

The course and nature of stalking: A psychological perspective

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CONTENTS

Page numbers

Section 1: What is stalking? Perceptions and legal definitions

| | | |
|---------------|------------------|--|
| 1-18 | Chapter 1 | General introduction |
| 19-31 | Chapter 2 | The similarities between stalking behaviours reported in early investigations |
| 32-53 | Chapter 3 | Perceptions and prevalence |
| 54-83 | Chapter 4 | Perceptions and prevalence of stalking in a male sample |
| 84-107 | Chapter 5 | What is stalking? The match between legislation and public perception |

Section 2: What is stalking? An assessment of real-life cases

| | | |
|----------------|------------------|---|
| 108-112 | Chapter 6 | The course and nature of stalking: An introduction |
| 113-145 | Chapter 7 | The course and nature of stalking: A victim perspective |
| 146-172 | Chapter 8 | The course and nature of stalking: An in-depth victim survey |

Section 3: Classification

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 173-184 | Chapter 9 | Stalker classification: The way forward? |
| 185-208 | Chapter 10 | Violence and the prior victim-stalker relationship |
| 209-223 | Chapter 11 | “There’s no smoke without fire”: Are male ex-partners perceived as more ‘entitled’ to stalk than acquaintance or stranger stalkers? |
| 224-256 | Chapter 12 | Stalker typologies: A law enforcement perspective |
| 257-263 | Chapter 13 | Conclusions |
| 264-278 | References | |
| 279-280 | Publication status of chapters | |

Appendices

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 281-285 | Appendix 1: Questionnaire employed in Chapter 3 |
| 286-290 | Appendix 2: Questionnaire employed in Chapter 4 |
| 291-296 | Appendix 3: Stimuli employed in Chapter 5 |
| 297 | Appendix 4: Questionnaire employed in Chapter 8 |
| 298 | Appendix 5: Example of stimuli employed in Chapter 11 |

| | |
|------------|--|
| 299 | Appendix 6a: Dendrogram illustrating female perceptions of stalking behaviours |
| 300 | Appendix 6b: Dendrogram illustrating female experiences of stalking behaviours |
| 301 | Appendix 6c: Dendrogram illustrating male perceptions of stalking behaviours |
| 302 | Appendix 6d: Dendrogram illustrating male experiences of stalking behaviours |

ABSTRACT

Stalking may be described as an extraordinary crime, one that is easy to commit but difficult to define and prosecute. This is because many activities of stalkers are ostensibly routine and harmless. Section one of this thesis however demonstrates that although English and Welsh law does not define criminal stalking, the general public hold shared ideas on what does and does not constitute stalking behaviour. It is concluded that anti-stalking legislation that does not tightly prescribe stalking acts may best capture public concerns about this highly prevalent form of harassment. Further, researchers in different countries are investigating the same phenomenon in that previous studies have detailed similar patterns of stalker behaviour. Section two reports two victim surveys that provide a preliminary picture of stalking experiences in the United Kingdom. These indicate that both stalking and the victims' reaction to it are changeable rather than constant, that any person can become a victim of stalking, and that stalkers themselves are a diverse group. Section three deals with the classification of stalkers. First, one specific classificatory factor, the nature of the stalker-victim prior relationship, is focused upon. Evidence that ex-partner stalkers are the relational group most likely to be violent toward their victims is provided, although stranger stalkers are most likely to be convicted for stalking activities. Next, a vignette study demonstrates how social psychological theory can account for the misattribution of ex-partner stalkers' behaviour. Finally, a taxonomy of stalkers that was specifically created for use by law enforcement agencies is presented. This classification illustrates how different interventions can have varying success according to the type of stalking involved. More generally, this thesis confirms some previous work for the first time with British samples, and provides practical insight into the course and nature of stalking as it occurs in the United Kingdom.

PART 1:

WHAT IS STALKING? PERCEPTIONS AND LEGAL DEFINITIONS

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns the harassment behaviour known as stalking, and is divided into three main parts. Each of these parts provides a relevant literature review (or reviews), followed by several pieces of research based on that literature. The first part of the thesis focuses on definitions and perceptions of stalking, its prevalence in the United Kingdom and how stalking may be legally defined and legislated against. Both survey and experimental methodologies are employed. The present chapter aims to review the most fundamental issue associated with stalking, that of definition. The nature of the problem will be described, then the two dominant means of defining (and thus legislating against) stalking will be outlined, followed by a discussion of the strengths and limitations of each approach. The background to both American and British anti-stalking legislation will also be considered.

The second section of the thesis concerns the course and nature of stalking in the United Kingdom, via a description and assessment of real-life stalking cases. Two victim surveys are reported in this section, and these represent the first such to be conducted in the UK. The third and final major section concerns attempts to classify stalking and stalkers. The relationship between the degree of prior intimacy between stalker and victim and the risk of violence is assessed, followed by an experimental study that concerns the prior victim-stalker relationship and attributions of culpability for a stalking scenario. This study draws on social psychological literature. The final chapter of Section three presents a new typology of stalkers, created specifically for use by law enforcement agencies.

INTRODUCTION

Stalking has been labelled “the crime of the nineties” (e.g. Goode, 1995). Yet, despite international media interest, there has been surprisingly little research conducted into the phenomenon. Much of the literature that does exist takes a discursive form, focuses on the pursuit of celebrities and other public figures (Dietz *et al.*, 1991, Fein and Vossekuil, 1998) or attempts to form typologies of stalkers and / or their victims (see Zona, Palarea and Lane, 1998 for a brief review), or concentrates on small and possibly unrepresentative clinical and court samples. The media coverage of stalking means that anecdotal and sensationalist accounts are far more prevalent than are systematic investigations.

Although stalking is a significant social problem (e.g. Wallis, 1996) there are a number of areas in which detailed information is extremely scant. For example, there is no agreed definition of what the phenomenon actually constitutes, nor is it entirely clear who the stalkers or their victims are likely to be. Furthermore, the prevalence of stalking is unclear, as are stalkers’ aims and motives. Despite the absence of detailed information on issues such as these, a number of countries, including England and Wales, have initiated anti-stalking legislation, in an attempt to deal with what is essentially an unknown phenomenon.

WHY IS DEFINING STALKING SUCH A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE?

As this chapter will indicate, there has been much debate over what the term 'stalking' actually means and what acts constitute 'stalking behaviours'. As far as the general public is concerned, it may be that stalking is like great art: they cannot define it, but know it when they see it. For the purposes of this chapter however, it is proposed to start with the premise that 'stalking' is composed of *a set of actions which, taken as a whole, amount to harassment or intimidation directed at one individual by another.*

Another useful way to portray the essence of stalking is by the use of examples. The following are statements made by victims of stalking collected by Sheridan, Gillett and Davies (1997):

"The most serious events took place over a two year period. I was followed continually, verbally attacked and physically. My property was damaged and I lived under constant threat of the phone continually ringing through the day and through the night. Some of the worst encounters were: being followed by a car which hit the back of my legs every time I got back up. Being threatened with a knife. Bombarded by constant verbal abuse in public spaces and when passers by intervened they too would be subjected to this. Also having to leave my home knowing after phone calls that the assailant was coming down to cause havoc. This would be anytime between 12 midnight and 4am."

(female, 27 years)

“An ex partner unbeknown to myself - put paint thinners over my car, slashed my tyres, sent doll figures with no heads on, chicken claws in the post, and apparently put my house and my activities under constant observation.”

(female, 35 years)

“A man who was known to me declared his interest on several occasions. I was not interested. Some time later I discovered that he waited outside my place of work, loitered outside my home, followed me home after social evenings out with my friends. He also obtained photos of me from colleagues under the pretence that he was arranging a practical joke. I was unaware of any of this until about 12 months after. I did actually approach him about this one night in the pub (I was with friends) but he seemed oblivious to my concerns and actually believed we were having a relationship! He even expressed worry about how this would affect my husband and how he was sorry my husband would be hurt.”

(female, 45 years)

Stalking is an extraordinary crime, given that it may often consist of no more than the targeted repetition of an ostensibly ordinary or routine behaviour. The major legislative difficulty is that the term “stalking” does not apply to a single action or actions which can easily be defined in legal terms and prohibited: rather, it embraces a multitude of activities. For example, stalkers can harass victims using illegal actions, such as making obscene phone calls or committing acts of violence. Frequently though, stalkers do not overtly threaten, but use behaviour which is ostensibly routine

and harmless, and not in itself illegal. Examples of this might include following somebody around a shop, or frequently driving past their house. Lawson-Cruttenden (1996) reports that in the past, most stalkers known to him had sought meticulously to stay within the bounds of criminal law, however objectionable or harassing their behaviour might have been.

LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF STALKING

The United States of America

In 1990, California enacted the first anti-stalking legislation in the United States of America and indeed the world. It has been alleged that while subsequent legislation in other states has been motivated by domestic violence, the original California initiative was probably due to the “stalking” of media celebrities (e.g. Goode, 1995), and particularly the murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer and the attempted murder of another actress, Theresa Saldana (e.g. Saunders, 1997): Both celebrities were stalked and subsequently assaulted by ‘crazed fans’. Within the first year of its enactment, 10 convictions were secured under California Penal Code 646.9 (Attinello, 1993).

There exists wide variation between US states in the actions covered by their respective anti-stalking statutes. Consequently, the National Institute of Justice was asked by Congress in 1993 to develop a Model Stalking Code. The resulting Code is recommended for consideration by states that seek to amend their existing statutes, and provides that any person is guilty of stalking who:

- (a) purposefully engages in a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury to himself or a member of his or her immediate family or to fear the death of himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family; and
- (b) has knowledge or should have knowledge that the specific person will be placed in reasonable fear of bodily injury to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family or will be placed in reasonable fear of death of himself or a member of his or her immediate family; and
- (c) whose acts induce fear in the specific person of bodily injury to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family or induce fear in the specific person of the death of himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family (Model Code, 1993).

Wallace and Kelty (1995) distilled the Code's requirements as "a knowing, purposeful course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family" (pp. 100-101). As a consequence of these requirements, many of the USA's stalking laws are based on behavioural definitions. For instance, California's amended (1994) law specifies: "Any person who wilfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family, is guilty of the crime of stalking."

The amended Californian legislation has been widely criticised by a number of commentators. Billings (1996) listed four specific deficiencies, namely that:

- (a) it defines 'harasses' through vague terms such as 'alarms' and 'annoys'
- (b) it prescribes 'harasses' as a course of conduct which causes 'emotional distress', which in turn is left without further explanation
- (c) the inclusion of a credible threat element could allow the exclusion of certain types of stalking behaviour
- (d) the 'specific intent' to cause fear of death or injury is too narrow a requirement

By 1994, almost all US states had introduced legislation against stalking, with most of this corresponding closely with the earlier California statute. According to these statutes, the crime of stalking requires a series of harassing acts, and not merely one isolated act. However, the series of acts can occur within minutes, such that no time lag is required. Stalking statutes in the US also typically require an intent to stalk, such that conduct must be wilful, malicious, and repetitive. Furthermore, the harassment must be directed at and cause substantial emotional distress to a specific person. Harassing conduct is not covered by the statute providing it can be shown to serve a legitimate purpose (although legitimate purpose is not defined, in common with the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997, see below). A further commonality between the statutes of several US stalking laws is that the emotional distress suffered by the victim is judged against a reasonable person standard: The distress must usually be caused by a credible threat of major bodily injury or death (Perez, 1993).

England and Wales

Mainly due to the attentions of the mass media, it became increasingly evident in recent years that existing legal remedies were inadequate, being unable to deal with the increasing numbers of stalking cases brought to the attention of the police. Prior to the introduction of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the legal situation in England and Wales was deficient in a number of ways. For instance, some offences contained elements such as intent which were difficult to prove in stalking cases. In addition, the powers of arrest for many offences were inadequate and, in the case of civil injunctions, often non-existent. Penalties for many offences seemed insufficient to deter offenders, and, following conviction, the courts had no real power to stop them repeating the offence (Metropolitan Police Service, 1997).

The common law power to arrest for breach of the peace was used in certain cases. However, this could only be used when the person (or their property) was actually harmed, or the individual was in fear of being physically assaulted. Much of the behaviour of stalkers does not actually amount to breach of the peace. Civil remedies available to victims were also unsatisfactory. Particular remedies had particular difficulties. For example, seeking a non-molestation order under the legislation relating to domestic violence excluded those cases where the stalker was only an acquaintance of, or was unknown to, the victim (Metropolitan Police Service, 1997). A major problem, (highlighted by Wallis, 1996) was that in the past, many stalking victims would seek police assistance in cases where their safety was threatened, only to find that police were powerless to act until physical or psychological damage had been done.

Thus, there was a clear need for the introduction of anti-stalking measures to fill the gaps left in previous existing legislation. The then British government recognised stalking as a serious problem of unknown scale, and introduced the Protection from Harassment Act in England and Wales on 16th June 1997. The Act was broad in scope and could be applied to a very wide range of situations including neighbourhood nuisance, bullying at work and in school, racial and sexual harassment, political demonstrations, and even intrusive news reporting. Its main purpose, however, was to deal with stalkers. The new Act sought to intervene before actual physical or serious psychological harm took place, by making it possible for police and victims to take action at an earlier stage. The offences could be committed anywhere, and all were arrestable. For the first time, the criminal courts had the power to control offenders' behaviour after conviction by way of a restraining order (Metropolitan Police Service, 1997). A unique feature of the new Act was the power it gave the police to intervene at an early stage and to recognise that a series of acts, innocuous in themselves, could constitute a serious punishable offence.

In addition, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 requires no specific intent. Instead, the Act was drafted so that it will not always be necessary to prove that a person knew that their conduct amounted to harassment. The 'reasonable person' test is used. It is qualified in the Act by the words 'in possession of the same information'. North American legislation, by an inclusion of intent to cause serious harm, may miss out on prosecuting in those cases where the defendant may never mean any harm, but if their desires and actions were made known to the victim, they could cause severe anxiety and distress.

The Act created two new criminal offences in England and Wales. Stalking causing “harassment, alarm or distress, whether or not intended” carried a maximum penalty on conviction of six months imprisonment, a £5,000 fine, or both. This was intended to snare those behind “lower-level intimidation such as excessive phone calls or flowers” (Protection from Harassment Bill 1996). There was also a new crime of “putting people in fear of violence”. This ‘high level’ offence was intended to catch the most serious cases of harassment “where on more than one occasion the conduct is so threatening that victims fear for their safety” (Protection from Harassment Bill 1996). A person guilty of an offence under this section was liable to be imprisoned for a maximum of five years, be fined up to £5,000, or both.

In sum, prior to the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the police were unable to act to protect a member of the public until s/he had suffered serious physical or psychological harm in some way. The breakthrough of the new Act was to allow police to take legal action *before* such harm took place, and to recognise what may previously have been regarded as a series of innocuous acts as a serious punishable offence.

The Act was delayed in its passage through the House of Commons by a debate concerning the criminal definition of stalking. The British government decided not to include such a definition within the Act. This was because many stalking activities, such as persistent gifts or frequent declarations of affection, were harmless and lawful when taken in isolation, a fact that had been highlighted by the inadequacies of other attempts at legislation. At the third reading of the Protection from Harassment Bill,

the then Minister of State, David Maclean, stated that: “The Bill aims to give protection to victims of harassment, not by defining activities that are known as stalking - as we believe that such a definition would inevitably omit some activities that are distressing, or worse, to victims - but by focusing on the harm inflicted on the victim. That harm is harassment”. The then Home Secretary insisted that measures placed in the Bill would not stop people from going about their lawful business, and that the “legitimate work of the police, the security service, journalists and others (would be) recognised and protected” (House of Commons Debates, 18th December 1996).

Legal professionals outside the House also levelled criticism at the Act. For instance, it was argued that the Act could be open to abuse by unscrupulous police officers (Lawson-Cruttenden, 1996); that what exactly constituted the criminal element of stalking had not been clarified (Hadley, 1996); and that the Act could not distinguish between the dangerous stalker and the “misguided fool wallowing in... the anguish of betrayal” (Daly, 1996, p.9).

These final two objections have carried considerable weight in that one of the first cases to be brought under the new Act failed after a judge ruled that it was ‘not a crime to court somebody’. This was despite allegations that the defendant kept his victim under almost constant surveillance and bombarded her with unwanted gifts and letters for a two year period. It was claimed that she was placed in such torment that she was forced to close down her business and move to another part of the country. The judge at Manchester Crown Court ruled that the defendants’ actions were innocuous as no violent act had been committed.

Conversely, there is of course a risk that if the scope of any legislation to deal with stalking is not carefully defined it will criminalise the everyday behaviour of innocent people. The challenge is to catch stalkers without putting in jeopardy the liberty of others to pursue everyday activities or those sincerely seeking to start a relationship with someone where their actions could not reasonably be considered to be a nuisance. Also, some may feel that ex-partners may be warranted in carrying out what could be deemed as harassing behaviour in order to gain an explanation for the sudden departure or change in affections of someone previously close to them. In short, it is suggested that a legislative line is needed so that legal practitioners can distinguish between robust wooing and intimidation. However, is this possible?

In conclusion, it seems that there is no internationally agreed upon definition of stalking. Indeed, it seems that the England and Wales legislation is framed to criminalise a wider range of activities than is that of the US, and as such the former may lead eventually to more convictions. In the UK, a consultation paper produced by the Home Office in 1996 noted that stalking was not defined in the civil or criminal law in England and Wales, but stated that “it can be broadly described as a series of acts which are intended to, or in fact, cause harassment to another person” (1.2).

Although the paper provided no explanation of the term ‘harassment’, it may be said that this is far looser a definition than that provided by the US Model Stalking Code. No specific intent is required, and there is no requirement of fear of bodily injury or death. Instead, actual harassment is the key issue. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 does offer brief guidance as to what constitutes harassment, stating that references to harassing a person include alarming the person or causing the person

distress. Again, a departure from the North American legislation is seen, in that in order to invoke the law, the English or Welsh victim does not have to suffer or fear physical injury or death.

Strengths and weaknesses of the two legislative approaches

It is evident that, if the scope of any legislation to deal with stalking is not carefully defined, there is indeed a risk that it will criminalise the everyday behaviour of innocent people. Some may feel, for instance, that it is perfectly acceptable for an ex-partner to pursue a former loved one in order to gain an explanation for the latter's unexpected change in affection. Other people may see such actions as unwarranted harassment. The challenge is to catch stalkers without putting in jeopardy the liberty of others to undertake legitimate activities or to initiate relationships in a way which could not reasonably be considered to constitute a nuisance. In short, it is suggested that a legislative line is needed so that legal practitioners can distinguish between robust wooing and intimidation.

It is clear that none of the legal definitions offered above are able to capture the essence of stalking whilst at the same time avoiding criticisms based on all the problematic issues outlined above. For instance, none are able to consistently separate the dangerous stalker from the over-attentive suitor, or are able to precisely identify the point where innocent interest turns into pathological obsession. Further, most of the above descriptions can be accused of employing nebulous terminology, a fault almost impossible to avoid.

Around the world, and even within particular countries, legal definitions of stalking vary widely. It can be seen that the North American Model Stalking Code and the England and Wales legislation differ quite markedly. A North American victim, according to the Code, must fear bodily injury or death, whilst the English or Welsh victim need only experience two acts which constitute harassment, which goes largely undefined. Such differences in definition may have major legal consequences, and although it appears at first glance that the England and Wales legislation is framed to criminalise a wider range of activities than that of the US Model Code, whether the former leads to more convictions remains to be seen.

RESEARCHERS' DEFINITIONS OF STALKING

Psychologists, unlike legislators, have suggested few behavioural definitions of stalking. Pathé and Mullen (1997) posit that: "Stalking describes a constellation of behaviours in which one individual inflicts on another repeated unwanted intrusions and communications" (p. 12). Meloy's (1997) review of the clinical literature on stalking noted that defining a clinical population on the basis of one pattern of behaviour was problematic. He discarded the term "stalking" for several reasons - mostly to avoid its sensationalistic media connotations, and to reserve it's proper use for the description of a statutorily defined criminal act. Meloy (1997) instead used the term "obsessional follower", which he felt described a person who engages in an abnormal or long-term pattern of threat or harassment directed toward a specific individual. An abnormal or long-term pattern of threat or harassment is defined as more than one overt act of unwanted pursuit of the victim that is perceived by the victim as being harassing (Meloy, 1997).

As noted earlier, Wallace and Kelty (1995) were able to distil the US legislative definition as “a knowing, purposeful course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family”. They believe this definition would cover most situations mentioned above, whilst at the same time not being overly broad or ambiguous. Meloy and Gothard (1995) however, interpret the legislation differently. They state that the North American legal definition of stalking is typically “The wilful, malicious and repeated following and harassing of another person that threatens his or her safety” (p.258). Unlike Wallace and Kelty, these researchers place the onus on threat to safety, rather than fear of bodily injury or death. There is an obvious difference here since the latter is a less strict requirement, and Meloy and Gothard’s interpretation is in fact perhaps closer to the England and Wales Act than to the North American model.

PREVALENCE

As is clear, the introduction of stalking laws caused legislators considerable difficulty, and further problems arose once these laws reached the statute books. When the Protection from Harassment Bill 1996 was drafted, it was anticipated that 200 new cases would arise per year at a cost of £216,000. This figure included all types of harassment, such as racial and neighbour harassment. However, in the Act’s first year alone, an estimated 12,000 complaints arose. Over a third (4,304) of these cases were proceeded against, and of these, half (2,165) were found guilty at Magistrates’ Court. These figures highlight the problem of prevalence. Specifically, because stalking has

been outlawed only in recent years, there existed no reliable long-term incidence figures on which legislation and resource-allocation could be based.

In the US, Faulkner and Hsiao (1993) estimated that 5% of US women in the general population will be victims of stalking at some time in their lives. A report commissioned by the US government (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998) estimated that approximately 8% of US women have been stalked at some time, and that 1,006,970 are stalked annually. Corwin (1993) has also produced a high estimate, suggesting the number of cases of stalking in the USA to be at least 200,000 each year. Furthermore, Furio (1993) estimated that one in six women in the USA who are murdered each year have been stalked first.

There are as yet no firm or reliable data concerning the incidence of stalking in Britain. This is mainly because the phenomenon has been criminalised only recently. However, some initial insight is provided by an English telephone survey (NOP Solutions, 1997). Twenty-five percent of 1,013 people under the age of 35 interviewed said that they knew someone who had been a victim of 'stalking' or persistent pestering, either face-to-face or through nuisance telephone calls. It also found that amongst all the adults interviewed, considerably more from the South (19%) said that they had felt personally threatened by persistent pestering compared with people from the North (12%) or the Midlands (11%). More than twice as many women as men said they had personally experienced threatening behaviour of some kind (19%, compared with 8%).

The problem of producing reliable incidence figures for stalking looks set to continue, and is clearly linked to the problem of definition. It is likely that different studies would produce differing prevalence levels, depending upon the definition of stalking employed. Incidence statistics for many criminal activities are problematic, and, especially in the case of 'new crimes' such as stalking, it is important that the working definitions employed in research are stated clearly.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the past decade, there has been a rush to legislate against stalking, such that legislators have failed to take into account the nature of the crime and have essentially outlawed an unknown quantity. As long as professionals in the area fail to agree on what constitutes stalking, two similar errors are likely to be perpetuated. Firstly, certain individuals who are guilty of no more than over-robust but well-meaning and harmless courtship may be accused of stalking, and even prosecuted under existing anti-stalking legislation. Conversely, dangerous stalkers may side-step prosecution due to the reluctance of the courts to label a series of individually innocuous acts as the intimidating holistic threat that they actually constitute. Stalking may be described as an elusive crime, one that is easy to commit, but difficult to define and prosecute.

AIMS OF THIS PART OF THE THESIS

This chapter has provided the background to Britain's first stalking legislation. Because the Protection from Harassment Act was introduced only in 1997, very little research related to stalking has originated from the UK. This means that fundamental

issues such as the people's perceptions of stalking and the prevalence of stalking (and stalking related acts) remain uninvestigated.

The next chapter reviews 12 studies that have included breakdowns of stalking behaviour as part of their analyses. This is in an attempt to discover whether stalkers engage in similar activities, with a view to delineating whether it is possible to firmly define criminal stalking. Chapter 3 describes a study that aims to investigate whether British women, the potential most likely victims of stalking, hold shared ideas on what stalking does and does not constitute. This study will also incorporate an assessment of the incidence of stalking and stalking related activities within the same population. Chapter 4 replicates this work, but with a wholly male sample.

Similarities and differences between female and male perceptions of stalking will be presented, along with a comparison of women's and men's experiences of stalking and harassment. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the results of an experiment which aims to assess the degree of correspondence between anti-stalking legislation and participants' own opinions of what constitutes stalking, and also to test the ability of lay persons to interpret anti-stalking statutes.

CHAPTER 2

THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN STALKING BEHAVIOURS REPORTED IN EARLY INVESTIGATIONS

The first chapter discussed the problems associated with defining stalking, and outlined the two major approaches to legislating against this form of harassment. The present chapter aims to further examine the issue of defining this seemingly nebulous phenomenon. Twelve academic studies that have detailed actual stalking activities are assessed to determine the extent to which they have recorded similarities in perpetrators' stalking behaviours. If these similarities are great, then it may be possible for psychologists to inform legal authorities as to what does and does not constitute stalking. Alternately, if the studies do not show any similarities between the methods of different individual stalkers, then this would suggest that it is impossible to legally define stalking and harassment.

IS STALKING A NEBULOUS CRIME?

As noted in Chapter 1, few psychologists have attempted to define stalking. Those definitions that have been offered are of little use to legal practitioners given the nebulous terms employed, and nor indeed were they intended to be. It may still be possible, however, for psychologists to give valuable input to the issue of what does and does not constitute stalking. Sohn (1994) notes that although stalking is now an offence in almost all US states, the term is not defined in *Black's Law Dictionary* (Nolan and Nolan-Hanley, 1990), nor is it discussed in major legal treatises such as

American Jurisprudence or *Corpus Juris Secundum*. Nevertheless, Sohn argues that the term “stalker” arouses certain common images in most people’s minds, and newspaper reports of stalking seem to follow a very similar format and appear to describe much the same kinds of behaviour. Consequently, it may be that many members of the public have clear ideas concerning what they consider stalking to be.

TWELVE STUDIES OF STALKING

To investigate this idea further, 12 studies that included stalking behaviours as part of their results were examined. It should be noted that these were not necessarily investigations of stalking per se: some were clinical research studies into obsessional behaviour, particularly obsessional following and erotomania. DSM-IV defines erotomania as one of the five subtypes of Delusional Disorder. This type of disorder tends to be chronic, and the erotomaniac subtype is characterised particularly by the belief that the target of attention (who is generally of higher social and economic status) bears genuine love for the erotomaniac individual. More importantly, a positive diagnosis depends on there being minimal or no prior contact between the target and the delusional erotomaniac (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Erotomania was traditionally regarded as a rare female disorder of little more than curiosity value. In recent years researchers have found the disorder to be more common in male offenders than previously thought (e.g. Taylor, Mahendra and Gunn, 1983), and erotomania is now widely viewed as clinically relevant to the understanding of stalking and domestic violence (Meloy, 1996). Indeed, it has been suggested that what is nowadays described as stalking has been in the past termed ‘erotomania’

(Bean, 1996). Some background to the 12 studies reviewed in this chapter will now be provided

Background to the studies

Taylor, Mahendra and Gunn (1983) conducted an investigation into erotomania in males. They noted that “in anglophonic countries erotomania has traditionally been regarded as a female disorder of little more than curiosity value” (p. 645) and that although the French literature did recognise the disorder in males, male erotomanics were regarded as a real rarity. Taylor et al. found that in a sample of 112 psychotic men who were held in remand prison charged with violent offences, three fulfilled the criteria for erotomania. Thus, they argued that the syndrome might be more common in men than previously believed. Goldstein (1978, 1987), Leong (1994), and Noone and Cockhill (1987) carried out further early case studies that discussed the involvement of male erotomanics in the criminal justice system. Although none of these investigations explicitly mentioned ‘stalking’, and were conducted using very small or unknown numbers of erotomaniac participants, they may be said to have rekindled forensic interest in the disorder and to have recognised its potential involvement in male stalking and violence (Lloyd-Goldstein, 1998).

