, force is used to control the victim, this can involve threat with or without a weapon. Violence may be used but not in the overpowering sense of the 'blitz attack'.

**32.steal unidentifiable**

Where the offender steals items from the victim which are unidentifiable such as currency or items which are not specifically recognisable as belonging to the victim.

**33.gagging**

As above in respect of the prevention of noise, this does not include the use of the offender's hand temporarily.

**34.demand for goods**

Where the offender approaches the victim with a demand for goods or money. This variable specifically relates to initial demands.

**35.steal identifiable**

Where the offender steals items from the victim which are identifiable in that they are specifically recognisable as belonging to the victim.

**36.steals personal**

Where the offender steals items which are personal to the victim but not necessarily of any great value in terms of re-saleable goods. For example photographs or letters.