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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 1999; 5; 43
DOI: 10.1177/10778019922181149

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/5/1/43
A Routine Activity Theory Explanation for Women's Stalking Victimization

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Drawing on surveys administered to 861 university women in nine institutions, this article presents a routine activity theory model for predicting stalking victimization likelihood for women. Using routine activity theory, the model highlights lifestyle behaviors and interactions as predictors of stalking victimization. Whereas routine activity theory often highlights the role of demographics and statuses as predictors, this analysis emphasizes the role of women’s social interactions and substance use in victimization risk. Significant predictors of victimization likelihood include substance use variables, activities in public settings, and residence off campus.

Stalking is a social condition that is attracting more attention not only from those in the criminal justice system but also from those in the social and behavioral sciences. As criminal justice practitioners, we are concerned with the early identification of those who stalk their victims.

Holmes (1993, p. 326)

Often associated with sexual assault, domestic violence, and homicide (Cohen, as cited in National Victim Center, 1997; Coleman, 1997; Gallagher, Bruner, & Lingenfelter, 1993), as well as producing vicarious victimizations of primary targets’ family, friends, and acquaintances (Romans, Hays, & White, 1996;

AUTHORS’ NOTE: The authors wish to thank Darin Moore and William Bolt for their assistance throughout this project, and the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions on this article. This research was funded, in part, by a University of Central Florida Sponsored Research Development Grant, #90726.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, Vol. 5 No. 1, January 1999 43-62
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Wright et al., 1996), stalking is a growing criminological concern in today’s society. However, researchers have allowed stalking to remain on the fringes of academic discourse. Little scholarly work addressing stalking victims, offenders, and the dynamics of such offenses is available (however, see Coleman, 1997; Romans et al., 1996).

Stalking is not only harmful in itself but is also presumed to precede other forms of violence. As shown by Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne et al. (1991), stalkers’ use of explicit threats does not necessarily signal a likely escalation to violence, but the duration and frequency of contacts may portend personal contacts and violence. Only about 5% of stalkers can be expected to perpetrate dangerous acts against their targets (Sharma, as cited in Wallace, 1996). But, identifying stalkers who are likely to turn to violence is extremely difficult; therefore, as stated by Wright et al. (1996), “all stalking victims are at risk for personal safety” (p. 500). However, although understanding the mind of the stalker is an important first step, it is also critically important to understand the contexts in which stalking occurs and those at whom stalking is directed. This latter “understanding” is the intention of this article.

Although the criminal offense of stalking is defined (whether as a misdemeanor or felony) by individual state statutes, the true nature of the behavior remains one of unwanted, annoying, and threatening pursuit of another. Stalking victims are defined in the social sciences as “men and women who are repeatedly followed, harassed, or physically threatened by other persons” (Gilligan, 1992, p. 285). Most states’ statutes require that a stalker pose a threat or act so as to instill a “reasonable” sense of threat in a target for a crime to be declared. Additionally, most statutes require criminal intent to instill fear in a victim in order to convict an individual of stalking (Morin, 1995; National Institute of Justice, 1996). A similar definition of stalking is offered by Geberth (1992): “An obsession on the part of the offender which is manifested through a persistent and intense preoccupation with the victim or target” (p. 138). Simply stated, a stalker is someone who persistently pursues another individual in a way that instills fear in the target.

The scarce literature on stalking focuses on identifying forms of stalking behavior and individuals who stalk. Unfortunately, American law enforcement agencies do not systematically collect
statistics on stalking incidents. Estimates of the number of stalkers in the United States suggest that there are somewhere between 20,000 and 200,000 (National Institute of Justice, 1996; National Victim Center, 1997) to more than 500,000 (Stalking Victim’s Sanctuary, 1997). Similar numbers of individuals are estimated as victims of stalking (Senate Judiciary Committee, 1992), with some claiming as many as 1 in 20 women will be a victim of stalking during her lifetime (Morin, 1995; National Victim Center, 1997).