In a ground breaking study, Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993) produced the first analysis of criminal stalking by examining 74 cases in the files of the Los Angeles Police Department’s Threat Management Unit (which was set up in July 1990 by Lieutenant John Lane with the explicit intention of investigating and managing stalking-related crimes). Similar works followed, with Mullen and Pathé (1994a, 1994b) providing

details of 16 personally assessed cases of individuals with 'pathologies of love' (erotomania). As with the previous studies cited above, the majority of subjects were male and the authors noted that they placed the targets of their attentions at risk of at best harassment and at worst violence.

Both Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995) and Meloy and Gothard (1995) described demographic and clinical details of persons who had been charged with 'obsessional following' and other stalking-related behaviour. Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan and Meloy (1997) produced an analysis of 25 forensic subjects whose alleged criminal offences met Missouri's legal definition of stalking activities. Similarly, Schwartz-Watts, Morgan and Barnes (1997) examined 18 individuals who had been charged with stalking in South Carolina and who were awaiting trial. Once again, the majority of these subjects were male, and it was by now widely recognised that contrary to traditional belief, erotomania was not the almost exclusive domain of women (e.g. Lloyd-Goldstein, 1998). Further, it would appear that the majority of individuals who were being charged with stalking offences were males.

Pathé and Mullen (1997) noted that although studies had begun to appear on stalkers, little information had been gathered on or from their victims, and the authors set about redressing this imbalance by producing the first substantive study of the latter.

Although their paper focused on the effect of stalking on its victims, data on the actual activities carried out by stalkers was also recorded. Whilst Pathé and Mullen's work originated from Australia, the next systematic study of stalking by Hall (1998) attempted to survey victims from across the United States.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the 12 studies outlined above, and details the main stalking behaviours they identified. It is also worthy of note that these studies were carried out on three continents.

Table 2.1: Studies detailing stalking behaviours

| Study | Sample and country of origin | Examples of stalking/harassment behaviours detailed |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Hall (1998) | 145 stalking victims were surveyed USA | Telephoning Letters/unwanted or offensive gifts Surveillance of home Following Property damage Threats to victim and third parties Physical and sexual assaults Kidnapping |
| Pathé and Mullen (1997) | 100 stalking victims completed a 50-item questionnaire on their experiences Australia | Communications through: telephone letters and notes electronic mail graffiti Ordering goods on the victim's behalf Intrusions: i.e. following, loitering nearby, maintaining surveillance, making approaches Interfering with the victim's property |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | <p>Specific or implied threats to the safety of the target</p> <p>Physical and sexual assaults</p> <p>Threats and violence to third parties</p> <p>Making false accusations</p> <p>Initiating spurious legal actions</p> |
| <p>Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan and Meloy (1997)</p> | <p>25 forensic subjects whose activities met a legal definition of stalking</p> <p>Missouri, USA</p> | <p>Telephoning</p> <p>Letters</p> <p>Visiting the victim's home</p> <p>Following</p> <p>Verbal threats of violence</p> <p>Physical assaults</p> |
| <p>Schwartz-Watts, Morgan and Barnes (1997)</p> | <p>18 pretrial detainees charged with stalking</p> <p>South Carolina, USA</p> | <p>Following and harassing (according to S 16-3-1070 of South Carolina law)</p> <p>Physical assaults</p> |
| <p>Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995)</p> | <p>48 'repetitive stalkers'</p> <p>New York, USA</p> | <p>Telephoning</p> <p>Letters</p> <p>Gift-giving</p> <p>Accosting</p> |
| <p>Meloy and Gothard (1995):</p> | <p>20 obsessional followers</p> <p>San Diego, USA</p> | <p>Telephoning</p> <p>Letters</p> <p>Gift-giving</p> <p>Stalking</p> |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| | | Visiting the victim's home Visiting the victim's place of employment |
| Leong (1994): | Five erotomanics Los Angeles, USA | Telephoning Letters Following Various approach attempts |
| Mullen and Pathé (1994a): | 14 stalkers or those with a 'pathology of love' Australia | Telephoning Letters Following Approaches |
| Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993) | Profiles of 74 'obsessionals', from case files held by the LAPD's Threat Management Unit. Los Angeles, USA | Telephoning Letters Stalking Threats Visits to victim's home Face-to-face contact |
| Noone and Cockhill (1987): | Erotomanics (N = unknown) Unknown | Telephoning Letters Stalking Various approach behaviours |
| Goldstein (1978, 1987): | Erotomanics (N = unknown) | Telephoning Gift giving |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Seven erotomanics | Stalking Various approach behaviours Talking to the target |
| | USA | Assaults |
| Taylor, Mahendra and Gunn (1983) | Three erotomanics Great Britain | Annoying telephone calls Aggressive letters Unwanted following Assaults Property damage |

- NB (i) the first two columns of the table are taken in part from Meloy, 1997.
- (ii) when “stalking” is referred to as a behaviour in Table 2.1 above, this is taken to represent the act in its purest sense, i.e. following or pursuit.

What is interesting is that there is a great deal of commonality in the stalking behaviours identified by these studies. These common behaviours include repeated communications, intrusions, property damage, threats to the person, and actual assaults. In all cases, these activities are assumed to be repetitious and unwanted by their target.

However, there are also a number of weaknesses associated with these studies. Firstly, the sample size in most cases was limited or unknown. Secondly, the majority of these studies appeared prior to recent legal developments. Third, most of the studies focused solely on erotomania, using subjects mainly drawn from clinical populations.

In a British study, Sheridan, Gillett and Davies (1997), employed a methodology that differed from all of those studies cited in Table 2.1 above. This investigation provided respondents with a range of 40 intrusive behaviours, and asked them to indicate those that they believed to be exemplars of stalking activities, via a simple yes/no format. A second difference between the Sheridan *et al.* study and those carried out previously was that the former employed neither stalkers or their victims, but instead investigated the opinions of a random female sample of British nurses, secretarial staff and students.

Sheridan *et al.*'s sample believed that stalking behaviours were characterised by repeated communications, various intrusions, property damage, threats to the person, and actual assaults. To give more specific examples, the respondents showed a high level of agreement that stalking included following a target, repeated telephone and/or written contact, and various approach behaviours. Indeed, respondents agreed at a level of 70% or higher that 20 of the 40 intrusive behaviours with which they were presented were acts of stalking.

There are thus considerable parallels between Sheridan *et al.*'s findings and the results of other studies that have also broken down various harassing behaviours, despite the varying methodologies employed. Similarly, Meloy's (1997) review of the clinical research literature on obsessional following published over the preceding 20 years noted that one consistent finding was a pattern of multiple and varied contacts with victims, with letter writing and telephoning often accompanied by a physical

approach. However, given the nature of the data outlined above, it may be argued that the contacts are not as varied as Meloy implies.

Furthermore, Sheridan *et al.* uncovered similar stalking behaviours to a number of other studies in which subjects were selected for erotomania rather than being victims of stalking or the general public. There are several possible reasons for this. One may be that there are far more erotomanics in the community than previously thought.

Alternatively, erotomanics and non-erotomanics may tend to employ similar stalking behaviours. It is unlikely though that all stalkers are erotomanics, as many 'stalking cases' involve an ex-partner of the victim (see stalker typologies section below).

Meloy (1989) suggests that erotomania exists in essentially two forms, namely classic, delusional erotomania and borderline erotomania. Meloy (1989) defines borderline erotomania as a nondelusional version of the syndrome where:

“an extreme disorder of attachment is apparent in the pursuit of, and in the potential for violence toward, the unrequited love object.”

In Meloy's borderline type, there has typically been a history of actual emotional involvement with the target, and this may have taken various forms.

Alternatively, it may be that stalking occurs on a continuum from non-delusional to delusional behaviour, as suggested by Wright, Burgess, Burgess, McCrary, and Douglas (1995). These authors suggest that what most readily distinguishes stalking behaviour on the spectrum is the type of prior relationship that the stalker has had with his or her victim. Wright *et al* (1995) posit that on the extreme delusional end of the

spectrum, no actual prior relationship need exist between stalker and victim, whilst at the other end are actual prior relationships. This is a difficult model to test however, as it assumes no clear boundaries between actual mental illness and inappropriate behaviour.

Perhaps, in these early stages, the most productive course of action would be to examine instances of stalking on a case by case basis, with the aim of amassing a database of stalker, victim and case details, before attempting to classify individual stalkers as pathological or normal. What may be most useful at present would be a more in-depth understanding of the various facets of stalking and the motives underlying such acts. Such information could well aid practitioners in deciding when an act of stalking has occurred, and in predicting whether or not a particular case is likely to escalate into a more serious offence.

THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A CONSENSUS ON WHAT CONSTITUTES STALKING BEHAVIOUR

Various commonalities in stalking behaviour have been found across a number of studies, and these commonalities point to a number of practical possibilities. Most importantly, it may be that when the term 'stalking' is used in a criminal context, it brings to mind a particular group of intrusive activities, such as pursuit and repetitive, unreciprocated communications. Perhaps it is possible for psychologists to apply this apparent consensus on the definition of stalking in distinguishing cases of stalking from those that should not be defined as such. Obviously, further investigations are necessary to clarify whether people really do agree on those kinds of behaviour that

constitute stalking. Also, it should be noted that consensus among members of the general public on the definition of stalking behaviours would only be legally useful if the behaviours in question were exhibited in the real world, and as such actual stalking cases would need to be monitored for this. Finally, high levels of agreement on behaviours which are exemplars of stalking may eventually make it possible to produce a set of guidelines which would guide police investigations and court decisions.

Of course, a further possibility may be that psychological intervention is not necessary if the general public and legal practitioners tend to share an idea of what stalking constitutes, and these tally with real-life criminal acts. If the legal profession already understands what the public regard as stalking then they do not require further assistance. Even if this were found to be so, additional questions remain. For instance: what constitutes the specifically *criminal* element of stalking? What is the point at which legal action should be resorted to in a particular stalking case?

Answers to questions such as these would enlighten psychologists, the police and the courts alike. For instance, if a point could be established at which a formal offence has been committed, then this could help police decide whether or not to pursue and devote limited resources to a particular case. Similarly, the same guidance could facilitate the decision of a court to convict or acquit a particular defendant.

A related question has been raised by Hadley (1996): Can an individual be said to stalk someone from the moment they set eyes upon them, or is there a particular period of time after which a person may be labelled as a stalker? Hadley suggested that the definitive moment could be when a person knowingly makes unwanted

advances after initial rejection or failure to elicit a response. But, if this line of reasoning is pursued, then how can the law cope with such common notions as 'faint heart never won fair maiden'? Also, it may be that in some cases an actual approach is never made, so rendering it impossible for the victim to rebuff a stalker. It is obvious that in order to answer questions such as these, a detailed analysis of stalking cases must be undertaken. This could enable patterns of threat to be established which may assist law enforcement officials in deciding whether or not to label an individual as a stalker, and, therefore, inform the decision as to what course of action to follow.

In short then, a consensus on what does and does not constitute an act of stalking needs to be reached, and this could be developed into legal guidelines. A major benefit would be the creation of a legislative line which may avoid the conviction of persons guilty of nothing but over-robust wooing, but conversely aid the conviction of those who conduct a similar campaign, but one which actually disrupts the life of it's victim to an intimidatory degree.

CHAPTER 3

PERCEPTIONS AND PREVALENCE

INTRODUCTION

While anti-stalking legislation exists, the definitions of the crime that this employs can be rather nebulous. Furthermore, there is very little evidence concerning public perception of the crime such that there is no way of knowing whether the existing legislation addresses the kinds of activities that the public believe should be unlawful. Sheridan, Gillett and Davies' (1997) study (see Chapter 2) found that members of the public held shared ideas on what constitutes a prototypical stalking act, and that these shared ideas fell into two clear clusters representing acts indicative of stalking and acts not indicative of stalking respectively. The 'stalking' cluster comprised three subdivisions, which were labelled as 'contact', 'violent' and 'proximity seeking' behaviour clusters.

It was not possible, however, to compare these clusters with subtypes of stalking generated in other studies, due to the vastly differing methodologies employed. For instance, the focus of victim-stalker typologies has been either on the victims (e.g. Holmes, 1993), on the stalkers themselves (e.g. Zona, Sharma and Lane, 1993) or on the various relationships between the two (e.g. Meloy and Gothard, 1995). Some of the classifications, such as Dietz's (1991a,b) deal with the stalking of public figures only, while others (e.g. Geberth, 1992) focus on mental illness in the perpetrator. No typology of stalking to date has been developed via women's actual experiences of particular harassing behaviours.

The present chapter seeks to investigate two stalking-related issues: firstly, how English and Welsh females perceive the crime, and secondly, the prevalence of stalking and stalking-related acts in a female population. The research reported here expands upon Sheridan et al.'s (1997) study (and also other research reported by Faulkner and Hsiao, 1993; Furio, 1993; NOP Solutions, 1997; Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998 – see Chapter 1), and has two main objectives. It first investigates whether female members of the British public hold clear ideas on what is and is not a stalking act, in the absence of any formal legal definition of criminal harassment. This was explored through the presentation of a list of 42 intrusive acts, with respondents required to indicate which acts they felt constituted stalking. Second, the sample was shown the same continuum of intrusive behaviours, and asked to indicate any that they had experienced personally. Cluster analyses were conducted on both women's perceptions of the 42 behaviours, and women's experiences of the same, in an attempt to discover whether perceived and actual typologies of stalking overlapped. Finally, the women were asked to record in detail their worst harassing or intrusive episode, if they had experienced one. The aim here was to obtain further insight into women's experiences of stalking and harassment.

METHOD

Participants

Questionnaires were distributed among female members of the trade union UNISON in England and Wales during the first six months of 1999. Three hundred and forty-

eight were returned and all were included in the analysis. The response rate was unknown as the questionnaires were copied and distributed by local UNISON representatives who did not keep full records. UNISON members were specifically selected in order that women from a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds should be sampled. UNISON is Britain's biggest trade union with 1.4 million members working in local government, the health service, the electricity, gas, transport and water industries, schools, colleges, universities, housing, the police service and the voluntary and community sectors.

The socio-economic status of the women, as defined by their occupational title, was as follows: 147 (42.2%) were clerical workers, 75 (21.6%) were professionals, 57 (16.4%) were students, 30 (8.6%) were employed in the nursing/caring professions, 16 (4.6%) were unskilled workers, 12 (3.4%) were technicians, 6 (1.7%) were retired, and 5 (1.4%) were unemployed.

The majority of respondents (307, or 88.2%) described their ethnic origin as white. Nineteen (5.5%) were Asian and 16 (4.6%) were black. Six more participants (1.7%) described themselves as Latin. Participants were bracketed into three age groups: 18-27 (n = 91), 28-45 (n = 174) and 46 and above (n = 83).

Some 149 (42.8%) were single, a further 148 were married, and the remaining 51 (14.7%) were either separated or divorced. Over half (197, or 56.6%) lived with a partner, 105 (29%) resided in another form of shared accommodation, and 46 (13.2%) lived alone.

The stalking questionnaire

The questionnaire (which may be seen in Appendix 1) was constructed specifically for this study consisted of an introduction and four main sections, and took the following format:

Section one. Participants were asked to state their age, job title, marital status, living arrangements (such as alone, or with partner), and ethnic origin via a selection of choices.

Section two. Participants were requested to read through a list of 42 intrusive behaviours, and select on a 'yes / no' basis all those that they personally considered to be exemplars of stalking behaviours. The spectrum of 42 items detailed a range of behaviours which may be described as intrusive. Some of these were selected from newspaper descriptions of actual cases of stalking and harassment and others were considered by the author to represent less serious intrusive behaviours. Participants were asked to think of the behaviours being carried out exclusively by males toward a female 'target'.

Section three. The list of 42 behaviours was repeated but with a more personal emphasis, and participants were now invited to indicate which, if any, they had personally experienced. Thus, this section was constructed to provide a measure of how far the sample had first hand experience of the various behaviours - regardless of whether they considered them to be stalking.

A working definition of stalking was provided on the questionnaire: “A series of actions directed at one individual by another which, taken as a whole, amount to unwanted persistent personal harassment.” It is obviously difficult to supply a global definition in a study that, in itself, is seeking to discover what definitive stalking behaviours constitute. However, it was felt necessary to provide the sample with a guideline to ensure that they understood the questionnaire’s instructions.

Section four. The final section of the questionnaire asked participants, if they had experienced any of the behaviours described in section three, to describe in some detail what they considered to be the worst incident, with particular reference to the behaviour of the ‘man involved.’

The list of 42 behaviours. The 42 behaviours included on the questionnaire were designed to represent a continuum of likely stalking and non-stalking acts. The list of items was designed such that it would be unrealistic if a participant indicated that she had not experienced any of the behaviours. The inclusion of behaviours such as: “‘Wolf-whistling’ in the street’, was designed to create an environment which made it easier for participants to volunteer having experienced some of the more serious and distressing behaviours (e.g. ‘Confining the target against her will’).

RESULTS

Acts that were and were not perceived as stalking

Participants 'yes/no' responses to all 42 questionnaire items in section two were subjected to cluster analysis, using Ward's (1963) hierarchical agglomerative method. Cluster analyses are a series of statistical techniques that allow researchers to organise observed data into meaningful structures, that is, to develop classifications. Ward's method is distinct from all other cluster analysis methods because it uses an analysis of variance approach to evaluate the distances between clusters. In short, this method attempts to minimize the sum of squares (SS) of any two (hypothetical) clusters that can be formed at each step. Ward's is a popular method because it tends to produce compact groups of well distributed size.

The resulting dendrogram (see Appendix 6a) yielded two main clusters. The interpretation of these was simple: one cluster represented behaviours on which there was high consensus that these were stalking while the second represented a range of behaviours not perceived as stalking by most participants.

The two major clusters were found to be comprised of several subdivisions. These could be interpreted as follows (the percentage in brackets indicates the proportion of participants marking that behaviour as representative of stalking):

'Stalking' clusters:

(i) *'Classic' stalking behaviours*. The behaviours in this cluster were dubbed as 'classic' stalking behaviours. This is because these items were identical to those most commonly featured in both the media coverage of stalking cases and in the academic research that has recorded the behaviour of stalkers (see Sheridan and Davies, 1999, for a brief overview).

- Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so (96.5%).
- Following the target (95.7%).
- Furtively taking photographs of the target without her knowledge (95.7%).
- Constantly watching/spying on the target (95.7%).
- Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace (93.1%).
- Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content (90.8%).
- Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, her house, workplace, etc.) (90.2%).
- Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters (90.2%).
- Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts (84.4%).
- Repeated personal approaches by a stranger (80.4%).
- Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood (78.1%).

(ii) *'Threatening' stalking behaviours*. The seven behaviours in this second cluster were given the label of 'threatening' stalking behaviours as five of them had an overtly threatening/violent theme.

- Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller (90.2%).
- An inappropriate man sending sexually explicit letters to the target (87%).
- Death threats (86.5%).
- Confining the target against her will (85.6%).
- Intercepting mail/deliveries (85.3%).
- Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends (83.6%)
- Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property (77.2%).

(iii) '*Unpredictable' stalking behaviours*'. The three items in this cluster were found to centre around acts which may be described as both threatening and unpredictable (compared with the threatening but more controlled acts listed in the cluster above).

- Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other men (friends or partners) (81.7%).
- Threatening suicide if the target refuses to go out with him (71.5%).
- The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument (61.7%).

(iv) '*Attachment' stalking behaviours*'. This final cluster of behaviours which most respondents viewed as stalking had their focus on 'attachment'. That is, means by which a stalker may seek to maintain maximally close contact with a target.

- The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace (91.1%).
- A man the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where she lives or places she frequents - just to be nearer to her (70.6%).
- Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis (63.4%).

- Often purposefully visiting places he knows that the target frequents (60.2%).
- Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over (55%).

'Non-stalking' clusters:

The following three clusters contain those activities which relatively few participants believed to be stalking.

(i) *'Courtship' behaviours*. The items in this first cluster of behaviours not widely believed to be stalking-related were collectively labelled 'courtship' behaviours. The common characteristic of these activities was that they could comprise part of the early stages of courtship.

- A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop (17.6%).
- Telephoning the target after one initial meeting (15.6%).
- Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting her just once (9.8%).
- Agreeing with the target's every word (even when she is obviously wrong) (8.4%).
- 'Wolf-whistling' in the street (7.8%).
- A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria (6.9%).

(ii) *'Verbally obscene' behaviours*. The label for this small cluster of behaviours is self-explanatory.

- A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion (39.5%).
- Obscene comments from a stranger (36.3%)

(iii) ‘*Overbearing*’ behaviours’. The common theme among the behaviours that form the cluster below was that they illustrate ways by which a person may attempt to interfere in the affairs of another, but not to a degree which unequivocally constitutes harassment.

- Trying to become acquainted with the target’s friends in an attempt to get to know her better (34.6%).
- Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused) (31.1%).
- Making arrangements including the target without consulting her first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant) (28.2%).
- He is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day (27.7%).
- ‘Outstaying welcome’ in the target’s house (25.1%).
- Unasked for offers of help: lifts in his car, DIY, etc. (21.3%).
- A man met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if she is interested in sexual intercourse (21%).
- Ex-partner insults the target when he finds out she is in a new relationship (20.5%).

Actual incidence of the questionnaire items perceived as stalking

Participant’s first hand experiences of those behaviours most strongly felt to represent stalking were examined next (section 3 - ‘have you yourself experienced any of the 42 questionnaire items?’), and findings are illustrated by the rank ordered list below. The figure placed after each item indicates the percentage of the sample having personally experienced that behaviour:

- Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller (30.2%).
- Following the target (29.4%).
- Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content (25.1%).
- Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over (22.2%).
- Often purposefully visiting places he knows that the target frequents (21.9%).
- Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis (20.5%).
- The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument (19.6%).
- Repeated personal approaches by a stranger (15.9%).
- Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood (15%).
- Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other men (friends or partners) (14.7%).
- Threatening suicide if the target refuses to go out with him (14.4%).
- Constantly watching/spying on the target (13%).
- Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters (12.7%).
- Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, her house, workplace, etc.) (12.4%).
- Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts (11.2%).
- Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so (10.4%).
- Confining the target against her will (9.8%).
- Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace (8.1%).
- Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property (6.3%).

- Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends (5.8%)
- The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace (4.3%).
- Death threats (3.5%).
- Intercepting mail/deliveries (2.3%).
- An inappropriate man sending sexually explicit letters to the target (2.3%).
- Furtively taking photographs of the target without her knowledge (2%).
- A man the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where she lives or places she frequents - just to be nearer to her (0.6%).

Cluster analysis on actual experiences

A further cluster analysis was carried out to investigate the patterns of the women's experiences of the 42 behaviours. Stalking by its very nature involves a course of conduct and multiple forms of harassment (e.g. Meloy, 1997; Pathé and Mullen, 1997). Because of this, it was predicted that where one of the intrusive items listed on the questionnaire had been experienced, it would not have been experienced alone, but rather in conjunction with several others. All responses to section 3 of the questionnaire were placed into a hierarchical cluster analysis, again employing Ward's method (dendrogram shown as Appendix 6b), and the results supported the prediction. As before, two major clusters were found: one comprised of 'stalking' behaviours and one comprised primarily of 'non-stalking' behaviours. These in turn were made up of several sub-divisions and could be interpreted as explained below. The term in brackets beside each questionnaire item relates to the labels given to the clusters produced earlier – those based on the sample's perceptions of what did and did not

exemplify stalking. Thus, the way in which the ‘perceptions’ clusters and the ‘actual experiences’ clusters mapped onto each other is demonstrated.

‘Stalking’ clusters:

(i) *‘Classic’ actual stalking behaviour.* This first cluster relating to actual intrusive occurrences experienced by respondents was labelled as ‘classic’ because six of the seven items that made up this cluster were also constituents of the ‘classic’ cluster above. This means that participant’s views on what constituted ‘classic’ stalking were mirrored by the sample’s actual experiences of ‘classic’ type harassment.

- Constantly watching/spying on the target. (Classic)
- Standing and staring regularly at the target’s home and/or workplace. (Classic)
- Constant ‘drive-bys’ (i.e. persistently driving past the target, her house, workplace, etc.) (Classic)
- Hanging around/telephoning the target’s workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so. (Classic)
- Often loitering in the target’s neighbourhood. (Classic)
- Often purposefully visiting places he knows that the target frequents. (Attachment)
- Following the target. (Classic)

(ii) *‘Threatening’ actual stalking behaviour.* This cluster was labelled as such because six of the nine behaviours within it were also found in the ‘threatening’ stalking cluster above. Thus, perceptions of the types of acts that make up stalking cases which involve threat, and actual behaviours seen in instances of harassment involving a threat element, were closely linked.

- Furtively taking photographs of the target without her knowledge. (Classic)
- A man the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where she lives or places she frequents - just to be nearer to her. (Attachment)
- Intercepting mail/deliveries. (Threatening)
- An inappropriate man sending sexually explicit letters to the target. (Threatening)
- Death threats. (Threatening)
- The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace. (Attachment)
- Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property. (Threatening)
- Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends. (Threatening)
- Confining the target against her will. (Threatening)

(iii) *'Mixed' actual stalking behaviour.* This final cluster of actual experiences of stalking-related behaviours did not clearly map on to any of the clusters generated by participant's perceptions of types of stalking. Instead, this cluster contained a mixture of three of the four perceived stalking subtypes. The only subtype not covered by this cluster was the 'threatening' subtype.

- Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other men (friends or partners). (Unpredictable)
- Ex-partner insults the target when he finds out she is in a new relationship. (Overbearing)
- Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters. (Classic)
- Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts. (Classic)
- Threatening suicide if the target refuses to go out with him. (Unpredictable)
- Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis. (Attachment)

- Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over. (Attachment)

'Non-stalking' clusters:

(i) *'Courtship' actual non-stalking behaviour.* This first cluster of the women's experiences of non-stalking behaviours mapped primarily onto the cluster of perceived non-stalking behaviours labelled as 'Courtship'. The remaining five behaviours in this cluster were from the two remaining clusters of behaviour also perceived as non-stalking (the 'Verbally obscene' and 'Overbearing' clusters).

- A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop. (Courtship)
- A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria. (Courtship)
- 'Wolf-whistling' in the street. (Courtship)
- Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused). (Overbearing)
- 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house. (Overbearing)
- Obscene comments from a stranger. (Verbally obscene)
- Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting her just once. (Courtship)
- Telephoning the target after one initial meeting. (Courtship)
- A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion. (Verbally obscene)
- A man met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if she is interested in sexual intercourse. (Overbearing)

(ii) '*Overbearing*' *actual non-stalking behaviour*. Five of the seven behaviours in this cluster had been classified by respondents as non-stalking behaviours, and four of these are also seen in the '*Overbearing*' non-stalking perceived subtype. As this cluster does contain two behaviours that were perceived by the majority of the sample as representing stalking behaviours, it may be that if these types of behaviours were directed at a target persistently, then they may be construed as stalking acts.

- Repeated personal approaches by a stranger. (Classic)
- He is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day. (Overbearing)
- Making arrangements including the target without consulting her first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant). (Overbearing)
- Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know her better. (Overbearing)
- Agreeing with the target's every word (even when she is obviously wrong). (Courtship)
- The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation. (Unpredictable)
- Unasked for offers of help: lifts in his car, DIY, etc. (Overbearing)

Prevalence of actual cases of stalking

The final part of the questionnaire asked participants, if they *had* experienced any of the 42 questionnaire items, to describe in some detail what they considered to be their most serious ordeal. One hundred and eighty nine of the 348 women (54.3%) responded. The researcher and five independent raters separately judged whether each

transcript detailed a case of stalking. The definition provided to the raters was that which had been provided earlier to the sample: “A series of actions directed at one individual by another which, taken as a whole, amount to unwanted persistent personal harassment.” Transcripts were recorded as stalking or not stalking if four or more of the six raters were in agreement. Utilising this methodology, it was found that 82 (23.6%) of the total sample of 348 had experienced at least one episode of stalking.

The six raters also judged the same transcripts as stalking or non-stalking in accordance with the theoretical requirements for prosecution under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The Act requires that:

- (a) The suspect has pursued a course of conduct, (note that a course of conduct must involve conduct on at least two occasions (s7(3)). Further, ‘conduct’ is not limited to actions, but includes speech (s7(4))).
- (b) This amounts to harassment of another, (note that the Act does not fully define ‘harassment’ but states that references to harassing a person include alarming them or causing them distress (s7(2)). Its effects on the victim determine whether a course of conduct amounts to ‘harassment’).
- (c) The suspect knows or ought to know that this is so. (note that the offence of causing harassment is unusual in that it is not always necessary to *prove* that a person actually knew the conduct amounted to harassment).

Using the above requirements as a guide, the raters now agreed unanimously that 33% of respondents (115) had described cases that could be prosecutable under the Act.

DISCUSSION

The present study has confirmed the high incidence of 'stalking' behaviours reported by Sheridan et al. (1997) in a much larger and more representative sample. For instance, 30.2% of the women said they had been the victim of obscene or threatening telephone calls from an unknown caller, 29.4% had at some time been followed in a public place, and 15% had had a man loiter regularly in their neighbourhood. Ex-partners of the women had refused to accept that a prior relationship was over in 22.2% of cases. Fewer women had experienced the perhaps more serious or distressing behaviours, but all of the questionnaire items had been experienced by at least two of the women. For instance, 9.8% had been confined against their will, 2% had had photographs taken of them furtively, and 0.6% had had a male with whom they were not involved move house closer to where they lived, in order to achieve maximal proximity.

However, merely because an individual has experienced one or more behaviours that may be perceived as harassing, this does not automatically mean that they have been stalked. Stalking refers to persistent harassment over time, and is rarely confined to one type of activity. As such, the incidence of harassing behaviours in the sample was assessed separately from the prevalence of actual cases of stalking in the sample. A high prevalence figure was found (23.6%), again supporting previous work (e.g. NOP Solutions, 1997; Sheridan et al., 1997). As such, these data go some way toward addressing the need for additional, reliable prevalence figures. However, the stalking criterion employed by this study was relatively strict, and so transcripts were also assessed in line with the requirements for prosecution under the England and Wales

Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The Act offers no strict guidelines on what kinds of activities make up a case of criminal stalking. The finding from the present work suggests that, according to the Act's requirements, one in three British women will theoretically be able to prosecute a stalker at least once during their lifetime.

More work is necessary to determine whether the high incidence and prevalence rates reported in this study are also to be observed in other countries. Researchers are likely to experience difficulties which reflect the degree to which stalking is legally defined in the country from which the research originates. Where stalking is tightly defined and individual behaviours are criminalised, then survey participants may judge their own experiences of harassment against such a definition and as a consequence refrain from detailing relevant information, believing their own case to be of peripheral relevance to a study of 'stalking'. The result would be that the findings of such a survey would not be comparable to those of the present work. As such, the wording of any research instrument should be intended to tap experiences of harassment and not necessarily any legal descriptions of stalking per se.

Despite the lack of definition in English and Welsh law, the present respondents held clear ideas on what were and were not constituent behaviours of criminal harassment. The sample were consistent in classifying a range of intrusive acts to form identifiable subgroups of stalking and non stalking behaviours. This work has supported earlier work (Sheridan et al., 1997). A minimum of 70% of the sample agreed that 22 of the 42 behaviours provided on the questionnaire depicted stalking behaviours. So, although people may not be able to define stalking exhaustively, they do have a shared understanding of what types of behaviours constitute a case of stalking. Both actual

and potential victims were able to recognise stalking behaviours to the extent that stalking behaviours were perceived as belonging to four separate clusters, or stalking subtypes. These were labelled as 'classic', 'threatening', 'unpredictable', and 'attachment' subtypes. Non-stalking behaviours were viewed as forming three subtypes, and these were labelled 'courtship', 'verbally obscene', and 'overbearing'. Thus, respondents were able to distinguish between the actions of a man who is 'trying too hard' to secure a date with a woman and the actions of a man that may reasonably be considered obsessive and possibly dangerous.

The real-world relevance of these perceived clusters was tested by conducting a cluster analysis on the sample's actual experiences of the same behaviours. The four stalking subtypes generated by participant's perceptions of stalking were found to partially map on to the clusters of subtypes generated by the same participants' actual experiences of harassing behaviours. A strong overlap was seen between the perceptions of, and experiences of, the 'classic' and 'threatening' subtypes. This means that the sample's perceptions of the types of acts which make up 'classic' and 'threatening' stalking cases were well founded in reality, mirroring real-life harassment made up of 'classic' and 'threatening' acts. However, for the 'unpredictable' and 'attachment' subtypes that the sample perceived as constituent of stalking, no real-life equivalents were found. Instead, a 'mixed' cluster of real-life experiences emerged, with 'attachment' behaviours split between this cluster and the 'classic' and 'threatening' clusters. Examination of the behaviours contained within the 'mixed' cluster would suggest that it is a category of harassing activities primarily carried out by an ex-partner of the target, or a current partner from whom the target is trying to escape. More research is necessary to clarify this.

Do the findings provide a basis for recommending that stalking should be legally defined? The results could add weight to the argument for defining stalking in England and Wales. Certainly there was a widespread consensus in this large sample about the types of activities that constitute criminal stalking. Further support for this argument can be added in that the subtypes of stalking perceived by participants were to a large extent matched by subtypes generated by actual experiences of harassment.

The results may however also add value to the argument *against* providing a legal definition of stalking. It is possible to conclude that stalking can only ever be defined to a limited degree: perceived and actual subgroups of stalking did not match entirely. Instead, a 'mixed' actual subtype of stalking was generated. This finding would suggest that not all of the behaviour of stalkers is consistent and predictable. Some cases of stalking may not fall into the strict categories produced by forensic science, but will rather consist of a series of actions which appear random and disorganised.

Further rationale for the case against defining criminal stalking comes from a criticism of the methodology used. A finite list of 42 harassing behaviours formed the basis for this study. It is certain that these are not the only behaviours in which a stalker may indulge. If criminal harassment were defined in terms these behaviours were made unlawful, then many stalkers might base their campaign on alternative, legal acts. The recommendation from this study then, is that the constituents of criminal stalking should not be made explicit in law. Rather, the present work has offered the positive finding that members of the British public are well able to recognise criminal harassment. If this is the case, then the authorities should similarly experience little

difficulty in deciding whether or not individual cases represent cases of criminal harassment.

This work has led to several firm findings. First, high prevalence rates of stalking were found. This confirmed earlier work with a much larger, more broadly representative sample. The same sample identified 22 stalking behaviours as forming three clear categories. These categories in turn mapped partly on to categories generated directly from the women's self-reports of harassment. The broad implication of this work is that it would be dangerous to prescribe explicit stalking behaviours and put into place sanctions against these and these alone. Rather, it would be more beneficial to prescribe intent and leave anti-stalking legislation widely drafted. Stalking is an extraordinary crime, given that it may often consist of no more than the targeted repetition of ordinary behaviour. As such, this highly prevalent phenomenon requires extraordinary sanctions.

CHAPTER 4

PERCEPTIONS AND PREVALENCE OF STALKING IN A MALE SAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the previous three chapters, until recently, much of what was known about stalking derived from studies of relatively small numbers of stalkers, and much of the wider literature had a speculative theme. Pathé and Mullen (1997, p.12) stated that 'little systematic information has been gathered on victims', but an expansion of this area is now being seen. Within the victim based literature, there has been a tendency toward emphasising the victim status of women and the perpetrator status of men (e.g. Coleman, 1997; Abrams, Robinson and Gail, 1998; Gibbon, 1998; Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stewart, 1999; Meloy, 1999; Mustaine and Tewksbury, 1999). The present study will broadly replicate the study described in Chapter 3 but examine two issues: firstly, how *males* rather than females perceive the phenomenon of stalking, and secondly, the prevalence of stalking and stalking-related acts in a wholly *male* population.

The investigation in Chapter 3 found that 24% of the female sample were judged to have described at least one episode of stalking. Even more alleged that they had been the victim of various harassing behaviours. For instance, 30.2% of the women said they had been the victim of obscene or threatening telephone calls from an unknown caller, and 29.4% had at some time been followed in a public place.

The present chapter seeks to replicate this work with a male sample, and to provide a comparison between the two sets of findings. The attitudes of males relative to those of females is an issue that has so far been unexplored in relation to stalking, although some investigators have looked at gender differences in perception of crime in general. Lindholm and Christianson (1998) for example, found that both male perpetrators and victims were assigned more culpability in a study which presented participants with a video of a simulated manslaughter where the gender of the actors was manipulated. The use of stereotypes was postulated to account for this effect. Perhaps then, it may be expected that as the 'modal stalker' is male and the 'modal victim' is his female ex-partner (Meloy, 1999), males will perceive themselves as less victimised than women when they suffer this form of harassment.

There does, however, exist some counter-intuitive data on the actual experiences of males as stalking victims. Novell (1999, cited in Hall, 1999) found that more males than females had been harassed via the internet (58%, as compared with 41%). Further, Romans, Hays and White (1996) concluded that more male than female university therapists and counsellors had been stalked (60%, compared with 40%). But, consistent with the stereotyping proposed above, both Hall (1998) and Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998) have suggested that some male victims who are 'stalked' by females are relatively unconcerned, perceiving females as posing little risk. It may be suggested then that some male victims of serious stalking believed their sex to be a disadvantage - particularly where their stalker was female - as the legal system tends to view their situation as less serious (Hall, 1998). Indeed, it has been reported that police are significantly more likely to arrest and detain suspects in cases involving female victims (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998). If this is so, then there

is cause for concern since it would appear that males and females have an equal likelihood of being subjected to violence by their stalker (Pathé and Mullen, 1997).

As regards prevalence, and as noted in Chapter 1, NOP Survey Solutions (1997) conducted a survey of 1,013 English residents and found that 8% of males had experienced persistent pestering, although the rate was higher for females (19%). A similar pattern among North American female and male college students was found by Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker in 1997 (34%, compared to 17%). Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) have estimated that approximately 1,000,000 females and 380,000 males are stalked each year in the USA, with male victims comprising 22% of the total stalked sample. Both Pathé and Mullen's (1997) and Hall's (1998) victim surveys had a 17% male sample (early on in the data collection process, 30% of the Hall's sample were male, a figure described by the author as 'astounding'), while Sheridan, Davies and Boon's (submitted) male subgroup comprised just 7% of respondents.

Findings from the Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) survey indicated that males were stalked primarily by strangers and acquaintances (as opposed to ex-partners). Results also indicated that stalking was primarily a male pursuit, with 94% of the stalkers identified by female victims being male, and 60% of the stalkers identified by male victims being male. Homosexuals who had cohabited with another intimate male had a greater risk of being stalked than those who had not. Both females and males reported similar levels of unwanted communications and items, and also property damage. In the year preceding the survey, 1% of females and 0.4% of males had been

stalked, and 8% of females and 2% of males had been stalked at least once during their lifetime.

Hall's (1998) sample yielded differing results. Male victims had been primarily stalked by prior acquaintances, and were found to be equally likely to have been targeted by males or females. The differences in findings between these two studies may be explained by the nature of the samples: Tjaden and Thoennes conducted a random probability telephone survey, whilst Hall's participants had responded to press appeals for stalking victims to come forward. Further, Tjaden and Thoennes suggest that some of their prior acquaintance stalking may have arisen through inter or intra gang rivalries.

The present investigation will assess male perceptions of stalking behaviour by asking respondents to indicate which of a continuum of 42 intrusive behaviours they believe to represent stalking acts. Next, participants will indicate on an identical list whether they have experienced any of these behaviours. An initial British prevalence estimate of stalking among the male population will be generated by asking the sample, if they have experienced any of the 42 behaviours directly, to report in detail their 'worst experience'. The results will be compared to the equivalent female data generated by the study described in Chapter 3. Due to the paucity of data in this area, no predictions are made as to whether males will hold different perceptions to females on what constitutes stalking behaviour. It is, however, predicted that males will report a lower frequency of experiencing both harassing behaviours and actual stalking than females.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred questionnaires were distributed among male members of the public across England and Wales between October 1999 and April 2000. Two hundred and ten (70%) were returned by the conclusion of the study, and all were included in the analysis. In an attempt to include male participants from a range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, convenience and opportunity sampling techniques were employed.

The socio-economic status of respondents, as defined by their occupational title, was as follows: 82 (39%) were students, 24 (11.4%) were professionals, 19 (9%) were clerical workers, 14 (6.7%) were employed in the emergency services, 11 (5.2%) were unemployed, 10 (4.8%) classed themselves as semi-skilled operatives, 10 (4.8%) had retired, eight (3.8%) were unskilled workers, five (2.4%) were technicians, another five (2.4%) were self-employed, two (1.1%) more were nurses, and a further 20 (9.5%) were employed in occupations not known to the authors.

Most participants (181, or 86.2%) described themselves as white in ethnic origin. Seventeen (8.1%) were Asian and 9 (4.3%) were black. Three more participants (1.4%) described themselves as Latin. Participants were bracketed into three age groups: 18-27 (n = 114), 28-45 (n = 55) and 46 and above (n = 41).

Some 129 (61.4%) were single, a further 66 (31%) were married, and the remaining 15 (7.1%) were either separated or divorced. More than a third (80, or 38.1%) lived with a partner, 104 (49.5%) resided in another form of shared accommodation, and 26 (12.4%) lived alone.

The stalking questionnaire

The questionnaire was based on that utilised in the study reported in Chapter 3 and may be viewed in Appendix 2. The instrument consisted of an introduction and five main sections, as follows:

Section one. First, participants stated their age, job title, marital status, living arrangements (such as alone, or with parents), and ethnic origin. All information was given via a selection of choices, with the exception of employment details where respondents provided free text.

Section two. Participants read through a list of 42 intrusive behaviours, and were asked to select on a 'yes/no' basis all those they personally considered to be exemplars of stalking behaviour. In the questionnaire used in the previous chapter, participants were asked to think of the behaviours being carried out exclusively by males toward a female 'target'. As the current questionnaire was examining the views of males, participants were informed that 'the word 'target' refers to any recipient of a particular behaviour'.

At the beginning of section two, a working definition of stalking was provided. This read: “A series of actions directed at one individual by another which, taken as a whole, amount to unwanted persistent personal harassment.” As noted also in Chapter 3, it is obviously difficult to supply a global definition in a study which, in itself, is seeking to discover what definitive stalking behaviours constitute. However, it was necessary to provide the sample with a guideline to ensure that they understood the nature of the investigation.

Section three. The list of 42 behaviours was repeated, but now participants were asked to indicate any of the behaviours they had experienced personally.

Section four. The fourth section of the questionnaire asked participants, if they had experienced any of the behaviours described in section three, to describe in some detail what they considered to be the most serious incident, with particular reference to the behaviour of the other person(s) involved.

Section five. The questionnaire’s final section was only relevant to respondents who had also completed section four. Where applicable, participants were asked to provide demographic data for the ‘other person(s)’ involved in their ‘most serious incident’ via a selection of choices. They were also asked to state the nature of the prior relationship between themselves and the perpetrator(s) (i.e. stranger, former partner, or prior acquaintance).

The list of 42 behaviours. The 42 behaviours included on the questionnaire were designed to represent a continuum of likely stalking and non-stalking acts. The list of

items was designed such that it would be unrealistic if a participant indicated that he had not experienced *any* of the behaviours. The inclusion of behaviours such as: 'A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria', was designed to create an environment which made it easier for participants to volunteer having experienced some of the more serious and distressing behaviours (e.g. 'Death threats'). All 42 items may be seen below.

RESULTS

Participant's yes/no responses as to whether the 42 questionnaire items represented acts of stalking were assessed via a cluster analysis, utilising Ward's (1963) hierarchical agglomerative method (see Chapter 3). Two major clusters were revealed (for dendrogram see Appendix 6c). The interpretation of these was straightforward in that one cluster consisted of behaviours where there was a high degree of consensus that these were 'stalking' acts (53% or more of participants stated that these acts were stalking, mean 79.2%) and the other cluster contained behaviours where there was wide agreement that these were *not* stalking acts (47% or less of the participants stated that the acts were not stalking, mean 20%). The two main clusters were found to be further subdivided, the 'stalking' cluster having three sub-clusters, and the 'non-stalking' cluster being made up of four. The clusters appear below, with the figure after each questionnaire item indicating the percentage of respondents who believed that item to be an exemplar of stalking.

Perceptions

'Stalking' behaviours:

(i) '*Threatening' stalking behaviours*'. This first sub-cluster was so labelled because all behaviours within it contained an element of threat.

- Death threats. (80.5%).
- Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends. (77.1%).
- Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property. (64.8%).
- Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other people (friends or partners). (63.3%).
- Threatening suicide if the target refuses a date/relationship. (71.9%).

(ii) '*Dysfunctional attachment' stalking behaviours*'. The items in this cluster were all ways in which one individual might seek to be physically closer to another without necessitating an actual approach. As such they may be described as 'dysfunctional attachment' behaviours, where although the target is unlikely to share these feelings, the perpetrator feels that they are linked to the target.

- Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood. (70%).
- Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, their house, workplace, etc.). (78.6%).
- Often purposefully visiting places the target is known to frequent. (53.3%).

- A person the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where they live or places they frequent - just to be nearer to the target. (63.3%).

(iii) ‘*Classic*’ *stalking behaviours*. This cluster contains those behaviours that may be described as ‘classic’ stalking behaviours. They are identical to those most commonly featured in the media reports of stalking cases and in the academic research that has recorded stalker behaviour (see Chapter 2).

- Following the target. (95.2%).
- Constantly watching/spying on the target. (95.7%).
- Furtively taking photographs of the target without their knowledge. (92.4%).
- Standing and staring regularly at the target’s home and/or workplace. (83.8%).
- Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller. (85.7%).
- Intercepting mail/deliveries. (87.1%).
- The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target’s home or workplace. (90.5%).
- Hanging around/telephoning the target’s workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so. (90.5%).
- Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content. (86.7%).
- An inappropriate person sending sexually explicit letters to the target. (80.5%).
- Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters. (84.3%).
- Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts. (73.3%).
- Repeated personal approaches by a stranger. (73.8%).

'Non-stalking' behaviours:

(i) '*Courtship' behaviours'. The items in this sub-cluster may be termed as 'courtship' behaviours, as some represent relatively non-sinister ways by which a person may register romantic interest in another. Others are methods of introduction, that is, means of initiating a conversation with a person who has aroused the interest of the actor.*

- A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria. (3.8%).
- 'Wolf-whistling' in the street. (7.1%).
- Unasked for offers of help: lifts, DIY, etc. (8.6%).
- Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting them just once. (7.6%).
- A person met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if they are interested in sexual intercourse. (8.6%).
- Agreeing with the target's every word (even when the target is obviously wrong). (9%).
- Telephoning the target after one initial meeting. (11.9%).
- A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop. (13.3%).
- 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house. (13.3%).
- Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused). (20%).

(ii) '*Borderline' behaviours'. The items in this cluster have been labelled such because the female sample reported in Chapter 3 largely believed that they were*

constituent of stalking. It is of interest that the two behaviours were clustered together in both studies (although in 'female sample' study, they formed part of a larger cluster that was named 'attachment stalking behaviours'). Overall, the women in the study reported in Chapter 3 believed that 26 of the behaviours were constituent of stalking, whilst men in the present work felt that only 23 were. The disparities are indicated by an asterisk.

- Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over. (41.9%).*
- Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis. (46.2%).*

(iii) '*Verbally obscene' behaviours*'. This cluster of behaviours which most respondents viewed as non-stalking shared a focus on the use of obscene or abusive language. The final item in this sub-cluster was regarded as stalking in the 'female sample' investigation.

- Sexual comments from a stranger on the street. (23.3%).
- Obscene suggestions from a stranger. (35.2%).
- A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion. (22.9%).
- The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation. (46.7%).*

(iv) '*Mixed non-stalking' behaviours*'. These behaviours were not felt to be stalking by many participants, but they do not appear to have an obvious unifying theme.

Thus, they have been given the umbrella title of ‘mixed non-stalking’ behaviours. It is likely that judgements concerning whether these items are stalking-related depend on the context to a greater extent than do many of the other questionnaire items. Taking the third item in this cluster as an example, one may see a newspaper vendor at the same time each day, or alternatively one may see a stranger peering through their bathroom window at roughly the same time each day. An individual’s reaction to these events would likely be very different.

- Ex-partner insults the target upon finding out they are in a new relationship. (15.7%).
- Making arrangements including the target without consulting them first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant). (26.2%).
- A particular individual is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day. (17.6%).
- Trying to become acquainted with the target’s friends in an attempt to get to know them better. (22.9%).

For the most part, the sub-clusters in the current study correspond to those produced by the study reported in the previous chapter. To test this statistically, the frequency data on males’ perceptions of the 42 behaviours was analysed along with the equivalent data from Chapter 3. The analysis was not significant - indicating that males and females hold shared perceptions on what does and does not constitute stalking behaviour ($t(80) = -1.15, p=.26$).

Experiences

As with the perceptions data, participants' yes/no responses to whether they had personal experience of any of the 42 questionnaire items were analysed by a cluster analysis (dendrogram shown as Appendix 6d). Once again two major clusters were revealed, and once again one of these contained 'stalking' behaviours whilst the other contained 'non-stalking' behaviours. The two main clusters and their constituent sub-clusters are detailed below, with the figure in brackets after each item referring to the number of participants who had experienced it. The cluster analysis would allow the conclusion that items within one sub-cluster were likely to have been experienced by the same subset of respondents.

'Stalking' behaviours:

(i) "*Classic' stalking behaviours*". Four of the five items in this sub-cluster were also found in the 'classic' cluster in the perceptions of stalking section above. This means that respondent's opinions as to what constituted 'classic' stalking behaviour approximated their actual experiences of this type of harassment.

- Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts. (3.3%).
- Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace. (4.3%).
- Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so. (4.3%).
- Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, their house, workplace, etc.). (5.7%).

- Constantly watching/spying on the target. (6.2%).

(ii) ‘*Aggressive stalking behaviours*’. This selection of items was spread across sub-clusters produced in the perceptions section above. Males’ experiences of the ‘stalking’ behaviours in this study were less sharply defined than were those of the female sample as reported in Chapter 3. This sub-cluster has been given the label of ‘aggressive stalking behaviours’ as the dominant theme that links these items is one of aggressive intrusion.

- The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target’s home or workplace. (7.1%).
- Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller. (9.5%).
- Criminal damage/vandalism to the target’s property. (8.6%).
- Threatening suicide if the target refuses a date/relationship. (9.5%).
- Often loitering in the target’s neighbourhood. (8.6%).
- Following the target. (13.3%).
- Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters. (14.3%).
- Often purposefully visiting places the target is known to frequent. (13.3%).
- Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other people (friends or partners). (13.8%).
- The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation. (15.2%).

(iii) ‘*Threatening stalking behaviours*’. The six behaviours in this sub-cluster were dubbed as ‘threatening stalking behaviours’ as at least four of them had an overtly

threatening theme. Most of these behaviours, however, may be experienced in non-stalking scenarios. Death threats, for instance, may be made in blackmail cases or in family disputes, and private investigators may take furtive photographs of their target.

- Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends. (6.2%).
- Furtively taking photographs of the target without their knowledge. (2.4%).
- Death threats. (3.3%).
- A person the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where they live or places they are known to frequent. (0.5%).
- An inappropriate person sending sexually explicit letters to the target. (2.9%).
- Intercepting mail/deliveries. (3.3%).

'Non stalking' behaviours:

(i) *'Adherent' behaviours*. This first 'non-stalking' cluster of behaviours experienced by the sample was given the title 'adherent' behaviours as a reflection of the romantically-inclined perpetrator proving difficult to deter.

- Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over. (20.5%).
- Ex-partner insults the target upon finding out they are in a new relationship. (13.3%).
- Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content. (16.7%).
- Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know them better. (18.6%).

(ii) ‘*Quotidian*’ behaviours’. This label has been chosen to describe a sub-cluster of behaviours that may be noteworthy for the recipient, but are not necessarily surprising, nor likely to cause disturbance over a protracted period of time.

- Sexual comments from a stranger on the street. (14.8%).
- Obscene suggestions from a stranger. (9.5%).
- Repeated personal approaches by a stranger. (12.4%).
- Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis. (12.9%).
- Unasked for offers of help: lifts, DIY, etc. (9%).
- Making arrangements including the target without consulting them first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant). (8.6%).
- A particular individual is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day. (11.9%).
- A casual acquaintance engaging the target in ‘inappropriate’ personal and intimate discussion. (11%).

(iii) ‘*Courtship*’ behaviours’. This final sub-cluster was labelled ‘courtship’ as all its’ constituent behaviours were also found in the sub-cluster of the same name in the perceptions of non-stalking behaviours cluster.

- A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria. (25.2%).
- A person met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if they are interested in sexual intercourse. (26.7%).

- 'Wolf-whistling' in the street. (22.4%).
- Agreeing with the target's every word (even when the target is obviously wrong). (22.9%).
- 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house. (23.3%).
- Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting them just once. (26.7%).
- Telephoning the target after one initial meeting. (26.2%).
- Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused). (25.7%).
- A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop. (31.4%).

Table 4.1 details the frequency of the 42 intrusive behaviours as they were reported to have been experienced by the female sample (n = 348) in Chapter 3 and by the current male sample (n = 210).

Table 4.1: Female and male self-reported experiences of the intrusive behaviours

| <i>Behaviour</i> | <i>Females</i> <i>% (frequency)</i> | <i>Males</i> <i>% (frequency)</i> |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 'Wolf-whistling' in the street. | 62.6% (218) | 22.4% (47) |
| A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop. | 53.7% (187) | 31.4% (66) |
| A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria. | 47.4% (165) | 25.2% (53) |
| Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused). | 38.8% (135) | 25.7% (53) |
| Obscene suggestions from a stranger. | 31.9% (111) | 9.5% (20) |
| Telephoning the target after one initial meeting. | 30.7% (107) | 26.2% (55) |
| 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house. | 30.7% (107) | 23.3% (49) |
| Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller | 30.5% (106) | 9.5% (20) |
| Following the target | 29.6% (103) | 13.3% (28) |
| A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion. | 28.2% (98) | 11% (23) |

| | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| A person met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if they are interested in sexual intercourse. | 27.9% (97) | 26.7% (56) |
| Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over | 26.7% (93) | 20.5% (43) |
| Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting them just once. | 26.1% (91) | 26.7% (56) |
| Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content | 25.3% (88) | 16.7% (35) |
| Often purposefully visiting places the target is known to frequent | 21.8% (76) | 13.3% (28) |
| Unasked for offers of help: lifts, DIY, etc. | 21.3% (74) | 9% (19) |
| Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis | 20.4% (71) | 12.9% (27) |
| The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument | 19.8% (69) | 15.2% (32) |
| Ex-partner insults the target upon finding out they are in a new relationship. | 18.7% (65) | 13.3% (28) |
| Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know them better. | 17% (59) | 18.6% (39) |
| Agreeing with the target's every word (even when the target is obviously wrong). | 17% (59) | 22.9% (48) |

| | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| Repeated personal approaches by a stranger | 16.1% (56) | 12.4% (26) |
| Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood | 15.2% (53) | 8.6% (18) |
| Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other people (friends or partners) | 14.9% (52) | 13.8% (29) |
| Threatening suicide if the target refuses a date/relationship | 14.4% (50) | 9.5% (20) |
| Constantly watching/spying on the target | 12.9% (45) | 6.2% (13) |
| Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters | 12.9% (45) | 14.3% (30) |
| Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, their house, workplace, etc.) | 12.4% (43) | 5.7% (12) |
| A particular individual is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day. | 11.8% (41) | 11.9% (25) |
| Making arrangements including the target without consulting them first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant). | 11.2% (39) | 8.6% (18) |
| Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts | 11.2% (39) | 3.3% (7) |
| Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so | 10.3% (36) | 4.3% (9) |

| | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace | 8.3% (29) | 4.3% (9) |
| Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends | 7.5% (26) | 6.2% (13) |
| Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property | 6.6% (23) | 8.6% (18) |
| The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace | 4.3% (15) | 7.1% (15) |
| Death threats | 3.4% (12) | 3.3% (7) |
| An inappropriate person sending sexually explicit letters to the target | 2.6% (9) | 2.9% (6) |
| Intercepting mail/deliveries | 2.3% (8) | 3.3% (7) |
| Furtively taking photographs of the target without their knowledge | 2.3% (8) | 2.4% (5) |
| A person the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where they live or places they frequents - just to be nearer to the target | 0.6% (2) | 0.5% (1) |

The data from Table 4.1 was subjected to an independent samples t-test. The frequency with which males and females experienced the 42 behaviours differed at the 0.05 level: ($t(80) = 2.67, p < .02$). The frequencies shown above indicate that, as expected, males were significantly less likely to be the recipient of both stalking and non-stalking behaviours than were females.