What we know about stalking events, stalking victims, and stalkers is limited. This is a crime that is primarily directed toward women; primarily perpetrated by men; and at least on occasion, associated with more extreme forms of violence, including sexual assaults (Norris, 1988), serial homicide (Keeney & Heide, 1994), and domestic violence (Coleman, 1997). Clearly, this is a criminal offense “motivated by interpersonal aggression rather than by material gain or sex” (Wright et al., 1996, p. 494), supporting the contention that victimization of women (as stalking usually is) does not arise from offenders’ desires to improve their material standing but is driven by the desire to control others (Holloway, 1994; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995).

Perhaps the best known academic work on stalking is that of Dietz and colleagues (Dietz, Matthews, Martell et al., 1991; Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne et al., 1991), who have studied the content of threatening letters mailed to members of the U.S. Congress and to Hollywood celebrities. Although having no personal contact with their targets, these stalkers clearly indicated a belief that they had a personal relationship with their targets and repeatedly made indirect contact and threats. Whereas we know that the motivations for stalking can vary, including desires for contact to jealousy to a real or imagined relationship with the target, these motivations are not consistent across offenders, incidents, or targets, leaving many questions unanswered.

Many academicians subscribe to a medical model of stalking (Holmes, 1994). These researchers assume that stalkers are mentally ill. However, relatively little is actually known about the mental state or psychological stability of stalkers (Holmes, 1994; Morin, 1995). The vast majority of stalkers are men who target women (Geberth, 1992; National Victim Center, 1997), and in some instances, the pursuer is well-acquainted with the pursued (Coleman, 1997; Harrell, Smith, & Cook, 1985). Additionally, we
know that most stalkers are young to middle-age or about 20 to 34 years old (Coleman, 1997; National Rifle Association, 1992), have above-average intelligence, and come from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds (National Victim’s Center, 1997). Building on these basics, a variety of behavioral typologies of stalkers are offered in the academic literature (Dziegielewski & Roberts, 1995; Geberth, 1992; Hazelwood & Douglas, 1980; Holmes, 1994; Zona, Sharma, & Lane, 1993). However, attempts to profile stalkers and their victims have concluded that “no clear demographic profile emerged that discriminated the stalking victims and perpetrators” (Coleman, 1997, p. 425; Romans et al., 1996).

These clear gaps in the literature provide the motivation for this article: to provide a greater understanding of the characteristics and behaviors of women who are stalked and the context in which these events occur. As summarized by the National Institute of Justice (1996), “a clearer picture about stalking and stalkers, the law enforcement response, and the needs of victims will emerge as current research yields findings” (p. 13). It is our intent to provide a piece of this literature, answering Coleman’s (1997) call to “examine this issue more closely using a larger sample” (p. 430). However, before addressing these issues, it is necessary to address the theoretical framework that guides the present research.

We use routine activity theory to explore the contexts in which female college or university students become stalking victims. Our use of routine activity theory focuses on the contexts in which victims pursue their lifestyles and daily activities, as well as the characteristics and behaviors of women stalking victims. Our goal is to add to the scant literature on stalking by identifying the lifestyle factors associated with the stalking of women and identifying lifestyle factors that can be used as predictors of women’s likelihood of becoming stalking victims.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Routine activity theory argues that criminal events are the product of the intersection in time and space of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and an absence of guardians capable of preventing the offense. The theory requires that all three factors be
present to predict criminal offending. As a way of understanding how, why, to whom, when, and under what circumstances criminal events occur, researchers have employed routine activity theory to explore offending, with emphases on all of the three central factors. Additionally, routine activity theory allows, and in fact facilitates, the exploration of criminal events, with a focus on the domains in which crimes occur (Lynch, 1987; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1997; Wooldredge, Cullen, & Latessa, 1992), as well as within specific subpopulations of a community (Engs & Hanson, 1994; Riley, 1987; Schwartz & Pitts, 1995).

Since its large-scale emergence in the research literature in the mid-1980s, routine activity theory has provided both a host of initial explanations for what might otherwise appear as disconnected and contradictory patterns of criminal victimization and an easily comprehensible, apparently logical, explanation for many criminal events. However, due in part to difficulties in operationalizing central concepts and obtaining appropriate levels of measurement, rigorous tests of routine activity theory have not been plentiful.

One of the clearest needs regarding tests of routine activity theory is to develop measures that gauge the theory’s ability to predict victimization for specific subpopulations, for specific offense types, or within specified domains of activity. These advances will allow categorical examinations of statuses and enhanced understandings of how activities of crime victims viewed within specified contexts interact with individuals’ victimization risks.