Prevalence of actual cases of stalking

The final part of the questionnaire asked participants, if they *had* experienced any of the 42 harassing behaviours, to describe the incident(s) in more detail. Ninety (43%) provided information here. The researcher and five independent raters assessed whether each account constituted a case of 'stalking', in accordance with the definition of stalking that had been provided earlier to the sample: "A series of actions directed at one individual by another which, taken as a whole, amount to unwanted persistent personal harassment." Accounts were recorded as stalking or not stalking if four or more of the six raters were in agreement, and the latter judged that eleven respondents (5.2%) had described a 'stalking' experience. Demographic data relating to both respondents and their harassers are detailed below:

Respondents

Nine of the 'stalked' respondents were white, and two were Asian. At the time of the stalking they described, seven were aged between 22 and 27, two were aged 18-21, and the other two were aged over 28. All bar one respondent was not in a relationship at the time, and seven lived alone. Three of the 11 respondents were employed in the

emergency services at the time of their harassment, three were students, two were professionals, two were unskilled operatives and one was a clerical officer.

Perpetrators

Eight of the 'stalkers' were female, and three were male. Eight were white, and three were Asian. At the time of the incidents described by respondents, four of the harassers were said to be aged 18-21, three 22-27, and three more were known or judged to be over 28 years*. Eight were described as single, one as married and one as separated*. Six of the harassers had lived alone, one with a partner, one with parents, and two in shared accommodation*. Three were said to be students, three unemployed, two professionals, one an unskilled worker and one more a clerical officer*. Respondents indicated that five perpetrators had been their former partners, three were prior acquaintances and three were strangers to them.

In the study reported in the previous chapter, which employed the same method as the current study, 23.6% of the female sample were judged to have recounted a stalking experience.

DISCUSSION

This study has shown that males and females hold convergent views on what does and does not constitute stalking, but have divergent experiences of intrusive and harassing activities. As predicted, females reported more unwanted intrusions and stalking than did males.

* in one case these details remained unknown to the victim

Like the female sample detailed in Chapter 3, male respondents held clear ideas on what were and were not constituent behaviours of unwanted harassment. The sample were able to agree on the types of behaviours that were representative of stalking to the extent that subgroups of stalking were revealed by subsequent cluster analysis. The subgroups were in turn similar to those produced by the female sample in the Chapter 3 investigation. Of the 42 behaviours presented in both studies, males thought that 23 were stalking activities, whilst the female respondents believed that 26 were indicative of stalking. These 'borderline' behaviours dealt with the perpetrator using obscene and threatening language, regularly visiting the target unannounced, and refusing to accept the demise of a relationship. It may be that males were less likely to see these as constituent of stalking as they were more able than females to effectively neutralise them. For instance, it is generally less dangerous and more acceptable for a male to use physical force:

"I was persistently pestered by an ex-partner refusing to accept the relationship was over. This involved constant phone calls of an abusive nature, visits to my house at any time of day or night and eventually forcing their way into my home... ...which led to me physically removing her from my home."

(participant number 163)

Despite disagreement on three of the 42 behaviours, males like females were able to distinguish not only between stalking and non-stalking behaviours, but could also

recognise distinct subgroups of harassing activities. The three subtypes of stalking that the sample identified were labelled as 'threatening', 'dysfunctional attachment', and 'classic'. The 'classic' subtype contained those activities that have been recorded by the media as stalking and supported by the academic literature as such (e.g. Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stewart, 1999). The 'threatening' cluster was made up of behaviours that were overtly threatening, and as with the 'classic' subtype, it was not surprising that these were judged to be stalking. The 'dysfunctional attachment' cluster however, was more ambiguous in that it was made up of behaviours that did not necessitate threat or even a physical approach (e.g. driving past the target's home, visiting places they are known to frequent). That these were considered stalking suggests males are able to distinguish between unacceptable harassment and acceptable boundaries when trying to attract the attention of a member of the opposite sex. Given that stalking and harassment are not defined in English and Welsh law, it is encouraging to find that males and females share an intuitive sense of what unacceptable intrusion constitutes.

Males and females *did* however differ in terms of their experience of the same 42 behaviours. In fact, females reported a higher incidence for 32 of the 42 intrusive behaviours. These behaviours represented a range of experiences which covered: being approached and spoken to by strangers, receiving sexual suggestions, being the victim of 'classic' stalking activities such as being followed and spied upon, having problems with unshakeable 'suitors', and being bullied and threatened. Although females were significantly more likely to report intrusion and harassment overall, males reported a higher rate of experiencing 10 of the behaviours. An examination of the frequency data however, reveals that the male-female differences were not

marked. In brief, males were somewhat more likely than females to have others 'agree with their every word', to have their property vandalised, and to receive unwanted postal material.

A further analysis was conducted on the sample's *actual* experiences of the 42 behaviours. Again, three 'stalking' subtypes were generated. Participant's perceptions of stalking were found to partially map on to the clusters of subtypes generated by the same participants' actual experiences of harassing behaviours. A strong overlap was seen between the perceptions of, and experiences of, the 'classic' and 'threatening' subtypes. This means that respondent's perceptions of the types of acts which make up 'classic' and 'threatening' stalking cases were well founded in reality, mirroring real-life harassment made up of 'classic' and 'threatening' acts. However, for the 'dysfunctional attachment' subtype which the sample perceived as constituent of stalking, no real-life equivalent was found. Instead, a cluster of real-life experiences emerged that was labelled 'aggressive' stalking behaviours. Of the three 'stalking experiences' clusters, the sample were most likely to have experienced the behaviours in this cluster. Examination of the items would suggest that they were primarily perpetrated by an individual seeking to develop or maintain a rather one-sided relationship with the target.

The differential between male and female experiences could represent little more than reporting differences. Perhaps male respondents were less likely to admit to having experienced the 42 behaviours as they didn't discern them as a problem. Women experiencing the same behaviours as men may perceive a higher element of risk. For instance:

“The most serious incident was when I was in a club and two individuals were repetitively asking me for a threesome, and making 'obscene' comments. This continued for about an hour. I wasn't particularly offended though as they were both quite fit.”

(participant number 36)

“Bloke used to follow me home from the train station at night, but he was just trying it on. i.e., nothing too serious.”

(participant number 123)

“*Honest* I'm not being sarcastic. I thought it was cute. After 18 months I got to know her better and went 'out' with her. I married her 18 months after that.”

(participant number 205)

Alternatively, it may be that when males do feel that they have been harassed, they are less willing to disclose than are females:

“I don't wish to go into detail. Sorry.”

(participant number 139)

“Don't want to think about it!”

(participant number 59)

In all, 5.2% of males were judged to have experienced at least one episode of stalking. Again, as predicted, the stalking rate for males was significantly lower than those produced for females. This finding supports earlier survey work conducted by Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker (1997), NOP Survey Solutions (1997), and Tjaden and Thoennes (1998). Of the eleven respondents judged to have been stalked, three had been stalked by other males. For example:

“...the stalker proceeded to lay his vengeance upon both myself and friends. The appearance of my friends around me at future events seemed to magnify his hatred towards myself, friendly banter at the beginning had mutated into malicious, constant and aggressive conduct towards me, which was in no way wanted and made my evenings a lot more 'colourful' than I would like.”

(participant number 101)

In the US, Hall's (1998) study of victims showed that males were equally likely to be stalked by females or males, and Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) found that 60% of male victims had male stalkers, whilst only 6% of females had same sex stalkers. It may be then that stalking is a predominantly male pursuit. Large scale studies need to be conducted to identify differences in demographic factors associated with stalking and gender.

In conclusion, the current study is the first investigation that has examined both the perceptions of males and their victim status in relation to stalking. It has demonstrated that males resemble females in identifying a range of intrusive behaviours as stalking and non-stalking. This is despite males reporting experiencing

significantly lower rates than females of both harassing behaviour and stalking. There are a number of explanations for this. When the target of stalking and intrusion, males may perceive less risk than females, or they may be less willing than females to disclose their victim status. Alternatively, males are the principal perpetrators of stalking and females their primary victims. Future survey and experimental work could seek to establish whether males and females differ in their concern over harassment, even though they recognise the same types of behaviours as 'stalking'. Although males were less likely to report stalking experiences than females, the current work has produced a male stalking prevalence rate of 5.2%. That one in 20 males may be stalked at some time in their life is still an appreciable risk, and it is important both that males recognise the hazard of stalking and that law enforcement agencies and society at large take this risk seriously.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT IS STALKING? THE MATCH BETWEEN LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION

INTRODUCTION

One of the themes underlying this first section of the thesis is that, although there is considerable consensus among the public over what does and does not constitute stalking (see Chapters 3 and 4), legislatures have experienced great difficulty in framing legal sanctions to effectively outlaw stalking activities. This is mainly because, when viewed in isolation, many of the behaviours of stalkers are ostensibly routine and harmless, such as the sending of Valentine's gifts, or simply walking along the same street as the victim. Various countries have sought to frame legislation that captures public concern and permits successful prosecution of stalkers. The current chapter will attempt to assess the amount of similarity and difference between anti-stalking legislation from three different countries and public perceptions of what is, and is not stalking. By doing so, the chapter will also assess the ability of lay persons to interpret and apply legal statutes.

There are several reasons why it is relevant to study the public's perception of stalking relative to existing statutes. Some of the legislation discussed above may exclude activities that the public might want to label as 'stalking', likewise some behaviour included in the legislation might not accord with public perceptions of stalking. Such perceptions may also have a direct impact on how criminal acts are defined: some have argued that alterations to the legal definition of rape have arisen in response to

changing social conditions and public perceptions (e.g. Temkin, 1997). Finally, where juries are involved, experimental evidence would suggest that people have naive representations of crime categories based on common sense opinions, and that these can include legally incorrect information (Smith, 1991,1993).

Stalking is prohibited in various ways in a number of countries but globally, no anti-stalking law has avoided criticism. In the United States of America, for instance, many anti-stalking sanctions require that the offender cause the victim to fear impending death or serious injury (Sohn, 1994). However, this requirement may prevent prosecution of those cases where the victim did not feel physically threatened, but nevertheless felt psychologically menaced. In Australia, with the exception of Queensland's legislation (which seeks only to criminalise behaviour which threatens a violent act), there is an intent requirement in the form of the intention to create fear or apprehension for personal safety, or mental or physical harm to the victim (Dennison and Thomson, 1998). One major criticism that may be levelled at US statutes is that by requiring the victim to fear death or serious bodily injury, they may prevent prosecution of those cases where the victim did not feel physically threatened, but nevertheless felt psychologically menaced. However, a number of commentators have pointed out the difficulties of proving intent in many cases of stalking (e.g. Dennison and Thomson, 1998).

The England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997 was drafted in such a way that its scope was wide, including domestic incidents, neighbourhood nuisances, bullying at work and at schools, racial and sexual harassment, political demonstrations, and even intrusive news reporters (Metropolitan Police Service,

1997). However, this wide-ranging nature has attracted criticism that the Act may be open to abuse by unscrupulous policing (Lawson-Cruttenden, 1996). Others (e.g. Hadley, 1996) have pointed out that it is unclear as to what the criminal element of stalking actually constitutes under the Act. The study described in the present chapter aims to assess the ease and consistency of application of three anti-stalking laws: the USA Model Stalking Code, The South Australian Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, s19AA, and the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

As noted earlier, the USA Model Stalking Code was developed by the USA National Institute of Justice in 1993, and is recommended for consideration by States when they amend their existing statutes. Wallace and Kelty (1995), from a legal perspective, distil the description of stalking given by the Code into the following definition: “a knowing, purposeful course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family”. Like the USA, Australia has anti-stalking laws that vary between states. No Australian equivalent of the USA Model Code could be found, so one particular piece of legislation that prohibits stalking was chosen for the purposes of the present study, namely the South Australian Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935, s19AA. This provides that if an individual follows a person, loiters near places they frequent, enters or interferes with their property, gives them offensive material, keeps them under surveillance, or “acts in any other way that could reasonably be expected to arouse the other person’s apprehension or fear”, then they are guilty of stalking. However, this is only the case if their behaviour is also proven to be intentional.

In England and Wales, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes no attempt to define an act of stalking, but rules that a person must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to the harassment of another person. No intent is required: instead the 'reasonable person' test is used, qualified in the Act by the words 'in possession of the same information'. The offence of causing harassment is unusual in that it is not necessary to prove that a person actually knew the conduct amounted to harassment. The mental element in harassment is established on proof that the suspect: (i) knew; or (ii) ought to have known that the conduct amounted to harassment (s1(1)). Its effects upon the victim determine whether a course of conduct amounts to 'harassment'. The advantage of this is that any persistent, unwanted behaviour can amount to harassment - permitting police to intervene before behaviour escalates to violence (Metropolitan Police Service, 1997).

There are several major differences between the three anti-stalking laws included in this study and these may be distilled as follows: the USA Model Code requires the victim to fear bodily injury or death in order to be invoked, and provides no definition of stalking; the South Australian Criminal Law Consolidation Act offers clear guidance as to what constitutes stalking and has an intent requirement; and the England and Wales Protection From Harassment Act is loosely framed, and does not require evidence of intent or fear of physical harm. (The statutes are given in full in Appendix 3.)

In the present study, participants were presented with 20 short, real life transcripts detailing intrusive experiences, and were asked to ascertain the extent to which these were cases of stalking, based purely upon one of the three legal descriptions of

stalking outlined above. The main aim was to see how many of the transcripts would be labelled as stalking by participants who based their decisions on the legal descriptions, and contrast this with decisions made on a purely intuitive basis. It was thought that if responses obtained from the 'intuitive' group were close to responses obtained from one or more of the 'law' groups, then it would seem likely that a particular anti-stalking law was close in its drafting to people's intuitive understanding of and concerns over stalking. It would be expected that, because of their differences, the three laws would have different sensitivities in labelling different cases as stalking or not stalking. For instance, it was envisaged that the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997 would allow significantly more of the transcripts in the present study to be interpreted as stalking cases than would the USA Model Stalking Code, as the latter requires the victim to fear bodily injury or death, and the former does not.

The current study is also concerned with the ability of the student participants to understand the legal requirements for prosecution provided within the three anti-stalking sanctions. Tanford (1990) notes that since the late 1950s, psychologists have conducted extensive research into the ability of lay jurors to comprehend and apply legal instructions. The broad conclusion drawn from this research is that legally precise instructions are incomprehensible to jurors. For instance, Strawn and Buchanan (1976) found that only half of their potential jurors were, after instruction, able to understand that the defendant did not have to present any evidence of his innocence. Similarly, Elwork, Sales and Alfini (1977) found that following instruction, 44% of their participants were still unable to score over 50% on a legal comprehension questionnaire.

Some legal commentators have suggested that one possible explanation of findings such as those outlined above is that jurors do not receive their instructions until the end of the trial (see Tanford, 1990, for a review). However, the evidence for this claim is mixed. Kassin and Wrightsman (1979) found that pre-instructed student participants demonstrated only a marginally beneficial effect. Cruse and Browne (1987) found that preliminary instructions had no effect or in fact decreased comprehension, whilst Greene and Loftus (1985) found that the timing of judicial instructions had no effect on trial results. This gives rise to a null hypothesis for the present study that there will be no significant differences between participants' transcript ratings in the four conditions.

METHOD

Participants

Eighty-eight undergraduates at the University of Leicester agreed to take part in an 'experiment on stalking'. All were enrolled as first year psychology students and received credit for taking part in the study. They ranged in age from 18 to 31 years, with a mean age of age of 19.30 years (SD 1.96). Sixty-seven (76.1%) were female; 21 (23.9%) were male.

Design

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four equally sized groups; each associated with a different set of instructions. Each group were asked to rate how far a set of 20 transcripts represented a case of stalking, according to either their own opinion or one of three anti-stalking laws described above. Transcripts were presented in a fixed order.

Materials and procedure

Participants were all provided with the same 20 real-life transcripts that detailed negative, intrusive acts as experienced by female members of the public. These transcripts were derived from Sheridan, Gillett and Davies (1997). The researcher and two independent raters separately judged every transcript derived by Sheridan, Gillett and Davies as representing a 'stalking' or 'non-stalking' experience on the basis of whether the account represented "unwanted, persistent harassment which causes distress - whether intentional or not - to the person experiencing it". The present study employed ten of the transcripts that were judged by the raters in the Sheridan *et al.* study to be cases of stalking, and ten of the transcripts that were judged by the raters in the Sheridan *et al.* study *not* to be cases of stalking (see Table 5.1 for details).

Each set of transcripts supplied in the experimental conditions had a cover sheet attached. These informed participants of one of three anti-stalking laws: the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the USA Model Stalking Code, or the South Australian Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 Sect 19AA. The main

requirements for prosecution under each law were supplied, and legalistic terms such as ‘course of conduct’ were clearly explained. Where the legislation had more than one requirement for prosecution (such as a course of conduct *and* intent), participants were reminded of this at the end of the cover sheet. The instructions given to participants in each of the four conditions are shown in Appendix 3.

To ensure that participants understood what was required of them, they were given three sample transcripts prior to the main task. The experimenter rated the first example, verbally explaining her reasons for doing so. The participant and experimenter together completed the second example. The final example was rated by the participant alone, and then discussed. The examples were rated purely on a ‘yes/no’ basis (i.e., “under the legislation that we have just discussed, is this, or is this not, a case of stalking?”). Responses to the three sample transcripts were not included in the analyses. As protection against experimenter bias, it was planned that participants were only to be given feedback if they made an obvious factual error. No participant was seen to make such an error, and no feedback was given. The control group (who were asked to base their judgements purely on the basis of their own opinions) also worked through the same three examples, to make certain that they were aware of what the term ‘stalking’ meant in the context of the study.

Participants were asked to read through all of the 20 transcripts and to decide the extent to which each transcript was a case of stalking. Only the control group were advised to make their judgements based on their own opinions. The other three groups were told to complete the task strictly according to the particular legal description of the crime with which they had been supplied. Thus, they were

explicitly told to discard their personal beliefs for the duration of the study, and instead to assess each transcript purely on the basis of the way stalking was defined in the relevant law.

Participants then assessed independently each of the 20 transcripts using two Likert scales for each transcript. On the first, an 11-point scale, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they judged the transcript to be a case of stalking, where 0 = ‘definitely not stalking’, 5 = ‘unsure’, and 10 = ‘definitely stalking’. The second scale consisted of 5 points, and assessed participants’ confidence ratings. They were asked ‘How confident are you in the accuracy of your judgements?’, where 1 = ‘not at all confident’, 3 = ‘somewhat confident’ and 5 = ‘highly confident’. The order of transcripts was identical over the four conditions.

RESULTS

Transcript ratings and the anti-stalking laws

A MANOVA was carried out to test for differences between the four conditions in ratings of the extent to which the 20 transcripts represented stalking. Overall, ratings assigned to the 20 transcripts differed significantly between the four conditions ($F(60, 201) = 3.82, p < .001$). The univariate statistics for each of the 20 transcripts are shown in Table 5.1 (in which figures in parentheses represent SD values), and indicate that 18 of the transcripts gave rise to significant differences. The table also indicates where Tukey HSD tests found significant differences for each transcript, along with information on whether each of the 20 vignettes were originally coded as stalking or

not stalking in the Sheridan et *al.* (1997) study. Note that in the original study, the transcripts were rated according to a definition supplied by the investigators, which may explain any inconsistencies between the original ratings and the ratings assigned in the 'own opinions' condition in the current work (ratings in the current work were given on a 0-10 Likert scale). No statistically significant differences were found between female and male participants in these ratings.

Table 5.1: Transcript ratings and the anti-stalking laws: univariate statistics

| Transcript No. | Own opinion | UK | USA | Australia | Overall mean | F | p | Originally coded as stalking? |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | 4.27 (2.00) | 5.55 (2.69) ^a | 2.91 (2.07) ^{a,b} | 5.41 (2.68) ^b | 4.43 (2.57) | 5.81 | .001 | No |
| 2 | 9.68 (0.65) ^a | 10.0 (0.00) ^a | 9.95 (0.21) | 9.95 (0.21) | 9.90 (0.37) | 3.66 | <.02 | Yes |
| 3 | 3.18 (2.38) ^a | 5.27 (3.01) ^{a,b,c} | 3.09 (2.50) ^b | 2.86 (2.27) ^c | 3.60 (2.70) | 4.23 | <.01 | No |
| 4 | 8.27 (1.24) | 9.14 (1.17) ^a | 7.41 (2.46) ^a | 7.77 (2.09) | 8.15 (1.91) | 3.69 | <.02 | Yes |
| 5 | 9.36 (0.95) ^a | 9.86 (0.47) ^b | 8.18 (1.76) ^{a,b} | 8.91 (1.71) | 9.08 (1.46) | 6.25 | <.001 | Yes |
| 6 | 5.91 (3.05) ^a | 8.23 (1.90) ^a | 6.32 (2.73) | 6.55 (3.13) | 6.70 (2.84) | 3.03 | =.03 | Yes |
| 7 | 4.00 (2.20) | 5.50 (2.50) ^a | 3.59 (2.54) | 3.00 (2.74) ^a | 4.02 (2.63) | 3.99 | =.01 | No |
| 8 | 5.59 (3.03) ^a | 8.59 (1.59) ^{a,b} | 6.82 (2.80) | 6.23 (2.74) ^b | 6.81 (2.79) | 5.40 | <.01 | No |
| 9 | 6.32 (2.06) ^{a,b} | 7.59 (2.20) ^{c,d} | 2.45 (2.32) ^{a,c} | 2.45 (2.91) ^{b,d} | 4.70 (3.29) | 26.97 | <.001 | No |
| 10 | 7.77 (2.05) ^{a,b} | 7.27 (2.86) ^{c,d} | 2.54 (2.92) ^{a,c} | 2.09 (1.92) ^{b,d} | 4.92 (3.59) | 32.51 | <.001 | Yes |
| 11 | 3.23 (2.45) ^{a,b} | 5.68 (3.44) ^a | 5.95 (2.97) ^b | 4.82 (2.54) | 4.92 (3.02) | 4.01 | =.01 | No |
| 12 | 4.00 (2.99) ^{a,b} | 4.41 (2.54) ^{c,d} | 0.95 (1.25) ^{a,c} | 1.18 (1.53) ^{b,d} | 2.64 (2.68) | 15.11 | <.001 | No |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------|-------|-----|
| 13 | 8.45 (1.26) | 8.95 (1.40) | 8.55 (1.94) | 9.14 (1.93) | 8.77 (1.66) | .84 | =.47 | Yes |
| 14 | 5.64 (2.50) ^a | 5.64 (3.47) ^b | 3.86 (3.18) | 2.68 (2.42) ^{a,b} | 4.45 (3.14) | 5.38 | <.002 | No |
| 15 | 5.73 (2.81) | 4.41 (2.79) | 5.55 (2.82) | 4.86 (3.21) | 5.14 (2.91) | 0.97 | =.41 | Yes |
| 16 | 6.95 (3.34) ^{a,b} | 7.91 (1.51) ^{c,d} | 3.50 (3.13) ^{a,c} | 4.27 (3.33) ^{b,d} | 5.66 (3.41) | 11.39 | <.001 | Yes |
| 17 | 6.18 (2.40) ^{a,b} | 6.77 (1.90) ^{c,d} | 2.68 (2.63) ^{a,c} | 2.18 (2.24) ^{b,d} | 4.45 (3.06) | 22.96 | <.001 | Yes |
| 18 | 3.32 (2.15) ^{a,b} | 4.23 (2.72) ^{c,d} | 1.32 (1.64) ^{a,c} | 0.95 (1.29) ^{b,d} | 2.45 (2.42) | 13.29 | <.001 | No |
| 19 | 5.73 (2.45) ^{a,b,c} | 7.64 (1.76) ^{c,d,e} | 1.91 (2.60) ^{a,d} | 1.68 (1.98) ^{b,e} | 4.24 (3.36) | 38.09 | <.001 | Yes |
| 20 | 2.86 (2.59) ^{a,b,c} | 0.41 (0.67) ^a | 0.55 (1.26) ^b | 0.41 (1.10) ^c | 1.06 (1.87) | 12.88 | <.001 | No |
| Total | 116.44 | 133.05 | 88.08 | 87.39 | 106.09 | | | |
| df = 3, 87 in all cases | | | | | | | | |
| NB. Within each row, means marked by similar symbols differ at the p<.05 level. | | | | | | | | |

Confidence judgements and the anti-stalking laws

Mean confidence judgement ratings ranged from 3.36 (transcript number 11) to 4.80 (transcript number 2). As mean confidence judgement ratings exceeded the 'somewhat confident' point on the scale for all 20 transcripts, it may be inferred that none of the transcripts were believed by participants to be especially difficult to judge in any of the conditions.

A one-way independent subjects MANOVA was carried out to investigate differences in confidence ratings assigned between the four conditions. The result of this was $F(60, 201) = 2.02, p < .001$. However the mean ratings indicated that no single condition consistently gave rise to the most or least confident judgements. Instead, different laws gave rise to different levels of confidence in different scenarios.

Confidence ratings and transcript ratings

In order to examine the link between confidence and accuracy, transcript ratings were recoded such that they reflected the extent to which the original transcript ratings differed from the midpoint of the scale. These recoded transcript ratings were then correlated with confidence ratings. The resulting Pearson's correlation was significant: $r(20) = .51, p = .02$. This suggests that the more clearly identifiable a particular transcript was or was not as an example of stalking, the more confident participants were in rating it as such.

More generally, the above results indicate that participants were able to comprehend and apply three anti-stalking laws of varying complexity.

Discriminant analysis

Participants' transcript ratings for each of the 20 transcripts were entered into a direct discriminant analysis. That is, the 20 sets of ratings given on an 11-point scale where 0 = 'definitely not stalking', 5 = 'unsure', and 10 = 'definitely stalking' acted as independent variables. Transcript ratings were in turn grouped by the four experimental conditions. A discriminant analysis was employed for several reasons. Firstly, this statistical technique is able to distinguish between mutually exclusive groups, where such a distinction is possible. In this case the mutually exclusive groups were the four experimental conditions, and distinctions between them were made on the basis of the transcript ratings given by participants. Further, discriminant analysis can attempt to predict which condition the ratings were assigned within. If not all ratings are correctly classified into the conditions within which they were originally assigned, then discriminant analysis indicates where mismatches occur. This allows inferences to be made concerning the similarity of certain conditions (in this instance, laws). Finally, individual transcripts that were most important in distinguishing between conditions could be highlighted.

Three discriminant functions were calculated, with a combined $\chi^2 (60) = 202.80$, $p < .001$. After removal of the first function, there was still a strong association between the four groups and transcript ratings: $\chi^2 (38) = 77.44$, $p < .001$. However, after removal of the second discriminant function, the association between anti-

stalking laws and transcript ratings was reduced to non-significance ($\chi^2 (18) = 25.00$, $p = .12$), indicating that the third derived function was unreliable.

The interpretation of the two significant discriminant functions is as follows. The first derived function, accounting for 75.43% of between group variability, maximally distinguished 'Own opinions' and the 'England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act' group from the 'USA Model Code' and 'South Australia legislation' groups. Four variables (transcripts) were correlated with the first discriminant function. These were: transcript No. 19 ($r = .54$); No. 10 ($r = .51$); No. 9 ($r = .46$); and No. 17 ($r = .43$). (The overall mean and the group means ascribed to these particular transcripts are shown in Table 5.1)

The second function, accounting for 17.67% of between group variability, again pointed to the similarity between the 'USA Model Code' and 'South Australia legislation' groups. However, the second function also distinguished the 'Own opinions' group from the 'England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act' group. This separation was mainly defined by transcript numbers 20 ($r = -.56$) and 8 ($r = .41$). (See Table 5.1).

Table 5.2: Predicted and actual classification of transcripts by law

| | | Predicted Group membership | | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Actual group | Number of cases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 = own opinions | 22 | 20 90.9% | 2 9.1% | 0 0% | 0 0% |
| 2 = England and Wales law | 22 | 3 13.6% | 18 81.8% | 1 4.5% | 0 0% |
| 3 = USA Model Code | 22 | 0 0% | 1 4.5% | 18 81.8% | 3 13.6% |
| 4 = South Australia law | 22 | 0 0% | 0 0% | 4 18.2% | 18 81.8% |
| Percent of "grouped" cases correctly classified: 84.09% | | | | | |

Table 5.2 shows the overall discriminant analysis classification results. There are two points to note. First, 84.09% of transcript ratings were accurately classified by the law used to interpret them - a high prediction rate. Second, where transcripts were incorrectly classified, mismatches were most likely to occur between the ‘Own opinions’ and the ‘England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act’ groups, and between the ‘USA Model Code’ and the ‘South Australia legislation’ groups. Thus, the similarity between the former two conditions, the similarity between the latter two conditions, and the difference between these two clusterings, is emphasised.

Post hoc analyses

Post hoc analysis provided examples of the different sensitivities of the three anti-stalking laws used in the study. For instance, participants in the England and Wales condition were most likely to judge Transcript 1 to be a case of stalking, whilst those in the USA Model Code condition were least likely to do so.

Transcript 1

A chap in the recent past kept turning up at my house uninvited and just walking in. He was sometimes difficult to get rid of. The relationship was flirtatious at first but his behaviour I considered inappropriate and I therefore cooled off a bit in friendliness towards him. He failed to acknowledge or accept this and chose to write weird poetry and one particularly worrying letter to me which was menacing and full of 'magical thinking' abstract type stuff. This behaviour stopped after a few weeks.

This is because the transcript described a situation where the man's behaviour disturbed the woman, but as she did not have reason to directly fear bodily injury or death, it would not have been possible for her to prosecute the man under the USA Model Code. However, his behaviour *was* sufficiently harassing for him to be prosecuted, in principle, under the Protection from Harassment Act.

Conversely, Transcript 11 was judged by participants to most likely constitute stalking in the USA Model Code condition.

Transcript 11

...After our divorce, whenever I saw my ex-husband he would use obscene and threatening language towards me when such was entirely inappropriate (i.e. not during an argument situation). He also threatened to kill me. I also received an obscene threatening telephone call from his girlfriend...

According to the Model Code, the activities described above would constitute stalking as firstly the husband would or should have had knowledge that his actions would cause his wife to fear bodily injury or death, and secondly, because his actions represented a 'course of conduct' (involving conduct on at least two occasions). Participants who rated this transcript in the own opinions and England and Wales condition were less convinced that it was an example of stalking, and were allowed to exercise this belief due to the subjective nature of their own feelings and the loosely defined element of the Protection from Harassment Act.

Transcript 10 was given ratings of 7 or above in both the own opinions and the England and Wales conditions, but ratings of less than 3 in the USA Model Code and the South Australia conditions.

Transcript 10

A man who was known to me declared his interest on several occasions. I was not interested. Some time later I discovered that he waited outside my place of work, loitered outside my home, followed me home after social evenings out with my friends. He also obtained photos of me from colleagues under the pretence that he was arranging a practical joke. I was unaware of any of this until about 12 months after. I did actually approach him about this one night in the pub (I was with friends) but he seemed oblivious to my concerns and actually believed we were having a relationship! He even expressed worry about how this would affect

my husband and how he was sorry my husband would be hurt. Nothing I said would convince him that we were not an “item”. I generally kept out of his way from then on, though I do know he continued to follow me (I saw him on a few occasions also). I did not report the situation - probably for fear of what my husband would believe - him or me!

This transcript does not include a clear threat element, nor was the target made to directly fear bodily injury. However, participants intuitively believed the target was being stalked, and the England and Wales legislation would have notionally allowed a case to be made against the man involved. This example illustrates the difficulties of victims whose home country has rigorous anti-stalking sanctions, and it also illustrates the ability of the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997 to deal with perpetrators who appear to intend no harm, and who may even be delusional.

Just one transcript was given its highest rating in the South Australia condition, although it did receive high ratings in all four conditions:

Transcript 13

I have been followed by an ex-partner, who also made constant telephone calls. He wrote unwanted letters, persistently waiting outside workplaces and home. The most serious incident was when he drove around following me until he got so aggressive he tried to run me over. I had to hide in a shop doorway until he was tired of driving around.

It may be that the South Australia statute gave rise to the highest rating for this transcript as intent is so clearly present, and this statute was the only one in this study which required intent.

DISCUSSION

The results have pointed to a number of interesting findings. Firstly, the extent to which 18 of the 20 transcripts were rated as examples of stalking was dependent upon the law used to interpret them. Second, the anti-stalking laws given to participants gave rise to varying effects when different transcripts were interpreted by them. That is, the three pieces of legislation employed in the study (and participants' own opinions) had different sensitivities covering different types of stalking, illustrated by the significant interaction between law and transcripts. Discriminant analysis also confirmed highly significant statistical differences between the four experimental groups. Finally, the sample was able to interpret and apply three anti-stalking statutes of varying complexity.

The England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997 generally produced the highest ratings. That is, the transcripts were rated as stalking to a greater extent in this condition than in the other three conditions. The mean ratings for this condition and the 'own opinions' condition were similar, in that they were not significantly different for 14 of the 20 transcripts. Discriminant analysis confirmed that these two groups did not produce identical transcript ratings, and that they mainly differed in terms of ratings given to two individual transcripts. One of these transcripts produced a higher mean rating in the England and Wales condition, and for the other transcript the reverse was true. Despite this, the results of the discriminant analysis classification showed that overall, the ratings given by participants in these two conditions were generally very similar. There were six instances where mismatches did occur between the experimental condition in which the ratings were actually assigned and the

condition the classification *predicted* the ratings to have been generated in. In all but one of these cases, the confusion lay between the 'own opinions' and the 'England and Wales' groups. This indicates a functional similarity between participants' own opinions of what constitutes stalking, and the way in which the Protection from Harassment Act determines what is and is not a case of stalking.

The mean transcript ratings produced by the USA Model Code and the South Australia Criminal Law Consolidation Act were very close (i.e. not significantly different for 19 of the 20 transcripts), and discriminant analysis confirmed that these two laws produced similar ratings. Again, where the discriminant analysis classification failed to correctly predict group membership in eight cases, seven of the mismatches occurred between these two groups. Perhaps there are two legislative factors that may act as obstacles to prosecution in certain types of stalking cases - the South Australia intent requirement and the US requirement for the victim to fear bodily injury or death. What is interesting here then, is that these two requirements, when individually present in anti-stalking legislation, may have similar effects on reducing the numbers of prosecutions. What is not known of course are the consequences of an anti-stalking law that had *both* requirements.

The results support an optimistic view of the ability of participants living in England to interpret the three anti-stalking statutes and apply them to real-life cases of supposed harassment. First, transcript ratings were seen to vary between the four conditions, indicating that participants successfully reached different decisions on what constituted stalking depending on the legal description of stalking they were given. This extends the work conducted by Kassin and Wrightman (1979) who found that

preinstructed student participants were able to comprehend legal instructions, although they found only a marginally beneficial effect. Second, our sample was confident in their ability to apply the three laws, as evidenced by their high confidence ratings. Despite variations in complexity, no particular law was uniformly reported to be easier to interpret, as analyses showed no consistent differences in confidence ratings between conditions. Thus, the presence or absence of a definition of stalking, and the number of requirements for prosecution within a statute, would appear to have no consistent impact on participants' self-reported ability to interpret an anti-stalking law.

As noted in the introduction, much of the research into the ability of lay jurors to apply legal instructions has reached pessimistic conclusions. One possible explanation for our more optimistic finding may be experimenter bias. Participants were required to rate three example transcripts as stalking or non-stalking according to the experimental condition they were assigned to prior to rating the 20 transcripts. Although this remains a potential explanatory factor for our results, future studies into the ability of lay jurors to comprehend various statutes may wish to investigate the effect of prior examples on legal comprehension. If such bias was found to aid comprehension, this may have real world implications for coaching jurors in how to interpret and apply legislation. Further research may also address some of the limitations of the present study, namely by increasing the sample size particularly by including non-student and also more male participants (although no gender differences in perceptions were observed in the present data).

The key finding from this work indicates that, of the three anti-stalking laws included in this study, the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act is the one which most effectively meets public perceptions of the crime of stalking. This was the most widely drafted law of the three, theoretically requiring just two or more 'harassing' incidents to take place to trigger its application. There is no intent requirement, nor is it necessary to prove that the victim feared for his or her physical safety, as is the case when making complaints under the South Australia legislation and the USA Model Code respectively. Given that many of the behaviours of stalkers do appear to be innocuous when taken in isolation, but actually cause considerable mental anguish to the victim, perhaps the loose drafting of the Protection from Harassment Act is necessary for the successful prosecution of certain types of stalking cases (such as in the scenario depicted by Transcript 1 in the results section). Certainly in this study it was the one piece of legislation that appeared to reflect prior public opinion on stalking. This conclusion would support Smith's (1991, 1993) findings that people use their own common sense definitions of crimes. However, Smith found divergences between legal definitions and the public's perceptions of crime, while the present study saw a convergence between the same. This is of course easily explained by the lack of strict legal definition in the 1997 Act.

However, as a number of commentators have noted, the lack of a legal definition may leave the Protection from Harassment Act open to abuse. The inherent dangers of a piece of legislation which allows virtually any behaviour to be labelled as illegal harassment, so long as it occurs on more than one occasion, are clear. The debate over whether to define stalking or whether to retain the current loose framing of anti-stalking legislation in England and Wales looks set to continue. A possible benefit of

the current Act is worthy of mention, however. That is, the Protection from Harassment Act in its present form may be effective in preventing some harassment cases from ever reaching the attention of the courts. This is because law enforcers now have the capability of citing the Act to individuals who harass when giving a 'cautionary word' subsequent to a complaint. This may be sufficient to warn off low level harassment in some instances, thereby halting an escalation into more serious stalking. More research is necessary to substantiate this hypothesis.

In conclusion, this section of the thesis suggests that males and females both agree on what does and does not constitute stalking, that the latter are more likely to be the target of behaviours perceived by the public as indicative of stalking, and that the England and Wales legislation, despite its lack of a final definition of the crime, best captures public concerns about the menace of stalking. This is a positive finding given previous evidence that juries may misinterpret legal instructions, and when they are able to interpret them, may override them with their own naive representations. Of course, most ordinary criminal acts are capable of strict definition. However, stalking by its very nature is an extraordinary crime in that it often involves targeted repetition of a range of 'ordinary' activities and the common sense of jurors may need to play a greater role in its successful prosecution.

PART 2:

WHAT IS STALKING? AN ASSESSMENT OF REAL-LIFE CASES

CHAPTER 6

THE COURSE AND NATURE OF STALKING: AN INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this section is to map in some detail the course and nature of prolonged stalking as related by British and Northern Irish victims. Part one has demonstrated that there exists high consistency and currency in the use of the term 'stalking'. The data also suggests that stalking and stalking-related acts may well be widespread among the British population, and that females may be the victims of this crime more frequently than are males. The previous section further provided a summary of the rapid proliferation of anti-stalking legislation that took place in much of the developed world during the 1990s.

The criminalisation of stalking and harassment has raised a number of issues. One of the most prominent of these is the question of what motivates a stalker to initiate and maintain a campaign of harassment that may stretch over years and even decades?

Who are stalkers or their victims likely to be? What kinds of behaviours and activities does stalking consist of? What is the duration of the typical case of stalking? Indeed, is there such a thing as a 'typical' case of stalking? This section attempts to provide some answers to these questions.

Given the evidence cited in the first section of this thesis that stalking seems to have a relatively high prevalence rate (Chapters 3 and 4; Corwin, 1993; Faulkner and Hsiao, 1993; Furio, 1993; Home Office, 2000; NOP Solutions, 1997; Sheridan, Gillett and Davies, 1997; Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998), it is surprising that so few surveys of stalking victims have been undertaken. The fact that stalking is so difficult to define

and classify may be partially responsible for this paucity of victim-based research. Also, because stalking has only recently been considered in a criminal justice context, very little data will exist on the victims of stalking themselves. Some victim surveys have been conducted however, and these will be briefly reviewed.

Pathé and Mullen (1997) carried out a survey of 100 Australian stalking victims, and Hall (1998) conducted a similar survey of 145 victims who responded to a series of press releases across the USA. In both these studies, the authors acknowledged that their samples were unlikely to be unrepresentative of all stalking victims, as selection processes resulted in skewed samples of self-defined victims. Other surveys have deliberately concentrated on specific populations of stalking victims. For example, both Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker (1997) and Mustaine and Tewksbury (1999) surveyed college students and Romans, Hays and White (1996) concentrated on college counselling staff.

Pathé and Mullen's (1997) survey was the first investigation of the experiences of stalking victims per se. Respondents were drawn from two sources - individuals referred to the clinic at which the authors worked, and individuals who contacted the authors after reading newspaper coverage of their work with stalking victims. The majority of victims (83%) were female. A high prevalence rate of threat was found (58%), and assaults were recorded in 31% of cases. It was concluded that the prevailing view of stalking as a rare phenomenon confined to celebrities was unsupported. The authors also paid particular attention to the impact that stalkers had on their victims and it was concluded that 'there is ample evidence of the devastating

effects on all aspects of victims' functioning' (p. 16). The support and protection available to stalking victims however, was found to be inadequate.

Hall's (1998) victims were recruited via a series of regional and national press releases that encouraged any victim of stalking to contact the researcher. Leaflets were also sent to victim support organisations. One hundred and forty five people responded, 83% of whom were female (the same figure as that found in Pathé and Mullen's survey). The bulk of the published results detailed demographic variables for both stalkers and victims, and a frequency count of the types of activities engaged in by stalkers. Hall concluded that the majority of stalking victims were females aged between 26 and 46 who had higher educational achievement than the general public. The stalking behaviours reported by the sample 'ranged from anonymous telephone calls to sexual assault and kidnapping' (p. 135).

Romans, Hays and White (1996) examined the incidence of stalking and stalking-related harassment experienced by US university counsellors. Just under 6% of the sample of 178 reported that they had been stalked by clients. Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker (1997) attempted to explore the prevalence of stalkers as well as stalking victims among US college students. Of 593 students, 30% of females and 17% of males said that they had been stalked. Conversely, just three males admitted that they had stalked other persons. The study also found that whilst females tried to ignore their harassers, the most common response among male students was to physically confront their stalker.

Mustaine and Tewksbury's (1999) data came from self-administered questionnaires completed by 861 female college students across the US. A total of 10.5% of the women admitted to having been stalked. With the exception of employment status, no demographic variables were found to be significant predictors of female college or university students' likelihood of being stalked. Unsurprisingly however, public behaviours that increased exposure to potential offenders (such as shopping at a mall), were found to significantly increase the women's risk of stalking victimisation. Women who participated in drinking and drug use were also found to have an enhanced likelihood of being targeted by stalkers.

What these studies have in common is that they have all set out to investigate stalking via the administration of questionnaires to victims or potential victims. Two studies focussed on self-defined victims of stalking, like the research reported in the remaining chapters of this section of the thesis. The other three studies outlined above assessed the prevalence of stalking in specific populations. The studies described in the following two chapters will be most similar to Pathé and Mullen's (1997) and Hall's (1998) investigations. However, it is difficult to compare and contrast findings due to two major differences. First, these works and the present studies derive from separate countries (Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom), and cultural differences may account for some disparities in findings. Second, the questionnaires employed in the investigations were not standard, and indeed the aims of the studies varied substantially. Pathé and Mullen's work examined the impact that stalking had on its victims, whilst Hall's results concentrated mainly on demographic details.

The two surveys that form the following two chapters aim to build a picture of the course and nature of stalking as experienced by its victims in the United Kingdom. In chapter 7, 95 self-defined victims of stalking completed a 46-item questionnaire relating to their experiences. Chapter 8 details the findings from a survey of a further 29 self-defined victims who completed a questionnaire that asked for more in-depth information about the stalking itself, with particular reference to how various aspects of the experience altered over time. Throughout, unless otherwise indicated, findings relate to the entire corpus of respondents, rather than sub-samples. This was so that a full overview of stalking could be provided, given that the British research in this field is at too early a stage to allow confident subdivision of the sample.

CHAPTER 7

THE COURSE AND NATURE OF STALKING: A VICTIM PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to build a picture of the course and nature of stalking as experienced by its victims in the United Kingdom. Ninety-five self-defined victims of stalking completed a 46-item questionnaire relating to their experiences.

METHOD

Participants

The sample comprised 95 individuals who had contacted the London-based Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a charity concerned with the promotion of personal safety. When persons approached the Trust to complain of being stalked, they were sent a questionnaire to complete, and the data below derives from this. The response rate is unknown, but Trust staff suggest that it was around 90%. All returned forms were included in the analysis. Respondents came from a wide cross-section of the British and Northern Irish community, but it cannot be assumed that they were representative of all stalking victims in the population, as all 95 were *self-defined* victims of stalking. All were members of the public, of which only one could be described as a celebrity victim.

Questionnaire design

The 46-item questionnaire explored: basic epidemiological data for the victim and, where known, for the stalker; any prior relationship between victim and stalker; the duration and frequency of the harassment; the nature and course of the stalking; physical locations of contact; possible stalker motives; specific behaviour of the stalking offender; the reaction of the victim; the response of the authorities and its perceived impact; and sources of support available for victims. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were provided with several blank sheets and were invited to add any further information not included in the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The victims

Ninety-two per cent of victims (87) were female and 7% (7) were male. A married couple were together classified as 'one' victim (1%), because this was how they had chosen to complete the questionnaire. According to the victims, the age at which the stalking began ranged from two years (24 months) to 70 years (mean 33.74, SD 11.81). Three victims (3%) were aged 14 or less when the stalking began and two (2%) were aged between 69 and 70.

The socio-economic status (SES) of the victims was defined by their occupational title, which victims were asked to state for both when the stalking began and at the

time of completing the questionnaire. From job titles, the victims were placed into occupational subgroups, details of which are illustrated in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Occupation of victims - both at the start of the stalking episode, and at the time of the questionnaires' completion

| Occupation subgroup | At start of stalking | At time of completing questionnaire | Difference |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Unemployed | 6 (6%) | 7 (7%) | +1 |
| Student (inc. school and pre-school) | 9 (10%) | 4 (4%) | -5 |
| Unskilled | 8 (8%) | 4 (4%) | -4 |
| Semi-skilled | 8 (8%) | 4 (4%) | -4 |
| Self-employed | 4 (4%) | 3 (3%) | -1 |
| Clerical | 17 (18%) | 3 (3%) | -14 |
| Nurse/hospital/care worker | 2 (2%) | / | -2 |
| Technical | 1 (1%) | / | -1 |
| Professional | 26 (27%) | 10 (11%) | -16 |
| Housewife | 11 (12%) | 5 (5%) | -6 |
| Retired | 2 (2%) | 5 (5%) | +3 |
| Information unavailable | 1 (1%) | 50 (53%) | - |

Note 1. Cases of stalking that had ended and cases of stalking that were ongoing at the time the respondents filled in questionnaires have been jointly analysed throughout this chapter. This of course means that cases included in the 'at time of completing questionnaire' columns cover both ongoing

cases and historical cases. However, the mean period of ongoing stalking was 7.71 years (SD 10.01 years). The shortest ongoing stalking episode was six months and the longest 43 years. As such, it was judged that all ongoing stalking cases would have altered the life of the victim to the extent that their inclusion along with historical cases to investigate the impact of stalking on the status of the victim was warranted.

From Table 7.1 it is apparent that during the course of stalking, the occupational status of the victims altered substantially. For instance, 26 were in professional occupations when they were first stalked, and just ten described themselves as professionals when they completed the questionnaires. Similarly, the number of victims in clerical occupations dropped from 17 to just three. In most cases, this drop in SES was related to the stalking, either directly or indirectly. For instance, one woman reported that she had little choice but to:

“give up my job as he (the stalker) was my boss.” (participant number 72)

Other victims explained that they were forced out of their careers because of the emotional effects of stalking:

“I had to give up my career because I couldn’t cope with him being everywhere I went and my daughter used to think that he would take me away whilst I was out at work and I wouldn’t come back home.”
(participant number 57)

“Fifteen months ago I had the job I always wanted, I had worked so hard to get there, but I had to give it up due to ill health and depression. Working with the mentally ill on top of the stress I was under was just impossible.”
(participant number 1)

The offenders

The stalker's gender was known to the victim in 94 of 95 cases. The majority of stalkers (87%, or 82) were male, and 7% (7) were female. However, in a further 5% of cases (5), there was more than one stalker. All 5 cases of multiple stalkers involved mixed sex stalker groups.

The age of stalkers when they began their campaigns ranged from 11 to 73 years (mean 35.48, SD 11.59). One stalker was aged 11 when the stalking began, and a further four were aged between 13 and 18. Three were aged between 60 and 73 years. In five cases perpetrators were part of a group, and ages of group members were not given. Some of the data provided by victims were approximations of stalker age. The correlation between the age of the victims and the age of the stalkers when the stalking first began was .52 (89) $p < .001$, with stalkers being on the whole a little older than their victims (mean of 35.48 years old compared to 33.74 years old).

The occupational status of stalkers, where known, was requested both for when the stalking began and for when the questionnaires were completed. Data obtained is illustrated in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Occupation of stalkers - both when the stalking began, and at the time of the questionnaires' completion

| Occupation type | At start of stalking | At time of completing questionnaire | Difference |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Unemployed | 22 (23%) | 26 (27%) | +4 |
| Student (inc. school) | 7 (7%) | 3 (3%) | -4 |
| Unskilled | 2 (2%) | 3 (3%) | +1 |
| Semi-skilled | 12 (13%) | 9 (10%) | -3 |
| Self-employed | 2 (2%) | 2 (2%) | - |
| Clerical | 2 (2%) | 1 (1%) | -1 |
| Nurse/hospital/care worker | 3 (3%) | 3 (3%) | - |
| Technical | 4 (4%) | 3 (3%) | -1 |
| Professional | 25 (26%) | 21 (22%) | -4 |
| Retired | 3 (3%) | 2 (2%) | -1 |
| Various - more than 1 stalker | 4 (4%) | 4 (4%) | - |
| In jail | / | 3 (3%) | +3 |
| Unknown | 9 (10%) | 15 (16%) | +6 |

Unlike in the case of victims, the SES of stalking offenders (as defined by occupation title) did not decrease significantly over time. A small decrease in the number of professionals was seen, along with a corresponding small increase in the number of

unemployed offenders. Three more stalkers lost their occupational status due to imprisonment for stalking-related offences.

Thus, it may be surmised that a person's occupational status and therefore SES may decrease as a result of being stalked. However, an equivalent decrease in the SES of the perpetrator is less likely to be observed.

How does the SES of stalkers compare with that of convicted males more generally?

It is a reliable finding that low SES is closely correlated with criminal conviction. For instance, a survey of the adult prison population, commissioned by the Home Office, classified prisoners by social class based on their most recent employment prior to imprisonment (Walmsley, Howard and White, 1992). The obtained data is seen in the first column of Table 7.3 below. Similarly, a study of court defendants found that only 5% (excluding those charged with motoring offences) were from classes I and II (Bottoms and McClean, 1976). Table 7.3 provides a comparison of these figures with the current data.

Table 7.3: A comparison of the SES of stalking offenders, the general British convict population, and the British general population

| | Walmsely et al. (1992) | Current data (stalkers at the start of the stalking) | General population (@ 1992) |
|---|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| I Professional etc. occupations | 18% | 38% (36) | 45% |
| II Managerial and Technical occupations | | | |
| III Skilled occupations (N) non-manual | | | |
| III Skilled occupations (M) manual | 41% | 13% (12) | 37% |
| IV Partly-skilled occupations | 41% | 25% (24) | 19% |
| V Unskilled occupations Not employed | | | |
| Not known/student/retired/ more than one stalker | / | 10% (9)/ 7% (7)/ 3% (3)/ 4% (4) | / |

From examining Table 7.3 above, it is apparent that in terms of SES, stalking offenders are closer to the population norm than are convicted males in general. However, there were markedly fewer stalkers in the ‘Skilled occupations (manual)’ grouping than in the convict and general populations. This could however be due to a number of factors, for instance the recent decline in the UK manufacturing industry.

Victim-stalker relationship

The prior relationship between stalker and victim has been given consideration by a number of authors, and no one classification system has been universally accepted by all professionals in the area of stalking. Instead, various attempts have been made to classify stalkers and their victims according to particular characteristics. Meloy (1997) suggested that future studies should utilise a system based on acquaintanceship: those who were prior acquaintances, those who were prior sexual intimates and those who were strangers (see Sheridan and Davies, in press, for a discussion of stalking typologies and arguments supporting Meloy's system). The current study classified victims in this way, and found that in 48% of cases (46), the stalker was an ex-partner of the victim, and in 12% of cases (11) there had been no prior relationship between the victim and their stalker. In 37% of cases (35), the stalker was described as being a former acquaintance of the victim. In two cases however the victim did not know her stalker's identity, and so was unable to indicate the nature of their prior relationship, if any. Table 7.4 shows this breakdown in more detail, and further subdivides the 'former acquaintance' category:

Table 7.4: Victim-stalker prior relationship

| Relationship | Percentage totals (and frequency) |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Stranger | 11 (12%) |
| ex-husband/wife | 19 (20%) |
| ex-boy/girlfriend | 27 (28%) |
| acquaintance: work-related | 7 (7%) |
| acquaintance: friend | 1 (1%) |
| acquaintance: neighbour | 15 (16%) |
| acquaintance: client | 8 (8%) |
| acquaintance: social activity | 2 (2%) |
| acquaintance: student | 2 (2%) |
| falls into several 'acquaintance' categories | 1 (1%) |
| stalker's identity unknown to victim | 2 (2%) |

Serial stalking?

Only five victims (5%) were sure that their stalker had never stalked any other person. Just over half (54%, or 51) were unsure as to whether they were the only victim of their harasser. The remainder (41%, or 39) indicated that their stalker had stalked someone else, or was doing so. In the words of one victim:

“The saddest thing is that I know that this man is as I write this stalking someone else and there is nothing that I or the law can do to prevent it. I only

wish that I could hold his unsuspecting casualty so that she does not feel alone.” (participant number 7)

Stalking by proxy?

Over half of respondents (59%, or 56) reported that their stalker had operated alone, and one more victim (1%) was unsure as to whether their stalker had recruited the help of others. However, 40% of victims (38) said that friends and/or family of their stalker had also been involved in the harassment. The 1982 British Crime Survey showed that lone offenders predominated in crimes of violence not limited to theft, whilst multiple offenders predominated in personal theft crimes and in vandalism. Similarly, victims who reported incidents of violence without theft also tended to report a prior relationship with the offender. This pattern is not apparent in the case of stalking, at least in the current sample. This is a surprising finding as the popular view of a stalker is of a lone and secretive individual.