This is not to say that there are not a number of commonalities that offense types share, regardless of where they are committed (Lynch, 1987; Miethe, Stafford, & Sloane, 1990; Wooldredge et al., 1992). Although research may examine a highly specific, carefully defined locale, the accumulation of findings from similar locales, and of particular offenses across locales, offer a depth of understanding for how motivated offenders, suitable targets, and capable guardians facilitate or inhibit criminal victimization.

In addition to foci on offenses and domains, routine activity theory also finds it important to highlight status categories of victims. This is most pronounced in calls for research to develop and test gender-specific models of victimization for distinct offenses or within particular domains. The call for gender-specific models has made a significant imprint on the literature. Victimization
predictors are consistently seen to vary by gender for essentially all offenses and domains. In large part, this is due to the fact that overall, men are more likely to be crime victims; when women are victimized, they typically are victims of different offenses than are men. In general, the dynamics of women’s victimization are very different from those of men’s victimization.

For women, being perceived as a suitable target is equated with men’s perceptions of women as vulnerable. Whereas the availability of suitable targets is central in routine activity explanations of crime, this may be equated, in an offender’s mind, with interpretations of women’s vulnerability (based on sex alone) (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995). Furthermore, although routine activity explanations do not include measures of deterrence, one must include the notion that men who sexually assault women, or who stalk women, seldom receive serious punishment, if any at all. Then, it may be that for certain offenses, women may be more suitable targets because their victimization is not taken seriously by society, including the criminal justice system (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995).

Routine activity theory strongly supports the idea that movement into the public domain increases one’s risk for victimization for both men and women. Consequently, individuals’ statuses (as they define their activities) can tell us much about potential for movement in public locales and, therefore, inform us about target suitability. Employed persons are known to be victimized more often than are unemployed persons; however, the unemployed are more often victimized than those individuals who (for whatever reason) stay in their homes (Cohen & Cantor, 1981; Cohen, Cantor, & Kluegel, 1981; Massey, Krohn, & Bonati, 1989). Similarly, full-time students also are more likely to be victimized than are persons holding full-time employment (Maxfield, 1987). It would appear that this finding may be due to the principle of homogamy, that is, persons who have characteristics that are similar to offenders are more likely to be around offenders and, consequently, be victimized more often.

One population that has several characteristics that are similar to offenders is college or university students. Students often have characteristics such as age, employment status, social class, and place of residence that are similar to offenders. Furthermore, for students, not only is there a greater likelihood of increased
exposure to others potentially motivated to offend, but the opportunities for participation in leisure and other public-setting activities are perhaps more numerous than at any other time in life. These activities include alcohol and drug use and abuse, which is known to be associated with a heightened risk for predatory victimizations (Lasley, 1989), such as being stalked. Being out in public also increases one’s risk for victimization by putting one in close proximity to potential offenders. Routine activity theory rationales suggest that being out of the home exposes one to those who may be motivated to seize opportunities to commit crime. In this regard, where an individual goes after she or he leaves home is also an important consideration. It seems logical that going to a bar is more risky than going to a friend’s home to study (because there are more potential offenders at a bar). However, when considering victimizations against women, this relationship is confounded, because much of the violence directed at women takes place in the home (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1996). As such, for women, it may be that the home either poses different dangers or is simply not any safer than being out in public.

**THIS STUDY**

This study adds three important contributions to the literature. First, the current research adds to the scant social science literature regarding stalking victimizations. Second, this study, by focusing on factors that are associated with women’s stalking victimization risks, is unique in its attention to a previously unexplored aspect of violence against women. Third, this work also makes significant theoretical contributions by providing a test of routine activity theory’s predictive abilities with a heretofore neglected offense, using specific lifestyle activity measures.

**METHODS**

The data in this study come from self-administered surveys conducted during the fall of 1996, with 1,513 college or university students in nine postsecondary institutions (including large and small universities, 4-year colleges, and community colleges) in eight states. Only the women in the sample (N = 861) are included
in this analysis. Institutions and courses for data collection were selected for inclusion based on geographic dispersion and so as to ensure the inclusion of a wide variety of postsecondary educational institutions. The sample is drawn from students in introductory-level sociology and criminal justice courses. Introductory-level courses were used to maximize the diversity of students' majors and life experiences. Furthermore, the use of data from university students is more than a matter of convenience, because this is a population that has been shown to experience significant levels of criminal victimization (Engs & Hanson, 1994; Garofalo, Seigel, & Laub, 1987; Toby, 1995), including stalking (Gallagher et al., 1993).

All respondents volunteered and received no compensation for their participation. When a department agreed to participate, introductory courses were identified for solicitation, and faculty were provided either a written script or audiotaped set of solicitations for students, instructions for instrument completion, and two copies of an informed consent form for all students. If students elected to participate, they first read and signed two consent forms, retaining one countersigned copy for their records. Although no statistics were maintained on refusal rates, comments from all participating faculty indicate very few, if any, students elected not to participate.

The sample used herein consists of a majority of Whites (75.3%, n = 648). The mean age of the sample is 20.8, with a range of 16 to 54. In terms of marital status, 90% (n = 775) are single, divorced, or separated.

The 95-item instrument assesses individual demographics, residential community characteristics and structures, transportation modes, employment information, social activity participation (including alcohol and other drug consumption), self-protective measures, fear of crime, self-report of illegal activities, and self-report victimization. This analysis draws on all categories of data. Residential community characteristics are assessed using eight items designed to elicit information on resident community stability, social class, and housing arrangements (single-family homes, apartments, multiple-occupancy dwellings). Social activity items collect data on respondents' participation in both at-home and away-from-home leisure activities (theater attendance, frequency of eating out, shopping, exercise, and
participation in community organizations), job tasks, school-based activity engagement, and use of alcohol. Drinking items assess how often respondents drink, where they drink, with whom they drink, and how often they become intoxicated. Self-reported illegal activities assess whether respondents have engaged in any of 30 illegal actions, ranging from being drunk in public; physical fights; the use, sale, or purchase of illegal drugs; to prostitution, vandalism, and theft. Self-report victimization items gather data on respondents' victimization for 18 criminal offenses.

The dependent variable in this study, being a victim of stalking, is assessed through direct report. All respondents were asked whether, during the prior 6 months, they had been a victim of behavior they defined as stalking. Of the 861 women in the sample, 90 (10.5%) reported having been stalked. This rate is consistent with that reported in previous research with college women (9.2%; Coleman, 1997) but higher than the rate reported for counseling-center staff (5.6%; Romans et al., 1996; see also Morin, 1995). Thus, although our dependent variable is measured with a single, self-labeling item, it appears to be a reliable and valid measure, given the similarity of our rate of victimization with other studies.

Once completed, instruments were returned to the authors; all instruments were coded, entered, and analyzed using logistical regression. The use of logistical regression is necessary due to the dichotomous and unevenly distributed nature of the dependent variable (i.e., most respondents were not victims of crime).

**FINDINGS**

To assess the explanatory power of routine activity theory for the influences of stalking of women, we tested several groupings of variables to come up with the best, most cohesive, model. In each grouping of variables, we regressed against the dependent variable and kept the variables with moderately significant explanatory powers ($\alpha \equiv .2$). The results of these groupings are displayed in Table 1 and are provided for informational purposes only. They will not be discussed in detail. By comparing $x^2$ and degrees of freedom across models, the most cohesive model was determined. This is the model that is presented in Table 2.
First, an examination of Table 1 highlights the variable groupings and notes the variables that are not significant predictors of women’s stalking victimization. The variable groupings include
### TABLE 2
Logistical Regression Results for the Best Model on Women’s Stalking Victimization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Exp (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.67</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop at the mall (less frequently)</td>
<td>-0.319</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks at home often</td>
<td>0.0114</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets drunk in public</td>
<td>0.4336</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought drugs</td>
<td>1.3271</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carries mace</td>
<td>0.5643</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carries pocket knife</td>
<td>1.3270</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status (unemployed)</td>
<td>-0.5820</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives on campus</td>
<td>-0.6166</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 58.398 (\alpha = .0000)$

$df = 8$

$N= 849$

a. $\alpha < .05$.

b. $\alpha < .10$.