Frequency of contact

All 95 victims were asked to provide information on the frequency with which their stalker contacted them. They were asked to do this in respect to (i) the worst/most intense period of their stalking and (ii) the more typical periods.

Table 7.5: Frequency of contact made by stalker

| Frequency of contact by stalker | At worst/most intense | On average |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| More than once per day | 70 (74%) | 19 (20%) |
| Once per day | 6 (6%) | 16 (17%) |
| 2-3 times per week | 14 (15%) | 29 (31%) |
| Several times per month | 4 (4%) | 22 (23%) |
| Less frequently | 1 (1%) | 9 (10%) |

Most of the 95 victims (72%) reported that the behaviour of their stalker had ‘worsened’ over time. A further 15% were unsure as to whether the stalking had intensified and just 14% stated that it had not.

Place of contact

Respondents were asked to provide information on where their stalker was most likely to seek them out. The data obtained is shown in the table below:

Table 7.6: Main places of contact between victim and stalker

| Place | % (frequency) of total sample |
|--|-------------------------------|
| a. Victim’s home only | 6 (6%) |
| b. Victim’s workplace/educational establishment only | 3 (3%) |
| c. Public places only | 3 (3%) |
| All three | 52 (55%) |
| A and b | 9 (10%) |
| A and c | 19 (20%) |
| B and c | 3 (3%) |

From Tables 5 and 6 above, it may be seen that the typical pattern of stalking as experienced by the current sample involved contact made by the stalker several times each week in the home, at work, and out in public.

Stalking behaviours experienced

The sample were then asked about the form their stalking took, so that the actual nature of stalker contact could be determined. Information was obtained via the presentation of a range of specific behaviours, with respondents required to indicate any they had experienced via a simple yes/no format. The results are detailed in the four tables below:

Table 7.7a: Frequency of experience of specific stalking behaviours - general

| Stalking behaviour | Frequency (%) of total sample |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Watches victim | 86 (91%) |
| Follows victim | 78 (82%) |
| Tries to gain victim-related information from victims family, friends, etc. | 73 (77%) |
| Trespasses on victim's property | 65 (68%) |
| Approaches and tries to speak to victim | 63 (66%) |
| Slanders victim/defames character | 57 (60%) |
| Stalked members of victim's family | 56 (59%) |
| Threatens victim with physical assault | 50 (53%) |
| Shouts abuse/obscenities at victim | 48 (51%) |
| Damaged victim's car | 38 (40%) |
| Makes counter-allegations of stalking | 37 (39%) |
| Threatened family/friends/partner(s) of victim | 37 (39%) |
| Damaged outside of victim's home/garden | 36 (38%) |
| Carried out actual physical assault(s) | 30 (32%) |
| Broke into/damaged inside of victim's home | 30 (32%) |
| Stole from victim | 28 (30%) |
| Attempted to kill victim | 24 (25%) |
| Tries to move into victim's social circle | 21 (22%) |
| Assaulted family/friends/partner(s) of victim | 16 (17%) |
| Bugged victim's home | 12 (13%) |
| *Carried out actual sexual assault(s) | 3 (3%) |
| *(NB, data only available for 22 victims) | |

Unsurprisingly, almost all victims were watched and/or followed by their stalker. It is these types of activities, which form ‘typical’ stalking cases. Sheridan and Davies (in press) reviewed 12 studies that had examined the harassment behaviour of stalkers

and found that stalkers do in fact engage in patterns of very similar activities (see Chapter 2). Chief among these were repeated communications, intrusions, approaches, property damage, threats to the person, and actual assaults. The present work has also found that almost 80% of stalkers had made attempts to obtain information on their victim from the victim's family and friends. Further, over half had actually stalked members of the victim's family, 40% had threatened those close to the victim and 17% had actually carried out assaults on the same:

“My stalker would telephone and visit my friends and family as much as he contacted me.” (participant number 46)

“He moved into the house across from me trying to frighten off my family and friends.” (participant number 61)

“My ex-boyfriend has been assaulted twice and has received warnings to keep away from me. He has also received threats by letter and over the telephone warning that if he doesn't stay away he'll get his legs broken.” (participant number 70)

It was noted earlier that for over half of the stalkers in the sample, stalking was not a lone venture. The finding that a similar number of stalkers harassed members of their victims' families deals a double blow to the popular image of stalking as a menacing game of cat and mouse perpetrated by an individual stalker toward a solitary target.

As noted above, repeated unwanted communications are an integral part of stalking activities. The following three tables list frequency data derived from asking the sample about their experiences of such.

Table 7.7b: Frequency of experience of specific stalking behaviours - telephone-related

| Stalking behaviour | % (frequency) of total sample |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Rings then hangs up | 56 (60%) |
| b. Silent calls | 54 (57%) |
| c. Conversational calls | 55 (58%) |
| d. Abusive calls | 42 (44%) |
| Mixture of d. and a, b, or c | 50 (53%) |

Many victims volunteered additional information relating to harassment via the telephone, and the following comments make clear the fear and frustration that telephone harassment can generate:

“The person did not assault me (though I know, by his own admission, that he is capable of violence) or send grossly obscene letters or threaten me - *in so many words* - or heave rocks through my window BUT his persistent phone calls, day and night, nearly drove me mad.” (participant number 55)

“From the 12th January 1998 till 3 February 1998 there were 127 phone calls.” (participant number 68)

Some respondents even experienced stalking via the telephone when their stalker had been jailed:

“I received a phone call from him when he was in prison, not the first, stating that he swears on his “f*****” life that I will be dead and that he has got someone to do the job for him.” (participant number 68)

Over half of victims (55%) reported their stalker to their telephone company for abusive and/or excessive unwanted telephone calls.

Table 7.7c: Frequency of experience of specific stalking behaviours - mail-related

| Stalking behaviour | % (frequency) of total sample |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Threatening mail | 28 (30%) |
| b. Abusive/Offensive mail | 24 (25%) |
| c. Pleading/begging mail | 41 (43%) |
| d. Conversational mail | 19 (20%) |
| Mixture of d. and a, b, or c | 26 (27%) |

Table 7.7d: Frequency of experience of specific stalking behaviours - gift-related

| Stalking behaviour | % (frequency) of total sample |
|--|----------------------------------|
| None | 48 (51%) |
| a. Non malicious gifts | 32 (34%) |
| b. Malicious gifts | 7 (7%) |
| Mixture of gifts of malicious/non-malicious nature | 9 (10%) |

Again, some victims gave details of the volume and content of letters and gifts:

“All I did was to act as a shoulder for him to cry on and then out of the blue the presents, flowers and letters started to arrive - sometimes 12-15 letters per day plus gifts.” (participant number 51)

“He even sent letters which were apologetic in tone, saying he’ll leave me alone (it never happened!).” (participant number 41)

“These letters were so offensive, they were terrifying - full of weird stories about the end of the world and threats and what he wanted to do to me.” (participant number 82)

Violence risk

Over half of the 95 victims (53%) were threatened with physical assault, and a third (32%) were actually physically assaulted by a stalker. One quarter of respondents (25%) had been the victim of a murder attempt perpetrated by the stalker, and 3% of the total sample had been sexually assaulted (note that data on sexual assault was only available for 22 of the 95 victims).

“He’s almost strangled me, beat me, blacked my eye and threatened to burn me and my family to death with a gallon of petrol and matches.” (participant number 77)

“The safety of my daughter is my main concern. This man attempted to kill us both when she was only five weeks old. He also nearly managed to kidnap her when she was two. She is unable to play out with friends and I dread the day she has to go to school.” (participant number 24)

“He eventually tried to kill me by strangulation and stuffing a towel down my throat.” (participant number 45)

As noted above, violence was not confined to the victim as in 39% of cases the stalker had threatened family and/or friends of the victim, and in 17% of cases, the stalker had actually physically assaulted individuals close to the victim.

Reason for stalking

Victims were asked why they felt they were being stalked. In 15% of cases, the victim could provide no possible reason for their harassment. The highest proportion of victims (46%) said that they were being stalked by an ex-partner, after ending a relationship with them. A quarter (24%) felt that their stalker believed him/herself to be in love with the victim, describing a likely delusional/erotomaniac individual. One victim (1%) said that her stalker believed himself to be protecting her.

A minority of victims (7%) said that their stalking was the result of an escalation with a neighbour. Two more (2%) said that they were being stalked by the new partner of their ex-partner (i.e. the new girlfriend of a former husband). One victim was being stalked by a man who she was due to testify against in court. Three victims provided other reasons for their stalking. For instance:

“He claims we are psychically linked and I am sending him my hangovers.”

(participant number 90)

How did the stalking end?

At the time of filling in the questionnaires, 20 of the 95 victims (21%) reported that their stalking had ended. Eight more (8%) said that their stalking had only (and perhaps temporarily) ended due to ‘extreme measures’ (e.g. they moved to another country, the stalker was jailed). One respondent told us:

“After I moved to Canada he tried to trace me through the hospital in London where I had worked, but they did not tell him that I’d moved overseas and so this is how I stopped his stalking.” (participant number 28)

One other victim attempted to placate her stalker in the following manner:

“In a split second I decided that to step backwards into the path of a bus might just give him enough satisfaction. It might satisfy his desire to see my blood. The bus fractured my skull and perforated my eardrum, but amazingly I was otherwise unhurt. He was arrested for causing a fuss in the hospital (then released 24 hours later). I stayed on the neurosurgical ward for a week while my parents packed up my belongings and moved me out of S_____”.
(participant number 46)

The 28 victims who believed that their stalking was now over were asked how it had come to an end. Five were unsure. In seven cases the victim moved house, and in another four cases the arrest of the stalker was sufficient for them to cease their harassing activities. Three victims said that their stalker stopped harassing them when the stalker found a new partner, and three more said the cessation was due to their stalker moving on to a different victim, and two more reported that their stalker had voluntarily moved to another area. Four more victims each gave one of the following varied reasons: the stalker was threatened, the victim left their job, the stalker was jailed, the stalker was detained under the Mental Health Act.

The total length of stalking for those whose harassment had ended is detailed in Table 7.8. The length of ongoing stalking at the time that the questionnaires were completed for the remaining 67 victims is also shown.

Table 7.8: Total period of stalking for victims still being stalked

| Years stalked | Ended stalking cases (n = 28) | Ongoing stalking cases (n = 67) |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Less than 1 year | 13 (46%) | 4 (6%) |
| 1 year | 0 | 15 (22%) |
| 2 years | 6 (21%) | 10 (15%) |
| 3 to 5 years | 7 (25%) | 12 (18%) |
| 6 to 10 years | 2 (7%) | 12 (18%) |
| 12 to 15 years | 0 | 3 (5%) |
| 16 to 18 years | 0 | 3 (5%) |
| 22 to 28 years | 0 | 4 (6%) |
| 35 to 37 years | 0 | 3 (5%) |
| 43 years | 0 | 1 (1%) |

Effects of stalking

Victims were provided with a list of adjectives, and were asked to tick the one which best described the emotions they had experienced as a result of being stalked.

However, 41% (39) were unable to choose one particular adjective, and instead explicitly stated that they had experienced them all. Of those who were able to choose

one emotion, the most frequent choice was 'fear' (18%), followed by 'terrorised' (15%). All of the remaining adjectives were chosen far less frequently, as the following list illustrates: 'intimidation' (7%), 'imprisoned' (5%), 'powerlessness' (4%), 'upset' (4%), 'anger' (3%), and 'loss of self-esteem' (2%).

Thus, the effects of stalking are various and wide reaching. Some victims reported that they were too afraid to go out in public:

"I curtailed my social life to zero over this last 6 or 8 months, have not been anywhere or really spoken to anyone." (participant number 5)

Others expressed the permanent damage that they felt that their stalker had inflicted:

"Although this ceased approximately 9 years ago, I have not recovered from the effects. The psychological damage to me has been incalculable. It has shattered my trust in men because once I loved this man and he was really a monster underneath it all. I look at all men now and think that this monster is probably lurking very near the surface and I am deeply afraid." (participant number 6)

"The emotional/mental strain placed on me has completely taken over my life. This man has left me half the person I used to be. General everyday affairs can cause me great anxiety. Stalking effects every aspect of your life from family to work to relationships. I trust noone, and am suspicious of all. I am different than most girls and know that this difference is the result of the extra

baggage that 'casualties of stalkers' carry with them 24 hours a day."
(participant number 7)

Still other victims spoke of the effects that their stalker had had not only on them, but also on their close ones:

"Our lives have been devastated. My wife still undergoes psychiatric therapy. She has had nightmares *EVERY* night for the past 8 years." (participant number 15)

"My daughter has constant nightmares." (participant number 57)

"I became obsessively involved and so inwardly focused, that my wife thought I had another woman. I did, the female stalker was possessing my thoughts night and day." (participant number 25).

One victim put her worst fear into words:

"He is going to kill me." (participant number 43)

The sample was asked if they had made specific changes at all during the time that they were stalked. Just 6% (6) said that no, they had not. Nearly half (44%) said that they had altered their behaviour in such matters as taking a different route to work, or stopping going out alone in public, *and* had changed their telephone number, *and* had

moved house. A further 20% (19) had made behavioural changes, and had also altered their telephone number. One woman reported that:

“I change my appearance, change my hair colour, dress differently, even walk differently.” (participant number 61)

Over a fifth of victims (22%) said that they had moved either to another county or overseas in an attempt to escape their stalker. However, such measures were not effective in all cases, due to the sheer tenacity of some stalkers:

“I moved 200 miles away - I did this suddenly, almost on a whim. Three weeks later he knocked at my door having somehow traced me. Considering I told noone I had moved this frightened me. He has strange ways of finding out information. He knew someone who had access to computers. He must have accessed the DVLC computer for the car details of my boyfriend to get his parents address, then used the Electoral Register to get their names. He got his date of birth details without having his age. He knows very quickly that I have moved twice even though I tell noone.” (participant number 45)

Response of the police

Most of the victims (92%, or 87) had reported the activities of their stalker to the police. Victims indicated the response of the police as either positive or negative, both for the first complaint of stalking and also for any subsequent complaint. The data may be seen in the table below:

Table 7.9: Perceived response of police to complaints of stalking

| | Police attitude -initial complaint | Police attitude - further complaint | Police actions - initial complaint | Police actions - further complaint |
|----------------|--|---|--|--|
| Positive | 44 (46%) | 35 (37%) | 40 (42%) | 28 (30%) |
| Negative | 44 (46%) | 39 (41%) | 48 (51%) | 46 (48%) |
| Not applicable | 7 (7%) | 21 (22%) | 7 (7%) | 21 (22%) |

The split between satisfaction and lack of it with police response is also illustrated by the following comments:

“Throughout the police have been sympathetic and supportive.” (male victim).
(participant number 82)

“The police just listen, say ‘ignore it’ and that’s it.” (participant number 5)

“I called the police almost daily. They always came promptly, sometimes at 2am and were sympathetic to my situation but powerless to help as no laws existed back then for them to use against the stalker.” (participant number 45)

Some victims commented on what they felt to be the inadequacy of the law to aid them:

“I believe him to have been impersonating me on the internet but can’t prove a damned thing. It is just so frustrating!” (participant number 5)

“My wife knows that the law will not protect her. We honestly feel that only direct action, outside of the law, is our only option. We are peaceful, law-abiding people, but if the law won’t protect you, what are you supposed to do? Stalking is one of the most serious crimes of the 1990s, but noone, apart from the victims, seem to realise it.” (participant number 15)

(both these victims were writing prior to the introduction of the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997).

Another victim spoke about how her stalker mocked her efforts to seek legal intervention:

“Consequently I feel I am a nuisance to the police. In fact my stalker in his latest correspondence to me writes “Run along now to the police... I bet the police love you.” (participant number 40)

A third of victims (34%) had attempted to obtain a civil injunction in order to deter their stalker. A civil injunction was successfully obtained in 14 of the 30 cases (five more were awaiting outcome). Of the 19 cases where an injunction was obtained, 9 included the power of arrest. The injunctions had been breached in 15 of the 19 cases, as one victim explains below:

“My stalker is currently in prison for breaching the injunction order, this is his fourth prison sentence he has served. I still have outstanding matters concerning my stalker breaching the injunction which is due to be heard in court on the next month.” (participant number 48)

Of a total of 95 cases of stalking, 28% of stalkers (27) were convicted as a result of their activities. Five more cases (6%) were awaiting outcome at the time of the filling in of the questionnaires. However, even successful convictions failed to allay the fears of several victims:

“My stalker is due to be released from prison at the end of August this year - it’s like waiting for a time bomb to go off! I feel powerless to stop the whole thing starting all over again. Since he’s been in prison I’ve had the same number of letters as when he was stalking me from the outside, and he’s also made some very serious threats.” (participant number 10)

Support

All bar one of the 95 respondents felt that the support available for British and Northern Irish victims of stalking was inadequate. As stalking has only recently been considered in a criminal justice context in England and Wales, there are few support networks that provide help to stalking victims specifically. There exist two known to the author; both created by former victims of stalking or their families. However, they are small in scale and not well known, being run from private residences on an ad hoc basis. The other sources of support open to victims of stalking are the same as those

available to victims of most intrusive crimes, i.e. the National Health Service where victims may seek counselling via General Practitioner referral, private counselling, and general victim support helplines. Given the seemingly high prevalence rate of stalking, it may be that in time, adequately funded victim support networks will be set up in Britain specifically for stalking victims. As one victim suggested:

“There doesn’t seem to be any support service for people who are being/have been stalked. A service/counselling facility similar to that for rape victims etc. would improve the psychological problems experienced by victims. It may even prevent the long-term problems suffered by victims.” (participant number 12)

The other problematic aspect of support as highlighted by respondents was that, at the start of the stalking period at least, they were not all taken seriously:

“The thing that really gets to me is that this ‘friend’ of mine can’t see the problem with what J***** is doing, she thinks I should be flattered by the attention, and she would love somebody to keep sending her gifts and being followed.” (participant number 26)

Almost half of the 95 victims who completed questionnaires said that when they first realised that another individual was behaving toward them in an overly intrusive and/or threatening manner, friends and family downplayed the idea that they were being ‘stalked’. Because some of the behaviour of stalkers is, when viewed in isolation, ostensibly routine and harmless, it is difficult for some victims to convey the

discomfort and fear that they are experiencing. To rectify this problem, additional research and education concerning stalkers and their motives needs to take place. As one victim states:

“The worst part of the experience was lack of support from others, some who believed that he was only acting out of ‘love turned to anger’. There is not justification for behaviour which works away at a person’s sense of trust for other human beings and makes them terrified at every moment of the night and day. It was psychological torture, vicious and nothing whatsoever to do with love.” (participant number 17)

LIMITATIONS

In common with the investigations cited in the introduction, all samples are non-random and as such generalisations to other survey results cannot be made. Nor can generalisations be made to the entire population of victims of stalking. An unknown number of individuals may not define themselves as stalking victims, or if they do so, they may be unwilling to come forward and speak openly about their experiences.

However, many other victim-based surveys share disadvantages not seen in the current sample. For instance, the victims discussed by this chapter were not reluctant to divulge their experiences as victims. All 95 independently approached the Suzy Lamplugh Trust and volunteered their histories. Further, many had kept ongoing records of their experiences and drew on these when completing their questionnaires, thereby reducing the likelihood of response error due to the frailty of memory. This survey is the only of its kind so far conducted in the United Kingdom, and as such it

provides a starting point for others wishing to carry out exploratory studies into stalking and harassment.

Throughout this chapter, respondents were treated as genuine victims of stalking and questionnaire responses are accepted as truthful, and so for the sake of brevity, terms such as 'alleged' and 'supposed' have been omitted.

SUMMARY

This investigation has revealed perturbing insight into stalking victimology and has provided preliminary answers to some of the questions set in the introduction.

Although stalking has a nebulous quality in that it often involves no more than the targeted repetition of ostensibly ordinary behaviours, most of the victims surveyed in this study reported shared experiences. For instance, 91% had been repeatedly watched, 82% had been followed, and 84% were victim to repetitive telephone calls. Thus, it may be surmised that a 'typical' case of stalking would share these features. Still, there was evidence of less endemic stalker behaviour. For instance, 30% of stalkers had stolen from their victims, and 13% were reported to have bugged their victim's homes. The perceived motivation for stalking varied: almost half of the victims were stalked by an ex-partner after ending the relationship, whilst others felt that their stalker was delusional. Other victims could discern no reason for the stalking. More work is necessary on the complex matter of stalkers' motivational aetiology.

In this study, 92% of victims were female. Their average age when the stalking began was 34 years. The largest proportion (55%) were professional and clerical workers, or students. Their stalkers tended to be male (87%) with a mean age of 35 years.

Overall, stalkers were of far higher socio-economic status than the majority of the criminal population. Unlike their victims, stalkers tended to retain their socio-economic status as the stalking went on. This was despite, in some cases, criminal charges being successfully brought against them. Another perhaps unexpected finding was that stalkers do not always conduct their campaigns single-handedly: 40% of victims reported that their stalker was helped by family and/or friends. Just 5% of respondents were sure that their stalker had never stalked any other person.

Threats of violence were reported in 53% of cases, and actual violence in 32%.

Friends and family of respondents had also been assaulted in 17% of cases. What is clear from these findings is that the support available for victims of stalking in the United Kingdom needs to be developed and that legislative remedy, while welcomed by victims, is in many cases still a palliative. Future work might therefore usefully address means of identifying the antecedents of stalking with a view to therapeutic intervention *before* offenders embark on their often unstoppable stalking careers.

CHAPTER 8

THE COURSE AND NATURE OF STALKING: AN IN-DEPTH VICTIM SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter detailed the findings of a survey of 95 stalking victims based in the United Kingdom. The chapter was based on a unique study of a population whose experiences had only previously been documented in the USA and Australia. This was a preliminary study which aimed to map the course and nature of stalking as experienced by British victims, and questions were originated as well as answered.

The current chapter presents the results of a more in-depth investigation of the experiences of a smaller number of stalking victims ($n = 29$). The primary aims of the investigations are two-fold. First, questions that arose from the previous work will be addressed. Second, the current data will be compared to the data detailed in Chapter 7 to establish whether the two samples of stalking victims share any features. If the two explorations provide comparable findings, it may be surmised that some consistency exists between the samples.

The previous survey reported in this thesis did not establish whether the pattern of the stalking altered over time. Indeed, the author could not identify a study that provided data on how cases of stalking develop. It may be suggested then, that surveys of stalking that have been reported to date have implicitly depicted stalking behaviour as a constant. It is unlikely however, that both the stalking itself and the victim's response to it remain constant. Stalking is unlike many other criminal or intrusive

acts in that it does not consist of one isolated incident, but rather is made up of a series of activities that may take place over a protracted period. To test the assumption that the course of stalking changes and develops over time, the present chapter asked the sample whether the activities of the stalker altered, and whether the reactions of themselves and others changed over arbitrarily defined time periods.

Other questions asked here were not investigated by the survey reported in the previous chapter. These included how the victim first became aware that they were being stalked, their initial impression of the stalker, whether other persons warned them that the stalker may present a danger, and whether there were any factors that the victim felt had caused the situation to escalate or abate. Requesting this latter information may produce valuable advice that could be tested and passed on to other victims of stalking and the legal authorities. In sum, the current chapter partially replicates the investigation reported in the previous chapter, and attempts to provide more detailed information on the course and nature of stalking in the United Kingdom.

METHOD

Participants

Questionnaires were distributed by a self-help group, 'Survivors of Stalking' (SOS), set up by ex-victims of stalking to offer aid to victims and ex-victims. Forty-five were sent directly to group members' homes via the organisation's mailing list, and 39 (86.6%) had been returned by the cut-off date. Of the 39 questionnaires returned, only

29 were included in the analysis. Seven of the 10 unused questionnaires had been completed by respondents who had participated in the study outlined in the previous chapter. The remaining three questionnaires were discarded as it was judged that they may not have detailed reliable accounts of stalking, and that indeed, their authors may have been experiencing mental difficulties.

As with the participants detailed in Chapter 7, respondents came from a wide cross-section of the British community, but were unlikely to be representative of all British stalking victims. All 29 had independently contacted SOS and defined themselves as the target or ex-target of stalkers. No checks were made to ascertain the authenticity of their accounts.

The questionnaire

The research employed a 38-item questionnaire which was designed to elicit information that would elaborate upon that provided by the questionnaire used in Chapter 7. It consisted of seven sections and may be seen in Appendix 4. The first two sections requested basic demographic data for the victim and stalker respectively. Section three asked for details of the stalking itself: how it began, how the victim came to realise that they were being stalked, victim-stalker prior relationship, how the stalking changed over time, any factors that were perceived as exacerbating or alleviating the stalking, how the stalking ceased (if applicable), and the involvement of any third parties. The fourth section of the questionnaire focused on the effects on the victim, and specifically the emotional response of the victim and how this changed over time. Sections five and six dealt with the reactions of other persons, and the

reactions of the authorities in particular, and whether these too had changed over time. The final section consisted of two blank sheets with an invitation to respondents to add any other comments or information that they felt may be of interest to the researcher.

RESULTS

The questionnaire findings have been split into six main sections, reflecting the structure of the questionnaire as described above.

Victim demographics

Twenty-eight of the 29 victims (96.6%) were female. Males stalked twenty-six of the 28 females, one was stalked by another female, and for one more the gender of the perpetrator was unknown. The male victim was stalked by another male. Victim age at the beginning of the stalking ranged from 14 to 47 (mean age 31.52, SD 9.16).

Twenty-eight of the victims described themselves as white in ethnic origin, and one as Asian.

No significant differences were found to exist between the data gathered in this section of the questionnaire and the equivalent data from Chapter 7. Mean victim age was found to be similar (31.52, compared with 33.74) and again, victims were predominantly females. The questionnaire employed in Chapter 7 did not collect data concerning on ethnic origin, so this factor cannot be compared between the two studies.

When the victims were first stalked, 51.7% (15) were not in a romantic relationship. Of the 14 who were, eight (27.6% of the total sample) were married and five (17.2%) were cohabiting. Of these fourteen, four were married to the person who became their stalker, three were cohabiting with him, and one more was in a boy/girlfriend relationship with him. At the time of filling in the questionnaires, just six of the victims (20.6%) were currently in a romantic relationship, and only one was married. Just one of the romantically involved respondents was still being stalked by a third party, and she was in a 'casual' relationship. Several respondents commented on the virtual impossibility of conducting a steady relationship whilst also being a victim of stalking:

“My boyfriend got sick and tired of it all and finished with me.” (participant number 1)

“He threatened new friends I had made and did them harm too.” (participant number 12)

When their stalking began, 44.8% (13) were employed in professional or clerical occupations. However, this figure had fallen to 31% (9) at the time of filling in the questionnaires. In Chapter 7, these figures were 45% and 13% respectively. Also, the number of victims who were now unemployed or were working in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs rose from 34.4% (10) to 51.7% (15). This represented a considerable drop in social status - higher than that reported in Chapter 7.

Stalker demographics

Just one stalker (3.4%) was female. Her victim was also female, and a former sexual partner. At the start of the harassment, the stalkers ranged in age from 17 to 60, with a mean age of 38.07 (SD 12.14). Thus, they tended to be slightly older than their victims. As regards the ethnic origin of the stalkers, 79.3% (23) were described as white British or Irish, three as Arabic, one as Asian, one as Afro-Caribbean, and one as Native American Indian.

In Chapter 7, 5% of victims reported having multiple stalkers, but all the stalking described in the current work was primarily a one-on-one activity. The stalkers were slightly older in this study (mean age 38.07, compared with 35.48), but again, they were predominantly male. The ethnic origin of British stalkers and their victims has been reported here for the first time. Twenty-eight of the 29 victims were white, and one was Asian. The ethnic background of their stalkers was more diverse, with 23 of 29 being described as white. Hall (1998) also found the ethnic origins of stalkers to vary more than those of their victims. In her survey of 97 stalking victims in the US, 67% of stalkers were said to be white, compared to the 1995 US national average of 83% (US Bureau of Census, 1996). Research work with a wider pool of identified stalkers, however, needs to be conducted before any firm conclusions may be made.