those types of behaviors that take one out in public (and in the presence of potential offenders), drinking and drug use behaviors (thereby making one more vulnerable—and suitable—target), self-protective behaviors (thereby increasing the level of guardianship), and demographic or status variables. Some of the absences in variable significance are noteworthy. For example, with the exception of employment status, none of the demographic variables (age, marital status, race, sexual orientation, social class, and others in the household) are significant predictors of female college or university students’ likelihood of being stalked. This is interesting because routine activity theory assumes that when an individual’s lifestyle behaviors or characteristics are accounted for, status (or demographic) variables will no longer be significant. In this circumstance, this appears to be the case, as the specific lifestyle behaviors and characteristics are the more important predictors of stalking.

Another set of variable groupings that is important in routine activity theory rationales is being out in public. Routine activity theory research suggests that persons who leave their homes have heightened exposure to potential offenders and thus are more likely to be victimized. This research suggests that most public behaviors are not significant predictors of stalking victimization of women. This is also important. Feminist critiques of routine activity theory argue that women are more vulnerable targets
simply because they are women (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995). Given this, public behaviors will not necessarily increase their likelihood of victimization. Furthermore, because many women who are stalked are pursued by former or estranged lovers or partners, the division between the safety of one’s home and the risks of public activity is blurred for this type of offense. All other variable groupings contain multiple significant determinants of female stalking.

Turning to Table 2, the results of the logistic regression of the best, most parsimonious, model are presented. The \( x^2 \) statistic is significant (\( x^2 = 58.398; \alpha = .0000 \)). Thus, in the best model, the variables, taken together, provide a significant explanation for women’s stalking risks. An examination of the variables reveals that eight measures are significant predictors of women’s stalking victimization risk. These variables represent a variety of lifestyle behaviors and characteristics that are important for determining the likelihood of a woman being stalked.

First, this analysis shows that lifestyle behaviors that increase one’s exposure to potential offenders are important predictors of stalking. Women who frequently go to the mall for shopping are more likely to be stalked than women who do not go shopping often at the mall. The logistic coefficient (\( B \)) connotes that women who frequently go shopping at the mall experience a .32 increase in the log odds of getting stalked than women who do not go shopping at the mall often. Using routine activity theory rationales, women who are out in public more often (as noted by shopping at the mall more often) are in the presence of potential offenders and are more likely to be victimized by them. However, it may be that going out in public more often is a response to the fear associated with stalking victimization. Perhaps women who are stalked are afraid to remain at home for fear of receiving harassing phone calls or unexpected and frightening visits from their stalker and, as a result, go out of the home (in this case, to the mall) to avoid the person who is pursuing them.

Results reveal that college or university women who live on campus are less likely to be stalked than women who live off campus. To elaborate, women who live on college campuses experience a .62 reduction in the log odds of being victims of stalking. This is also in line with routine activity theory. Living on campus in a dormitory or sorority house provides a more insulated
environment than does living in the community. Campuses tend to be more socially and culturally encapsulated, and any potential offender will typically have to get through a security desk, resident assistants, and/or knowledgeable residents who know who does or does not live in their midst. Thus, it may be that stalkers are less likely to victimize women who have many other potential and capable guardians surrounding them. Relatedly, because stalking is more a crime of power or aggression rather than material gain or sex (Wright et al., 1996), stalkers may be motivated more by vulnerability in the form of social isolation.

Employment status is another important determinant for the risk of stalking. Results indicate that women who are employed are more likely to be stalked. Specifically, women who are employed have a .56 (Exp [\(b\)]) higher odds of being stalked than do women who are not employed. Several explanations here are possible. Routine activity theory suggests that women who work are more likely to be stalked because they are out in public more often than women who are not employed or who are primarily at home during the day. These women who are out in public more often also are more likely to be exposed to potential offenders. This may be the case for college women, especially those who work at odd hours due to class schedules. Another possible explanation is provided by feminist research on violence against women. This research suggests that women who are working or who follow a less traditional female role are more likely to be the victims of men who are threatened by the increasing social position of women in general, or of women they know (Peterson & Bailey, 1992; Smith, 1990). In these cases, men may stalk the women in their lives (or the women who used to be in their lives) as a way of threatening or attempting to dominate them. In this way, men who stalk may be attempting to gain control of women and force them (out of fear) to submit to the relationship and/or to a more acceptable way of living. In either case, the risk of stalking for women is dependent, in part, on the lifestyle behaviors in which they engage.

Turning to the drinking or drug use behaviors, women who participate in some drinking and drug use behaviors have enhanced the likelihood of being stalked. The logistic coefficient posits that women who have bought illegal drugs in the past 6 months experience a 1.33 increase in the log odds of being stalked.
than do women who have not purchased illegal drugs recently. Similarly, women who have been drunk in public recently (in the past 6 months) have a .43 increase in the log odds of being stalked than women who do not get drunk in public or those who have not done so recently. Finally, women who get drunk at home more often (as opposed to other locations) experience a .01 increase in the log odds of being a stalking victim than do women who get drunk less often at home. These relationships are in line with routine activity theory in several ways. Drinking and drug use make a person more vulnerable to victimization and thus more vulnerable to predatory victimization (Lasley, 1989; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1998). Furthermore, women who drink or use illegal drugs are more similar to potential offenders than are non-drinkers and/or those who do not use drugs (recall the principle of homogamy) (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Likewise, it may be that women who use drugs are viewed as more suitable targets because they may be unwilling to report harassment to the police for fear of having their own criminality discovered. Research also suggests that alcohol (and possibly other illicit substances) may increase aggression in those who are already prone to aggressive behavior (Pernanen, 1991; Roth, 1994). Given this, women who drink or use drugs more often may be in the presence of men who are also using alcohol or drugs. These men may become more aggressive due to the effects of the alcohol or drugs, and stalking may be the aggressive crime they choose to commit. Finally, certain drinking behaviors may be a response to stalking victimization. It may be that women who are stalked are afraid to go out in public when they are drinking for fear of meeting their pursuer (while he is drunk and more aggressive) at the same time they have been drinking (and are more vulnerable).

Finally, measures taken to protect one’s self are important indicators for the risk of stalking for college or university women. However, the direction of the relationship is not in the expected direction. The parameter estimates indicate that women who carry mace or pocketknives for self-protection are more likely to be stalked. More specifically, women who carry mace have a 1.76 higher odds for being stalking victims than women who do not carry mace for self-protection. Similarly, college or university women who carry a pocketknife for self-protection have a 3.77
higher odds of being victims of stalking than women who do not carry pocketknives. It may be that these lifestyle behaviors are responses rather than antecedents to stalking victimization. Women who are stalked undoubtedly experience great fear that their pursuer will actually fulfill their threatening promises or carry through on their harassment. As a result, it is likely that these women may take to carrying protection with them, knowing the dangers that exist and the lack of official protection that is present (Stalking Victim’s Sanctuary, 1997).

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Based on the logistic regression results, it appears that routine activity theory has a significant amount of explanatory potential when it comes to influences over women’s stalking victimization. Variation in the incidence of stalking for college or university women appears to be the result of a variety of lifestyle behaviors, such as employment status, residential location, drinking and drug use behaviors, and employed measures of self-protection. These indicators provide support for routine activity explanations for female stalking victimization.

Additionally, and of equal importance, are the measures that are not important predictors of female stalking. As previous research has shown, demographic factors are not influential in aiding to our understanding of stalking determinants (Coleman, 1997; Romans et al., 1996). This is of particular interest because it is the contention of routine activity scholars that the effects of a person’s status on his or her risk of victimization will be negated when personal lifestyle characteristics and activities are considered. This research provides strong support for the notion that it is not whom the persons are that determines their chances for victimization but rather what they do, where they are, and with whom they come in contact.

At the same time, this research acknowledges that the subpopulation under investigation is select (although the rate of victimization in our sample is similar to that reported elsewhere). Given the contention that elements of deterrence should be considered in analyses of routine activity theory (Schwartz & Pitts,
1995), this specificity is warranted and necessary. Because it is likely that the predatory, violent victimization risks of women are related to the cultural, legal, and thus societal "supports" for the abuse of women (that men do not experience), it is judicious to examine the victimization risks of women separately. This is especially the case because we are examining a predatory crime—stalking—that usually is characterized as having a male offender who wishes to intimidate and gain power and/or control over his female victim (Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996; Wright et al., 1996). This research also is supportive of these assertions, as the best model includes several lifestyle characteristics that suggest that women who are more insulated (living on campus, do less shopping at the mall), less vulnerable (not drinking, getting drunk, and/or buying illegal drugs), and less threatening (not being employed) are less likely to be the victims of stalking.

Relatedly, these findings illustrate the importance of considering feminist explanations of predatory victimization. To elaborate, because these results are cross-sectional, they also can be taken to suggest that many of the variables thought to be predictors of stalking may actually be responses to stalking. It may be that women who are stalked, as a way to avoid stalkers who call incessantly on the phone, who lay in wait, or who stand outside their victims' home or place of work, may take steps to protect themselves (carrying mace or a pocketknife) or alleviate their fears of being confronted by their stalker when they are alone or vulnerable (by going to the mall, by drinking at home instead of in public). These alternative interpretations suggest that further study is needed to fully consider the impact of both feminism and routine activity theory as possible explanations for, and to increase understandings of, women's stalking victimization. Additionally, these potentially confounding results indicate the need for longitudinal or time-series analyses to fully decipher the predictors of stalking from the consequences of stalking.

This research also suggests the importance of conceptualizing activity measures more specifically and more relevantly to the population in question. For example, one factor that has been shown to be related to violence against women is alcohol consumption (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995). This research expands on this conclusion by examining both more detailed measures of alcohol
consumption and public environment behavior. We find that more detailed measures of alcohol consumption are significant predictors of stalking for women. Women who are frequently drunk in public and women who often drink at home are more likely to be victims of stalking. Similar to alcohol consumption, women who buy illegal drugs also are more likely to be stalked.

This research provides an understanding of a side of stalking that has been underdeveloped in research. This literature mainly discusses stalking typologies, definitions of stalking, and legal aspects of stalking (however, see Coleman, 1997). This research focused on the victims of stalking, deepening our understanding of the types of influences that increase (or decrease) a woman's chances of being the victim of stalking and providing insight into the lifestyles of female stalking victims. However, these lifestyles encompass more than relationship issues, such as the victim-offender relationship typically discussed in feminist research (Coleman, 1997). As the present research shows, women who are drunk in public more often, drink at home often, buy illegal drugs, are employed, do not live on a college or university campus, and go mall shopping more often have a greater risk for being stalking victims. It also suggests that a common response to stalking is to acquire and carry items for self-protection, such as mace and pocketknives (and perhaps go to the mall or drink at home rather than in public).

This research, in conjunction with previous research, suggests that the addition of other indicators may increase the explanatory power of the model. Such additions include measures of offenders' characteristics. Although most routine activity research only uses victim measures, characteristics of the offender may also be important (Schwartz & Pitts, 1995). Intuitively, for example, it seems useful to know that most stalkers are young to middle-age and have above-average intelligence (National Rifle Association, 1992; National Victim's Center, 1997).

Expanding on the violence against women literature, this study of stalking adds a new piece of understanding regarding the predatory victimization of women, with the hope that such research will contribute to the development of effective preventive, protective, and therapeutic programs.
NOTES

1. Participating institutions are located in Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Ohio.

2. No data are reported on students’ majors or standing in their programs. Items to assess these measures were not included on the instrument, as one author’s institutional review board believed such information would unnecessarily compromise respondents’ anonymity.

3. Although we are aware that measures of significance are inapplicable for a nonrandom sample, they are reported and discussed here as gauges of variables that are important explanatory indicators.

4. The equation, $x^1 - x^2; d_j^1 - d_j^2,$ can be used to evaluate which of two models is the better one (SAS, 1990).

5. Several statistics are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The chi-square statistic provides an indication of the overall fit of the data to the model. A significant chi-square indicates that the variables, as a group, contribute significantly to the dependent variable. In addition, the tables report the logistic coefficients and their standard errors ($SE$). The logistic coefficient ($B$) can be interpreted as the change in the log odds for a 1-unit change in the predictor. Finally, we report $Exp \ (b),$ which is a net odds ratio (Lottes, Adler, & DeMaris, 1996). Variables are regarded as significant if $\alpha \leq 0.05$ or $0.1,$ using a two-tailed test.

6. Unfortunately, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow this relationship to be assessed.

REFERENCES


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