The victims reported that when the stalking episode began, 31% of the stalkers (9) were unemployed, and 20.7% (6) had semi-skilled occupations. One third (34.4%, or 10) were employed in clerical or professional fields. One more was self-employed,

and in four cases the victim did not know the stalker's occupation. Unlike the occupations of the victims, those of the stalkers did not change significantly over time. This was despite the fact 25 stalkers (96.2%) were reported to the police, and 12 had legal action taken against them. These findings reflect those reported in Chapter 7.

The stalking itself

Duration

At the time of filling in the questionnaires, 55.2% of the victims (16) were still being harassed. Of those for whom their stalking had ended, the mean total length of continuous harassment was 7.12 years (SD 4.07 years). The minimum reported stalking episode was 1.33 years, and the maximum was 18 years.

Where stalking was still ongoing (13 cases), the mean recorded length of ongoing harassment was somewhat longer (9.74 years, SD 8.71 years). The shortest ongoing stalking episode was three years and the longest 47 years. On the whole, respondents in this study tended to be stalked for longer than those discussed in Chapter 7, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Victim-stalker prior relationship

In 17.2% of cases (5), there had been no prior relationship between victim and stalker. In 37.9% of cases (11), the stalker was a former partner of the victim, and was an acquaintance in 41.4% of cases (12). Of these 12 cases, the stalker was a workmate in

six instances, a neighbour in four, and a family friend in two. In one case, the identity of the stalker was unknown to the victim, and therefore their prior relationship could not be established. In Chapter 7, 12% of stalkers were described as strangers, 48% as ex-intimates, and 37% as prior acquaintances. The current study then, saw a higher proportion of ex-partner stalkers. Hall's (1998) victims were stalked by ex-partners in 57% of cases, whilst 30% of Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stewart's (1999) group of Australian stalkers (n = 145) harassed their ex-partners. Tjaden and Thoennes (1998), however, probably provide the most reliable data from the US. They conducted the National Violence Against Women survey which asked a nationally representative sample of 8,000 women and 8,000 men about their experiences of violence, including stalking. They found that 1 in 12 women reported being stalked at least once, as did 1 in 45 of the men. Over half of women (59%) reported that they had been stalked by an ex-intimate, as did 30% of the men.

Serial stalking?

In Chapter 7, only 5% of victims were sure that their stalker had never targeted anyone else. Here, 41.5% respondents stated that their stalker had not stalked any other person(s). Almost half the current victims however, (48.3%, or 14) claimed that their stalker had also targeted at least one other person who was unconnected with themselves. Three more were unsure. Just three of the 11 'serial stalkers' had had a previous relationship with our respondents. All these three had previously stalked other ex-partners. Thirteen of the 14 were reported to have stalked others prior to stalking our respondents. The exception was the sole female stalker who was said to

have stalked others before, during and after the experience of our respondent. The following is a quote from a respondent who was stalked by a stranger:

“Before me he smashed a young woman’s house windows and cut his wrists on her doorstep. She had to move away. She had only worked at the employment exchange where he signed on.” (participant number 16).

Stalking by proxy?

The data reported in Chapter 7 suggested that the act of stalking may not always be a lone venture, as 40% of victims said that their stalker had been assisted by other persons. A higher proportion of the stalkers described in the current work (72.4%, or 21) were reported to have enlisted the help of others during their harassment campaign. In 13 cases, these assistants were friends of the stalker, in four cases they were relatives, in one case the stalker’s partner was said to be involved, and in a further two cases, individuals from two or more of these categories. In one case, members of the victim’s family were said to have assisted the stalker. Furthermore, 75.9% of stalkers (22) were reported as having attempted to glean information about the victim from the victim’s family, friends and workmates.

“He harassed my sick mother when he knew she was alone and talked to neighbours trying to gain their sympathy. He delivered ‘presents’ to neighbours and asked them to pass them on to me... He obviously has a contact at British Telecom who has on three or four occasions given him my ex-directory phone numbers.” (participant number 21)

“He contacted my friends, relatives and work colleagues. He was a university lecturer and a very plausible person who would tell them lies to get information.” (participant number 9)

The remainder of the information reported in this section was not available in the survey reported in Chapter 7. In the current work, respondents were asked not only about how their stalking experiences started, but also about how they first came to realise that they were being stalked. Participants were also asked about how the stalking altered over time. Prior reportage of information of this kind could not be located in the literature. It is included here to provide further details of the course of stalking. This type of data may eventually become valuable to those investigating stalking crimes. Respondents also provided details on any factors that they felt served to exacerbate or alleviate their situation. If researchers can come to identify potentially helpful or dangerous activities that stalking victims may engage in, then guidance based on this data may be able to aid both the victims and investigating officers.

How the stalking began

Just 34.5% of victims (10) reported that they were aware of the stalking right from the beginning. Of these ten, five said that they had become aware of their harassment due simply to the ongoing physical presence of their stalker. Two were made aware via direct communication from their stalker, and two by physical violence directed toward them by the stalker. One more was informed of her predicament by a third party.

“I wouldn’t have called it ‘stalking’ at the start as I thought he just wanted me back and eventually would get the message and leave me alone.” (participant number 21)

“I knew he was watching my movements but thought it was only occasionally. I had no idea of the extent of his stalking until it had been happening for around 8 weeks.” (participant number 18)

“The man raped me then moved to live near me, followed me, sent letters, threatened me, told people I loved him.” (participant number 16)

The stalking began immediately after the first meeting of the stalker and victim in nine cases (31%). Otherwise, the mean length of time between the stalker and victim first meeting and the commencement of the stalking was 5.09 years (SD 10.36, minimum five months, maximum 42 years).

Respondents were asked, if they had known the stalker prior to the harassment, their initial view of the individual. Twenty-one were able to answer. Of these, 12 had held an initial positive view of their future harasser, four a negative view, and five an ambivalent viewpoint.

“I didn’t know who he was until five weeks before he was arrested.”
(participant number 6)

“I was married to him. It was an extremely violent relationship. His insecurities showed by locking me in a room to ‘keep me safe’”. (participant number 10)

“I knew from living in the same area since a child that he had killed cats, had no friends, and was said to be suffering from paranoia and was a homicidal psychopath. I was frightened of him – as are a number of people.” (participant number 16)

The changing behaviour of the stalker over time

Participants were asked how the behaviour of their stalker had developed over time. They were requested to provide a brief outline of the kinds of activities that their stalker engaged in over three periods: the initial stages, after the initial stages, and during the most recent or final approach. Table 8.1 below illustrates the responses in terms of the primary activities via which the stalkers were said to operate:

Table 8.1: Changing behaviour of stalkers over time

| | Initial approach | Middle approach | Most recent / final approach |
|---|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Constantly present (non-verbal) | 12 (41.4%)*` | 14 (48.3%)* | 7 (24.1%) |
| Verbally present (telephone and/or personal approaches) | 4 (13.8%) | 5 (17.2%) | 4 (13.8%) |
| Actual aggressive behaviour | 7 (24.1%) | 6 (20.7%) | 13 (44.8%)* |
| Sending letters/items | 6 (20.7%) | 4 (13.8%) | 5 (17.2%) |
| * Highest values for each period | | | |

Note: 1. Cases of stalking that had ended and cases of stalking that were ongoing at the time participants filled in the questionnaires have been analysed jointly in this table, and indeed, throughout this chapter. This of course means that cases included in the ‘most recent/final approach’ column cover both ongoing cases and historical cases. However, the mean period of ongoing stalking was 9.74 years (SD 8.71 years). The shortest ongoing stalking episode was three years and the longest 47 years. As such, it was judged that all ongoing stalking cases would have continued for long enough for the victim to be able to observe any alterations in the behaviour of their stalker over time.

The table above would indicate that over time, the stalkers in this sample decreased the amount of time in which they were proximal to the victim, but that they also became more violent. Twenty-six respondents (89.7%) said that the stalking had changed over time (three more said it had not). Of these, twenty-four said that the stalking had intensified, and just two said that that it became less intense.

Alleviating and exacerbating factors

Respondents were asked if they knew of any particular actions or factors which had served to either worsen or curb their stalker's behaviour. Only 41.4% (12) felt that specific factors had been effective in reducing their stalker's activities. Six cited legal intervention, two said that simply ignoring the stalker had had an effect, one secretly relocated, one put a telephone trace into operation, one finished her relationship with her partner, and one more had her partner physically threaten the stalker.

When asked about factors which worsened the stalker's behaviour, 41.4% of victims (12) said that they knew of none. Again, affecting factors were varied. Six cited legal intervention (cf. above), three said that going into new romantic relationships led to an increase in the stalker's activities, two said that going into hiding did, four cited paying attention to the stalker, and the final two reported staying with a male partner or having male visitors as an aggravating factor.

It may be concluded then, that the current work has failed to offer any clear-cut factors that may serve to exacerbate or alleviate stalking. The same behaviour, such as engaging in legal proceedings, may deter some stalkers but provoke others into intensifying their activities. This may be due to the different nature of the stalkers, the type of legal interventions entered into, or some other factor. Further investigation of a larger number of real-life cases is necessary to clarify these issues.

How the stalking ended

In the 16 cases where the stalking had ceased, eight cited legal intervention as the cause (five of these stalkers were jailed). Six victims said that their relocation had led to the end of the stalking, one more did not know why her harassment had ended, and a further one said the cessation was due to her stalker finding a new partner. This data would suggest that in 14 of 16 cases, the stalking had ended only because the victims had taken 'extreme measures' to terminate it. Otherwise, the stalking may or may not have continued indefinitely. Some examples of these 'extreme measures' follow:

"I left Canada and returned to the UK after 25 years." (participant number 8)

"He is in prison." (participant number 4)

"I do not know why it has stopped. In reality I am safe at present only because I have removed myself from England, and now live on an island off the West coast of Scotland. When where I am I will have to move again, if I am able to find the energy." (participant number 16)

"He realised I would continue to report him to the Police and that action would be taken. He actually got a four month prison sentence and had to serve two months. When the magistrate said 'take him away' he looked terrified. I

assume the fear of another prison sentence has played the largest part in stopping the stalking.” (participant number 18)

In 12 of 16 cases, the stalker stopped their actions immediately: the remaining four cases saw a winding down period. There was only one recorded instance of a stalker informing the victim of their intention to stop:

“I received a letter recently, a letter of apology, but then two weeks later he saw me and it all started up again.” (participant number 5)

The effects on the victim

How victims were affected over time

When they first became aware that they were being stalked, 51.7% of victims (15) said that they felt terrified, 27.6% (8) that they felt confused, 13.7% (4) described angry feelings, and 6.9% (2) said that they were initially annoyed with the stalker. The way that the victim’s most dominant feelings changed over time are illustrated in Table 8.2 below:

Table 8.2: Effects of stalking on victim over time

| | Initial awareness | Initial stages | After the initial stages | Most recent/ final stages |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Terrified | 51.7% (15)* | 44.8% (13)* | 24.1% (7)* | 27.6% (8) |
| Confused | 27.6% (8) | 17.2% (5) | 13.8% (4) | |
| Angry | 13.7% (4) | 13.8% (4) | 13.8% (4) | 31% (9)* |
| Annoyed | 6.9% (2) | | | |
| Sickened | | 10.3% (3) | 6.9% (2) | 3.4% (1) |
| Distressed | | 10.3% (3) | 24.1% (7)* | 6.9% (2) |
| Helpless | | 3.4% (1) | 10.3% (3) | |
| Tired/Depressed | | | 6.9% (2) | 27.6% (8) |
| Suicidal | | | | 3.4% (1) |
| * Highest values for each period | | | | |

The table shows that when they first became aware that they were being stalked, the highest proportion of victims (just over half) recalled feeling terrified. In the early stages of the actual stalking, a similar number of respondents said they their primary emotional response was still terror. The number of victims who initially felt confused as to what was happening to them dropped from over a quarter to under a sixth. As the stalking progressed however, the victims reported that they felt distressed as often as they reported feeling terrified, and tiredness or depression was mentioned as a primary emotional response for the first time. Towards the end of the stalking period, or in its most recent stages, just over a quarter of respondents said that terror was still

their overriding reaction to their harassment. The same amount however, cited tiredness and/or depression as their dominant response.

The following quotes illustrate how respondents felt over the various time periods:

Early stages:

“Terrified for my safety, for my security, for my well-being both physically and mentally – so alone and helpless and hopeless, frightened, angry, unhappy.”

(participant number 16)

“I felt confused and thought that maybe I should reconsider and go back to him. I felt totally confused that this man who I initially loved and who said that he loved me could do this to me.” (participant number 22)

Middle stages:

“I think I had a sort of nervous breakdown, but had to carry on. I just went through the motions and was constantly tired.” (participant number 5)

“I felt I had to keep one step ahead and spent hours trying to plan how to catch him out whilst protecting myself. I became extremely frightened, especially once it was dark. I began to go to bed fully dressed and had difficulty sleeping. I became very anxious and lost weight.” (participant number 18)

Final/most recent stages:

“Still angry and find the situation totally hopeless now. There is nothing I can do. I have given up trying and just have to accept the situation as it is.”

(participant number 5)

“I had to give up work – became depressed, visited the doctor who put me on anti-depressants, contemplated suicide on many occasions, saw a psychologist and completely changed my image so he wouldn’t recognise me.” (participant number 12)

Of the 16 victims whose stalking experience had ended, just one reported entirely positive feelings upon realising that the harassment was over. This woman said that she felt “rejuvenated”. Ten of the other 13 described feelings of relief mixed with extreme nervousness, two said that they felt surprise and disbelief, and three more felt anger towards their stalkers.

“Does it ever end? If it physically stops, does it ever really stop mentally?”

(participant number 21)

“Stalking is and causes emotional turmoil. It is for the victim mental rape - you live in constant fear of what s/he will do next - the emotional scars and lack of support and counselling is disheartening, making you believe that what happened does not represent and is not recognised as a sexual crime. It is, and

it is an emotional roller coaster that makes you hate yourself, your body, distrust everyone - especially those of the same sex as the offender. A stalker's victim is a lonely one - left with no support - only those closest to him/her. I hate what he did to me. I am in a constant internal/mental fight with him every day." (participant number 27)

"It took some time for me to accept that it had stopped. I continue to be vigilant and cautious. I realised I was becoming free from it when I walked across a dark car park alone and felt afraid of strangers, ghosts, etc. instead of only seeing him as the danger." (participant number 18)

The reactions of friends and family

Just 11 of the victims (37.9%) had been warned by others about their stalker prior to the stalking itself. In seven cases members of the victim's family warned against the stalker, in three cases friends of the victim did so, and in one case a member of the stalker's family did. All 11 were told that the stalker was a dangerous or mentally unbalanced person who the victim needed to be wary around.

"A mutual friend realised his interest in me wasn't normal or safe and tried to warn me to be very clear with him." (participant number 24)

Most respondents told other people about their experiences at an early stage - just four (13.8%) told no one. Twenty-four talked to family and/or friends, and one spoke to a close neighbour.

The reactions of other people to the stalking over time are best illustrated in tabular form, as in Table 8.3 below:

Table 8.3: Victim-reported reactions of other individuals throughout the stalking episode

| | Initial stages (n = 25) | After the initial stages (n = 26) | Most recent/ final stages (n = 25) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sympathy | 31% (9) | 44.8% (13)* | 44.8% (13)* |
| Ambivalence | 34.5% (10)* | 31% (9) | 13.8% (4) |
| Fear for victim | 13.8% (4) | | |
| Anger | 6.9% (2) | | 17.2% (5) |
| Fear for self | | 13.8% (4) | 6.9% (2) |
| Guilt | | | 3.4% (1) |
| Told no-one | 13.8% (4) | 10.3% (3) | 13.8% (4) |
| * Highest values for each period | | | |

When the stalking experiences of respondents began, most of their friends and family were either ambivalent or sympathetic. When the stalking became more established, a higher proportion of third parties were sympathetic towards victims (almost half, compared to a third). Almost a third were still ambivalent however, and 14% were reported to be chiefly fearful for themselves. As the stalking progressed further, less victims said that their friends and family were ambivalent toward them, and around a sixth said that their loved ones now felt anger toward the stalker.

Again, quotes from victims are perhaps the best illustration of these changes over time:

Early stages:

“The first time that I had been stalked it was the mid/late 1980s and it was relatively unheard of. The initial reaction of my family was that I was imagining it but as time went on they realised just how dangerous he is. At the start my family did not express much concern and thought it was coincidence.”
(participant number 27)

“All my immediate family were concerned for me – everyone thought this only happens to famous people not normal people.” (participant number 12)

Middle stages:

“I could see their concern. I believe that they saw the fear in me.” (participant number 27)

“They began to realise how dangerous he is, especially when he began harassing them too.” (participant number 10)

Final/most recent stages:

“My family were angry as by now my health, physical as well as mental, was poor.” (participant number 28)

“My family seem to want to trivialise incidents and talk about them every time they see me. I think it’s like a real life soap opera to a lot of them.”
(participant number 10)

In those 16 cases where the stalking had ended, most respondents (7) reported that friends and family felt primarily relieved for the victims. However, 5 were said to be apathetic, and 2 were reported to be primarily relieved for themselves that the stalking was over (two cases did not have the support of family or friends at this point).

The response of the authorities

Twenty victims (69%) reported their stalker to the police at an early stage, i.e. around the time that they first realised that they were being harassed. However, half (10) described the initial response of the police as indifferent. Just one victim received what she described as a negative police response. In six cases, the victims reported that they were believed, and in three cases a police officer visited the stalker and spoke to them informally. In seven cases the police were said to have stated that the legal situation at the time was inadequate for victims of harassment (all seven of these cases were reported prior to the introduction of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997).

The reactions of the police over the stalking period were described as in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4: Victim-reported reactions of the legal authorities throughout the stalking episode

| | Initial stages (n = 21) | After the initial stages (n = 21) | Most recent/ final stages (n = 21) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Unconcerned | 37.9% (11)* | 24.1% (7) | 13.8% (4) |
| Sympathetic/inactive | 20.7% (6) | 10.3% (3) | |
| Sympathetic/active | 13.8% (4) | 27.6% (8)* | 41.4% (12)* |
| Spoke to offender | | 6.9% (2) | |
| No longer in contact | | 3.4% (1) | 17.2% (5) |
| Did not report situation to Police | 27.6% (8) | 27.6% (8) | 27.6% (8) |
| * Highest values for each period | | | |

The table suggests that as the stalking progressed, the Police were more likely to believe the victim and more likely to take action against the stalker. However, during the most recent or final stages of the stalking, 13 of the 29 victims were not in contact with the Police. Eight of these 13 victims had never reported their stalking to the authorities. Further research is necessary to ascertain why some victims but not others attempt to take legal action against their stalker, and to investigate which factors associated with stalking cases are most likely to prompt positive Police intervention.

Even when stalkers were prosecuted (although the number of stalkers prosecuted by the present sample is unknown) as a result of their harassing activities, participants cited a lack of appropriate support:

“When he was taken to prison, he tried to have our house burgled, got another prisoner to leave murder threats on the answer phone and sent ‘ heavies ’ to threaten me and my mum.” (participant number 11)

“Once my ex-husband had been found guilty of the numerous charges brought against him, the defence offered in mitigation a psychiatric report claiming he had a violent upbringing. Every service crawled out of the woodwork saying he needed help, support and understanding. Not once did anyone offer me any help, ask what I felt like, or how I had coped or could cope.” (participant number 18)

LIMITATIONS

As with the study reported in the previous chapter, the sample from which this data originates is non-random. As such, generalisations cannot be made to all victims of stalking, nor can direct comparisons be made between these results and those from surveys of other stalking victims conducted by other researchers.

As previously, the respondents who provided the information for this chapter were treated as genuine victims of stalking and their responses were accepted unconditionally as truthful.

SUMMARY

This section of the thesis has provided preliminary data on the course and nature of stalking as it occurs in the United Kingdom. The two studies reported are the first European surveys of stalking victims that are known to the author. Where possible, the data from the two investigations were compared and overall, a high degree of consistency was observed between the two data sets. For instance, no significant differences were seen as regards the age of both the stalkers and their victims, and in both studies the proportions of ex-partner, acquaintance and stranger stalkers did not differ at a significant level. Similarly, the present study confirmed some of the more unexpected results produced by the study detailed in Chapter 7. For example, it was found that many stalkers tend to target their victims in a serial fashion and may indeed stalk more than one person concurrently, and stalking by proxy was also found to be prevalent in the current sample. The finding that stalking has a detrimental impact on the victim's, but not the stalker's, socio-economic status was also confirmed.

The current work requested information from respondents that had not been asked of the sample detailed in Chapter 7. Data on the ethnic origin of stalkers and their victims, the victim's current romantic situation, how the stalking started, and the victim's initial view of the stalker were presented for the first time in a British sample.

It was assumed that because stalking takes place over an extended time period, the behaviour of stalkers and victims' reactions to this behaviour would change as the stalking went on. This assumption was borne out. Over the course of the harassment, stalkers tended to decrease the overall amount of time during which they were

proximal to the victim, but they also generally became more violent in their behaviour toward the victim. More detailed information on the effects of stalking on its victims and the reactions of family and friends of stalking victims was also provided. For instance, it was found that the largest proportion of victims reported that they were initially very frightened of their stalkers, but that they eventually came to feel anger towards the architect of their plight.

In all, the current section of the thesis has demonstrated that the victims of stalking are a rich source of data on the course, nature and attributes of this invasive phenomenon. This was to be expected as many of the victims reported in this section were stalked for a period of years rather than days or weeks. Further, most had collected evidence and made notes on the activities of their stalker in order to aid police investigations. As the two victim surveys are the first of their kind to be reported in the United Kingdom, the data need to be treated with caution until further replications have been undertaken. It is suggested that future work be based on samples of stalking victims, particularly if accounts can be corroborated by police evidence. Although the surveys reported in this section are preliminary, consistency has been seen between the two data sets and further scope for research has been identified. For instance, there is a need for investigation into factors that serve to exacerbate or alleviate the activities of a stalker. In the present chapter, it was not possible to make clear-cut recommendations and it may be that particular factors may serve to reduce the danger posed by some stalkers but encourage others to intensify their campaign of harassment. These issues will be discussed further in the next section of the thesis, which moves from an initial assessment of the course and nature of stalking to methods of classifying stalkers and their victims.

PART 3:
CLASSIFICATION

CHAPTER 9

STALKER CLASSIFICATION: THE WAY FORWARD?

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Collectively, Chapters 7 and 8 detailed the findings from two surveys of stalking victims, the first such surveys to be conducted in Europe. When taken together, the results illustrated that many of the 129 victims shared some important features. For instance, the majority were young employed females. The survey findings also revealed marked differences between these same victims. For example, half were single when their stalking began, and only around a third were aware from the beginning of the harassment that they were actually the target of a stalker.

Differences as well as similarities were also seen among stalkers. Most of the stalkers described were male, and slightly older than their victims. However, around one third were unemployed when they began their harassment campaigns whilst an additional third were in professional and clerical occupations. Further differences were seen in the methods employed by the stalkers: almost all regularly watched their victim, whilst only around half threatened assault, and a minority bugged their victim's home.

Research that has discovered similarities and differences such as these, coupled with the need for society to attempt to control aberrant behaviour has resulted in the creation of a number of diverse stalker classification systems. These systems have been designed for use in different disciplines and as such vary in their aims and scope.

This chapter outlines the most influential taxonomies that have been offered to date, and provides a discussion of their major strengths and weaknesses.

Section one of this thesis illustrated that there is a high level of shared understanding regarding people's interpretation of the term 'stalking', despite the existence of numerous definitions of the phenomenon in both criminal justice and clinical contexts. However, if researchers and clinicians are to advise law enforcement on what represents good practice when investigating stalking crimes, then perhaps they should agree among themselves as to the nature of the crime. Yet, it is true to say that no one classification system has been universally accepted by all professionals in the area of stalking. Instead, various attempts have been made to classify stalkers and their victims, as illustrated by the broad range of examples detailed below. The majority of these systems distinguish between subtypes on the basis of particular characteristics of stalkers or their victims, whilst others have made distinctions according to the nature of the prior relationship between the two. Just one current taxonomy may be described as multi-axial.

CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON STALKER OR VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

Dietz (Dietz, Matthews, Martell et al., 1991a; Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne et al., 1991b) examined cases of stalkers who had targeted celebrities and other public figures, with emphasis on identifying the level of attachment the stalker had for the victim. The crucial difference between stalkers and 'normal persons', according to Dietz, is that normal persons feel attached to celebrities or officials due to feelings of

obligation or attraction. Stalkers differ in that their activities are motivated by a wish to become physically closer to, or be noticed by, their target.

In contrast, Geberth (1992) established a typology of stalkers based solely on their mental states, labelling his stalker 'types' as psychopathic personality stalkers, and psychotic personality stalkers. The former is described as being a dominant ex-partner who has lost control of the victim and intends violence toward them, whilst the psychotic personality stalker is said to be a delusional individual who has become obsessed with an unobtainable object such as a film star. Such people, the typology holds, are convinced that the individual returns their intensely affectionate feelings, and they mount a campaign of harassment to make the victim aware of their existence. This mental state is known widely as 'erotomania', a delusional disorder whereby the sufferer believes that the target of attention - generally a person of higher social and economic status - bears a genuine reciprocal love for them (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

Some of the existing literature was reviewed by Holmes (1993), who suggested there were six different types of stalkers based on the nature of the victim. These comprised: celebrity, lust, hit, love-scorned, political and domestic stalkers. These labels are largely self-explanatory. For instance, the celebrity stalker is described as someone who harasses only those prominent in the entertainment field, while the domestic stalker is described as being a former partner of the target. The lust stalker was articulated by Holmes as being motivated by sex, stalking one victim after another in a serial fashion. The hit stalker differs from the others in this classification,

in that these individuals are hired by a third party to murder a specific target for profit, stalking their victims first to try and establish their habits.

A further typology of stalking was advanced by McAnaney, Curliss and Abeyta-Price (1993), again based on a review of the psychological, psychiatric and forensic literature. This four-fold classification comprised: erotomaniac, borderline erotomaniac, former intimate and sociopathic stalkers. In this system, sociopathic stalkers were said to be otherwise known as serial murderers and serial rapists who develop a criteria of an “ideal victim”. Three of these four stalker types were said to have a delusional mental illness or be personality disordered.

Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993) created a dominant classification system of stalkers which is still employed by many US police forces. These researchers classified 74 cases into three categories: erotomaniac, love obsessional, and simple obsessional. Under this system, love obsessives are said to be similar to erotomanics in many ways, but with the distinction that love obsessives know their victims only through the media. In the case of simple obsessives, a prior relationship is said to have existed between stalker and victim, and the stalking is initiated following the end of a relationship, or where the stalker perceives that s/he has been mistreated.

Finally, Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan and Meloy (1997) divided stalkers into two groups simply according to whether they were or were not judged to be psychotic. Unlike Geberth, the authors did not assume that all stalkers were mentally ill or personality disordered.

PROBLEMS WITH THE ABOVE SYSTEMS

Although the various approaches to classifying stalkers and their victims have much to offer to both researchers and practitioners, many have shortfalls and are incomplete. Some are too simple, given that the population is heterogeneous and is likely to include individuals who are mentally ill and/or personality disordered and those who are not. Others are difficult to decipher and many stalkers may fall either between two categories or may fit into more than one. The reliability of such ad-hoc typologies may be questioned, given that the number of cases on which they are based is not always clear, and as some are of an arbitrary and impressionistic nature. The number of the stalker types ranges from two to more than seven, and some of the classifications, such as Geberth's, may be criticised as being too finite, whilst others (e.g. Dietz) deal with the stalking of public figures only. Further, many of the typologies (e.g. Zona *et al.*) have their focus solely on mental illness in the perpetrator. A more frustrating problem is that most typologies fail to offer accessible implications for case management. It is important to remember however, that any classification of stalkers will likely vary in accordance with the goals of the group who develop it (Mullen, Pathé and Purcell, 2000).

CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON THE STALKER-VICTIM RELATIONSHIP

Zona, Palarea and Lane (1998), drawing on a decade of practical research, posited that the relationship (real or imagined) between stalker and victim best informs an understanding of the psychology of stalkers. Probably the first study that attempted to classify the victim-stalker prior relationship was conducted in 1993 by Zona, Sharma

and Lane in their categorisation of the police case files of 74 'obsessional harassers' (also cited above). Victims were divided into two categories, 'prior relationship' and 'no prior relationship'. The former grouping was further subdivided into 'acquaintance', 'customer', 'neighbour', 'professional relationship', 'dating' and 'sexual intimates'. Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995) classified the 'type of prior interaction' between 48 individuals who had been charged with harassment and their victims into: 'personal', 'professional', 'employment', 'media' (where the target is a celebrity with no connection to the stalker), 'acquaintance', 'none' or 'unknown'.

Fremouw, Westrup and Pennyypacker (1997) examined the harassment experiences of 593 US college students, producing four victim-stalker categorisations: 'friend', 'casual date', 'serious date' and 'stranger'. Finally, Emerson, Ferris and Gardner (1998) collected opportunistic victim and archive data from a variety of sources, and produced the following relational categories: 'unacquainted stalking'; 'pseudoacquainted stalking', where the pursuer feels that they have a special bond with a celebrity; and 'semi-acquainted stalking', where there has been historical contact, or where there exists a minimal amount of present contact.

Meloy, in 1997, posited that future studies should utilise a system based on acquaintanceship: those who were prior acquaintances, those who were prior sexual intimates and those who were strangers. He regrouped Harmon et al.'s (1995) data according to this classification and found that that 58% were prior acquaintances, 21% were strangers, and 12% were prior intimates (8% were unknown). Similarly, Mullen and Pathé (1994) wrote that, "the majority of objects of affection had had some contact with the patient, albeit fleeting" (p. 471) (see Chapter 10 for a full discussion

of the relative incidence of ex-partner stalkers). Meloy (1997) concluded from his review that the majority of obsessional followers will pursue prior acquaintances, and that the rest will be divided, in some unpredictable proportion, between prior sexual intimates and complete strangers. However, Meloy also pointed out that possibly the most important caveat in the application of early taxonomies to clinical and research work was the likely under-representation of spouses or ex-spouses. This is probably the result of the exclusive focus on erotomaniac disorders in early studies. It may also reflect a selection bias on the part of law enforcement officers to arrest and prosecute the more 'high profile' or 'stranger' obsessional followers during the periods of data gathering for the larger studies. Similar trends in prosecution have been observed in child sexual abuse cases (Davies and Noon, 1991).

In Britain, Wallis (1996) conducted a study of Chief Constables, asking them to provide details of stalking cases in their force area. This was the first investigation in the United Kingdom that attempted to provide data on the victim-stalker prior relationship. Five broad relational categories were produced, and these are illustrated in Table 9.1 below:

Table 9.1: The relationship between stalker and victim (from Wallis, 1996)

| Relationship between stalker and victim | Frequencies (%) (N = 151) |
|--|------------------------------|
| Casual relationship (e.g. friend, neighbour) | 40 (25.8) |
| Ex-intimate relationship (boy or girl friend) | 34 (21.9) |
| Unknown to victim | 32 (20.6) |
| Ex-domestic partner (spouse, common law partner) | 25 (16.1) |
| Work colleague | 24 (15.5) |

(NB: Although N = 151, the column total is 155. This is because 151 examples of stalking were included, and one stalker targeted a family of five victims.)

These results seem to correspond with Meloy's prediction, in that the largest proportion of stalkers were said to have been casually acquainted with their victims. Similarly, Pathé and Mullen (1997) found that, of their 100 stalking victims, 29 were ex-partners of the stalker, 25 had first encountered the stalker through a professional relationship, nine had first encountered him/her in other work-related contexts, 21 had had casual social encounters with or were neighbours of the stalker, and 16 had no knowledge of any prior contact with their stalker.

Although Meloy's proposal of classifying stalkers into prior acquaintances, strangers, and prior intimates is unlikely to be problem free (for instance, it would be difficult to classify a stalker whose identity was unknown to the victim), it is proposed that this

system should be adopted as a means of categorising the victim-stalker prior relationship, at least until more rigorous research has been conducted on real-life stalkers and their victims. This is for three main reasons:

- the classification recommended is relatively simple and unambiguous
- if it appeared that a significant number of serious cases involved prior intimates, this could help 'domestic stalking' cases to be taken more seriously
- it allows a comparison of obtained results to be easily compared with those from other studies conducted both in Britain and abroad.

A MULTI-AXIAL APPROACH TO STALKER CLASSIFICATION

Although the recommended approach to classifying stalkers and their victims in terms of their prior relationship may be useful, it is simplistic and represents only part of the classification process. It does not, for instance, take account of the absence or presence of mental illness in the stalker - an important factor considering that as a group, stalkers are likely to be co-morbid for a range of disorders (e.g. Farnham, James and Cantrell, 2000; Kamphuis and Emmelkamp, 2000; Mullen, Pathé and Purcell, 2000). It may be that the personality disordered stalker targets ex-partners, strangers, or both. Actual stalker behaviour is also an important consideration as distinct stalker types (if indeed they exist at all) may present different levels of risk to their victims and to third parties. Further, what are the motivations that drive the behaviour of different stalkers? Can different types of stalkers be associated with distinct antecedent, alleviating and exacerbating factors?

Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000) have recently produced a detailed classification of five stalker types: rejected, intimacy seeking, resentful, predatory and incompetent. It was built on data obtained from stalkers that the authors had assessed at their specialist clinic in Australia. The classification represented an advance over previous typologies as it took a multi-axial approach, incorporating the context for the stalking and stalker motivations, the stalker's psychiatric status *and* the prior stalker-victim relationship. The need for an examination of what the stalker had to gain personally from their pursuit was recognised, as this would aid an understanding of motivation, goals and the factors that may serve to reinforce the individual stalker's aberrant behaviour. Mullen et al. posited that the context in which the stalking arose is also of importance, as it will be intrinsically related to the stalker's aims. These issues make up the first of the three axes that form the taxonomy.

The second axis involves the prior relationship between stalker and victim. These relational categories were separated into: ex-intimate partners, professional contacts, work-related contacts, casual acquaintances and friends, the famous, and strangers. The final axis was related to the stalker's psychiatric status and all of the 168 stalkers on which this classification was based were diagnosed with at least one psychiatric disorder.

Mullen et al. state that this typology aided decisions on the clinical management strategy that was adopted. For instance, it was discovered that many 'intimacy seekers' had psychotic disorders, and whilst legal measures had little effect, mental health treatment was effective in ending their campaigns. Conversely, 'rejected' stalkers (the majority of whom were ex-intimates) were more likely to react to legal

interventions. This taxonomy would appear to be a definite advance on those outlined earlier, and this is primarily for four reasons. First, it is based on sound clinical data and on a relatively large sample ($n = 168$). Second, it incorporates all the major variables (such as the psychiatric status of the perpetrator and the nature of the prior victim-stalker relationship) that were included piecemeal in the previous typologies. Third, the taxonomy includes details of the context in which the stalking began and the motivations that drive the stalking, features absent from most other classifications. Finally, this multi-axial approach has a clear practical applicability in that it has provided unambiguous guidelines for the treatment of stalkers. If the taxonomy has one major caveat, this would concern its applicability to the policing of stalkers. As the authors themselves note:

“Our system of classification... works for us but this is in the context of mental health professionals who... have no role in law enforcement” (p. 78).

STRUCTURE OF THIS PART OF THE THESIS

This final main section consists of three chapters. Chapters 10 and 11 will examine factors associated with the nature of the stalker-victim prior relationship. Specifically, Chapter 10 reviews a literature that suggests ex-intimate stalkers are the most likely subgroup to be violent toward their victims, and then provides further analyses of stalker violence and the victim-stalker prior relationship. Chapter 11 takes a social psychological angle in assessing whether there exists a positive relationship between the degree of prior intimacy between stalker and victim and the extent to which the victim is assigned blame for the situation. Finally, Chapter 12 sets forth a new

typology of stalkers which is aimed at law enforcement practitioners and which has direct implications for the management of a heterogeneous population of offenders.

CHAPTER 10

VIOLENCE AND THE PRIOR VICTIM-STALKER RELATIONSHIP

INTRODUCTION

This section of the thesis deals with classifying stalkers and their victims, and it discusses two main approaches to constructing such classifications. It is important that this distinction be noted. The current chapter, along with Chapter 11, discuss a specific method of classification, namely grouping stalking cases according to the degree of prior intimacy between the stalker and their victim. Chapter 12 differs in approach in that it presents a typology of the stalkers themselves and any information that was deemed relevant was incorporated into the classification. Thus the behaviour of the stalker, their mental health status, their motivations, the context for the stalking, relevant case management strategies, and the victim-stalker prior relationship are all factors that have been incorporated in the final chapter of this section.

A major issue in stalking research is whether the perpetrators of this crime can be characterised as harmless but misguided individuals or whether stalking is a prelude to violence against the victim. One method of researching this question is by attempting to identify subgroups of stalkers who may be more violence prone than others. Ex-partners have been singled out as one such group, with some evidence suggesting that they present a higher violence risk to their victims than do acquaintance or stranger stalkers.

In the United States, Tjaden and Thoennes (1998) surveyed a nationally representative sample of 8,000 women and 8,000 men, asking about their experiences of violence, including stalking. One in 12 of the women reported being stalked at least once, as did 1 in 45 of the men. Of those women who had been stalked, over half (59%) had been stalked by an ex-intimate, compared to 23% by a stranger (the corresponding figures for men were 30% and 36% respectively). A fifth of the women stalked by former partners reported that the stalking had begun before the relationship ended, 43% after the termination of the relationship, while 36% said it had occurred both before and after the relationship had ended. Men were more likely to be stalked by strangers and acquaintances. The mean total stalking period was longer in ex-intimate and intimate cases than in cases involving non-intimates (2.2 years, compared to 1.1 years).

The Tjaden and Thoennes survey also found a strong link between stalking and other forms of violence in intimate and ex-intimate relationships. For instance, 81% of women who were stalked by a former partner were also physically assaulted by him. Further, ex-husbands who stalked were significantly more likely than non-stalking ex-husbands to engage in controlling and emotionally abusive behaviour toward their wife while the relationship was still intact. These findings complement a survey of 120 respondents charged with domestic violence offences, of whom 30% self-reported stalking behaviours (Burgess, Baker, Greening, Hartman, Burgess and Douglas, 1997). Further, Walker and Meloy (1998) state that anecdotal and clinical reports of domestic violence clearly show that far more abusive individuals "follow, harass, surveil, and frighten their partners and ex-partners" (p. 158) than are known to the criminal justice system. These figures testify to the importance of investigations into

violence and relationship factors in stalking cases. As Burgess et al. (1997) note “Stalking behaviour is yet another repetitive interpersonal intrusive act that can have lethal consequences.” (p. 398).

Incidence of violence and the former victim-stalker relationship

Early research seemed to imply that stalkers were generally harmless obsessed individuals. Meloy (1997) reviewed 10 studies published between 1978 and 1995 where all participants had received criminal charges arising from their ‘obsessional following’. Meloy referred to Monahan and Steadman’s (1994) finding that most obsessional followers were not prone to violence, and concluded that his review findings supported this opinion, with an overall rate of violence across the 10 studies of 8.5%. Meloy even cautioned that some of the violence rates included in his review had overstated the degree of violence present because certain participants had been specifically selected for study because of their aggressive behaviour.

As more systematic investigations have been conducted into a wider range of stalker behaviour, estimates as to the danger presented by stalkers have risen. Stalkers are now being seen as typically more dangerous, with domestic stalkers presenting the highest risk. Kienlen, Birmingham, Solberg, O'Regan and Meloy (1997) found that 41% of their nonpsychotic group of stalkers acted out violently, compared to 13% of their psychotic group (although the difference didn’t reach statistical significance due to sample limitations). All violent incidents reported by Kienlen et al. involved former intimates with the exception of one stalker who had assaulted his mother.

Schwartz-Watts and Morgan (1998) reviewed the medical records of 42 individuals who had been charged with stalking in South Carolina. Violent and non-violent stalkers were assessed on a range of variables to see if there were any associations with stalker violence. The only finding that approached statistical significance was that violent stalkers were more likely to have had a previous attachment to their victims, in that sixteen of the 20 violent stalkers had had an 'amorous attachment' to their target.

Using a similar sample, Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1998) reviewed the cases of 175 individuals who were referred to a New York forensic psychiatry clinic after being charged with stalking and harassment-related offences. Cases were divided into non-violent (54%, or 94) or violent categories (46%, or 81), where "any incidence of documented physical aggression was considered to be an indicator of violence" (p. 240), then further divided on the basis of the prior relationship between harasser and victim: 'intimate', 'acquaintance', or 'none' (intimate also included familial relationships). Analyses showed that intimate harassers were most likely to carry out violent acts: 49% had exhibited violent behaviour in this category, compared to 25% in the acquaintance, and 7% in the no prior relationship subgroup.

Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993) developed an influential typology of stalkers based on 74 police case files. They found that whilst only two of the 74 had physically assaulted their victims, both of these were from their 'simple obsessional' category - the only grouping where there existed an actual prior relationship between stalker and victim. Zona et al. later reiterated (1998) that the simple obsessional grouping were

“the most dangerous” and that many of these stalking cases had followed domestic violence.

Palarea, Zona, Lane and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, (1999) analysed 223 stalker and victim pairs who had a prior relationship. Cases were divided into those who had a former intimate relationship (married, engaged, cohabiting, dating, casual sexual relationship) and those who had shared a non-intimate relationship (e.g. workmates, neighbours, clients). Former intimate stalkers were twice as likely to threaten their victims as non-intimate harassers, and significantly more likely to commit physical violence and damage property. Further, threats which were followed by actual physical violence were four times more likely to be made by former intimates.

Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stewart (1999) conducted a study of 145 Australian stalkers who had attended a forensic psychiatric clinic. They found that ‘resentful’ and ‘rejected’ stalkers were most likely to threaten their victims, and rejected stalkers were those most likely to carry out assaults. ‘Rejected’ stalkers also tended to harass their victims for longer than the other subtypes (‘intimacy seeking’, ‘incompetent’, ‘resentful’ and ‘predatory’) and had in most cases responded to the rejection of a relationship by an ex-partner. Specific psychiatric diagnoses were not found to be significantly associated with threats or violence, but non-psychotic stalkers were more likely to commit assaults. Farnham, James and Cantrell (2000) echoed this finding after assessing 50 British stalkers who were awaiting trial. Stalkers were classified as former sexual intimates, acquaintances, or strangers and serious violence against victims was defined as assault occasioning actual or grievous bodily harm, wounding, attempted murder, and murder. Former sexual intimates were by far the most violent

subgroup, with a violence rate of 70%. The authors concluded that “the greatest danger of serious violence from stalkers in the UK is not from strangers or from people with psychotic illness, but from non psychotic ex partners” (p. 199).

The studies cited above were all based on contact with or on archival data pertaining to stalkers. Other studies have focused on the accounts of the victims of stalking, and this approach has certain advantages. Ex-partner stalkers may have been under-represented in some previous works, probably as the result of the exclusive focus on erotomaniac disorders in early studies (Meloy, 1997). This exclusion may also reflect a selection bias on the part of police to arrest and prosecute more ‘high profile’ or ‘stranger’ stalkers: similar trends in prosecution have been observed in child sexual abuse cases. Victim based studies may be able to avoid these problems and present a perhaps more realistic picture. The major benefits of victim accounts are the wealth and range of data that may be obtained from persons who may or may not have reported their experiences to the authorities. Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000) stated that stalking victims are “the most reliable source of information about intimidation, threats and violence” (p. 214). The associated disadvantage is that their reports may not be forensically validated.

Despite sampling differences, victim-based studies have also found that it is ex-intimates who tend to present the highest risk of violence toward their victims. Pathé and Mullen (1997) provided the first substantive victim study, based on a group of 100 victims who had been assessed at a specialist clinic. Of these 100, ex-intimate stalkers made up 29% of the sample, 16% were strangers and 55% could be described as acquaintances. The authors found that violence had occurred in significantly more

cases when the stalker was an ex-intimate. Hall (1998) studied 145 victims of stalking who responded to a series of advertisements across the USA. Over half of their harassers (57%) were described as 'post intimate relationship stalkers', 6% as strangers, and 35% as prior acquaintances. Hall did not provide figures on the incidence of violence between these relational subgroups, but she did state that 38% of the overall sample had been hit or beaten, and 22% reported having been sexually assaulted.

Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000) stated in a review that ex-intimate stalkers are "the largest category, the commonest victim profile being a woman who has previously shared an intimate relationship with her (usually male) stalker" (p. 44). They further posit that ex-intimates are subject to the broadest range of harassment methods, and that "repeated phone calls and persistent following, threats and violence are more likely experienced by this group". They further suggest that stalkers with whom the victim had a brief romantic episode are less likely to be violent toward their victims because longer-term ex-partner stalkers have a greater emotional investment.

Current study

The present study set out to compare the frequency of violent acts perpetrated by ex-intimate, acquaintance and stranger stalkers in a sample of 95 British self-defined stalking victims. The current study considers violence by stalkers not only against the primary target of the stalker's attentions, but also toward the victim's acquaintances and relatives. It has already been noted that stalkers do not limit themselves to assaulting their victims: "The most likely victim of violence is the object of pursuit,

probably at least 80% of the time. Third parties perceived as impeding access to the object of pursuit are the next most likely victim pool” (Meloy, 1997, p. 27). It was predicted that ex-intimate stalkers would have a higher violence rate than acquaintance or stranger stalkers. The opportunity was also taken to investigate correlates of stalker violence in each of these subgroups.

METHOD

Participants

This is a descriptive study of a non-random sample of convenience of a cohort of stalking victims. Respondents were 95 individuals who had contacted the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a London-based charity concerned with the promotion of personal safety. When persons approached the Trust to complain of being stalked and to ask for advice, they were sent a questionnaire to complete, and the data derives from this. The majority of victims had heard about the Trust from newspaper reports which mentioned its work and aims, namely “to create a safer society and enable people to live safer lives, providing practical personal safety advice for everyone, everyday, everywhere.”

The 95 victims came from a wide cross-section of the British and Northern Irish community, but it cannot be assumed that they were representative of all stalking victims in the population. This is because the victims self-referred themselves to the Trust, and as such they may represent a group that are more motivated or more severely affected by their experiences than are most victims of stalking. Although the

precise response rate is unknown, Trust staff estimated it to be around 90%. The 95 victims were chosen from a sample of 102: seven were excluded as the author had doubts as to the veracity of their accounts. For instance, the claims that they made were unlikely, if not impossible (e.g. remote harassment by aliens, thought transference via electrical equipment owned by the respondent).

The research instrument

The questionnaire completed by respondents covered such issues as: basic demographic details for both victim and stalker, the nature of their prior relationship (if any), whether the stalker acted alone and had stalked before, whether the stalker had recruited others to aid their campaign, location of the harassment, duration and frequency of stalking, specific behaviours targeted toward the victim, perceived reason for the stalking, the victim's reaction, the response of the authorities, and action taken by the victim and its consequences. Additional pages were provided at the end of the questionnaire for respondents to add any further information or comments of their choosing.

Thresholds and definitions

All 95 victims whose data was included in the analyses were judged by Pathé and Mullen's (1997) criteria to be victims of stalking. That is, they had experienced repeated, unwanted intrusions via following, surveillance, approaches, and communications by letter, telephone or electronic mail. All 95 victims had described

multiple episodes of harassment which lasted for a minimum of one month, and which had involved more than one form of intrusive behaviour.

In earlier works, terms such as 'intimate' and 'acquaintance' have not been consistently applied. For instance, Harmon et al. (1998) included familial relationships in their 'intimate' category, whilst Palarea et al. (1999) did not. In this study, victims were placed in the 'ex-intimate' grouping if they had had a prior romantic relationship (boyfriend/girlfriend or spousal) with their stalker. Those in the 'stranger' group had had no contact with their stalker prior to the onset of their harassment, or at least none that they knew of. The 'acquaintance' subset had been targeted by their neighbours (15 cases), work colleagues (8), work clients (8), students (2), social contacts (2) and friends (1).

The questionnaire included a section titled 'perpetrator behaviour'. Here, respondents were provided with a list of behaviours and were asked to indicate those that had been directed toward them by the perpetrator of their harassment. Those most relevant to this study included: 'threatened me with violence', 'physically assaulted me', 'sexually assaulted me', 'attempted to kill me', 'physically assaulted a member of my family, a friend or partner', 'threatened a member of my family, a friend or partner with violence'. Thus, terms such as 'attempted murder' and 'threat of violence' were not explicitly defined, and it was left to respondents themselves to decide whether they and/or those close to them had experienced threats and attacks.

RESULTS

The victims

The sample consisted of the victims whose data is reported in Chapter 7. Ninety-two per cent of victims (87) were female and 7% (7) were male. A married couple were together classified as 'one' victim (1%), because this was how they had chosen to complete the questionnaire. The age range of victims when the stalking began was two (24 months) to 70 years (mean 33.74, SD 11.81). Three victims (3%) said that they were aged 14 or less when the stalking began and two (2%) that they were aged between 69 and 70. The majority of cases (87, or 91.6%) were reported to the Police, and 34 victims (36.1%) successfully prosecuted their stalker.

The incidence of violence and former victim-stalker relationship

Almost half of the stalkers (49%, or 47) were ex-partners of the victim, 34% (36) were former acquaintances, and 11% (12) were strangers. The incidence of physical assaults carried out by stalkers was found to be 45% for ex-intimates, 14% for former acquaintances, and 33% for stranger stalkers ($\chi^2 (2) = 15.69, p < .001$).

Frequency of violent acts across prior relationship subgroups

The finding above relates to actual physical assaults only. The questionnaire asked respondents if they had experienced more specific acts of violence. *Across* prior relationship subgroups, 16% of the 95 victims (15) said that they had experienced a physical assault, but no other specific violent act. Nine (10%) reported that their stalker had tried to kill them, but had not carried out any other violent acts. Thirteen (14%) said that their stalker had physically assault them and made an attempt on their life. Just 22 of the victims had been asked whether they had been sexually assaulted by their stalker. Of these, two said they had, and they also reported that their stalker had physically assaulted them *and* attempted to kill them. Over half of the victims (60%, or 55) said that they had experienced none of these acts at the hands of their stalker.

Analyses of victim-stalker prior relationship with additional variables

Differences between the relational subgroups

The research questionnaire asked victims to indicate whether or not their stalker had engaged in a range of intrusive activities. Respondents were also asked detailed questions about the course and nature of their stalking and about their own reaction to it. The significant findings on the relationships between stalking behaviour and degree of prior intimacy are detailed in Table 10.1.

| Table 10.1. Prior victim-stalker relationship and stalker-victim variables: significant chi-square analyses | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|
| | Ex-intimate | Former acquaintance | Stranger | Overall mean | χ^2 | <i>p</i> |
| Stalker physically assaulted victim | 45% (21) | 14% (5) | 33% (4) | 31% | 8.97 | <.02 |
| Stalker tried to kill victim | 36% (17) | 14% (5) | 17% (2) | 22% | 5.90 | <.05 |
| Stalker threatened third parties | 53% (25) | 28% (10) | 17% (2) | 33% | 8.40 | <.02 |
| Stalker approached and talked to victim | 83% (39) | 61% (22) | 17% (2) | 54% | 19.52 | <.001 |
| Stalker trespassed on victim's property | 79% (37) | 53% (19) | 75% (9) | 69% | 6.63 | <.04 |
| Stalker made silent telephone calls | 70% (33) | 44% (16) | 42% (5) | 52% | 6.81 | <.04 |
| Stalker made conversational telephone calls | 77% (36) | 47% (17) | 17% (2) | 47% | 16.79 | <.001 |
| Stalker made abusive/offensive 'phone calls | 64% (30) | 25% (9) | 25% (3) | 38% | 14.52 | <.001 |
| Stalker had mixed telephone style (i.e. engaged in both the two behaviours above) | 72% (34) | 33% (12) | 33% (4) | 46% | 24.65 | <.001 |
| Stalker sent begging/pleading letters | 68% (32) | 19% (7) | 17% (2) | 35% | 23.59 | <.001 |
| Stalker had mixed letter style (i.e. alternated | 38% (18) | 17% (6) | 17% (2) | 24% | 10.55 | <.04 |

| pleasant and offensive content) | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|---------|-----|-------|-------|--|--|
| Stalker sent gifts | 64% (30) | 42% (15) | 25% (3) | 44% | 7.58 | <.03 | | |
| Stalker used obscene language | 64% (30) | 42% (15) | 25% (3) | 44% | 7.58 | <.03 | | |
| Stalker tried to access victim information from third parties | 85% (40) | 78% (28) | 42% (5) | 68% | 10.17 | <.007 | | |
| Victim tried to reason with stalker | 68% (32) | 53% (19) | 17% (2) | 46% | 10.46 | <.006 | | |
| Stalker assisted by stalker's family/friends | 32% (14) | 44% (16) | 55% (4) | 44% | 6.12 | <.05 | | |
| Victim spoke to stalker's family | 40% (19) | 19% (17) | 8% (1) | 23% | 7.14 | <.03 | | |
| Victim tried to obtain a civil injunction | 45% (21) | 28% (10) | 8% (1) | 27% | 6.56 | <.04 | | |
| Stalker breached civil injunction | 26% (12) | 3% (1) | 8% (1) | 12% | 10.87 | <.03 | | |
| Stalker convicted for stalking activities | 39% (18) | 14% (5) | 55% (4) | 36% | 10.27 | <.02 | | |
| <i>Note:</i> Sample size = 95 in all cases, df = 2 in all cases. The numbers in brackets seen in columns two to four represent the <i>n</i> numbers for each cell. The percentage values represent the overall percentage of each subgroup who were scored positive on each variable. | | | | | | | | |

Overall, the results detailed in Table 10.1. suggest that ex-intimate stalkers were the most intrusive in their approach, and that victims were most pro-active in trying to curtail the stalking when their harasser was an ex-partner. Of the three subgroups, former intimates were significantly more likely to assault their victim, threaten third parties, try to access victim-related information from third parties, trespass on the victim's property, and contact the victim by phone and by mail. Acquaintance stalkers carried out harassing behaviours to a greater extent than stranger stalkers, but less frequently than the ex-intimates. Stranger stalkers had two distinctions: they were most likely to be assisted by their family and friends in their campaign and they had the highest rate of criminal conviction

Similarities between the relational subgroups

There were a number of variables that were *not* found to be significantly associated with prior victim/stalker relationship. Non-significant chi-square analyses were found for prior relationship and: victim age when the stalking began; stalker age when the stalking began; whether the stalker had stalked anyone else and the total duration of stalking involvement. Other aspects of stalker behaviour not found to be associated with prior relationships included: following and watching the victim; telephoning and then hanging up; sending threatening, abusive or conversational mail; defaming the victim's character; making counter allegations of stalking; trying to join the victim's social circle; involving the victim's family; bugging the victim's home; sending malicious gifts, and finally, escalation of the stalking behaviour over time. Whether the victim had altered their behaviour due to stalking, and whether the victim had

reported their case to the police were also found not to be significantly associated with prior relationship.

A number of violence-related variables were not found to be statistically associated with prior stalker-victim relationship. These were, whether the stalker had threatened the victim; sexually assaulted the victim; physically assaulted the victim's family/friends; damaged the inside or outside of the victim's home; damaged the victim's car; or stolen from the victim.

Correlates of violence

In an attempt to understand more about possible linkages between aspects of stalker violence, a number of Pearson product-moment correlations were carried out between the data on physical assaults and the data on several other violence-related variables. Not all variables were exhaustively correlated with one another, only relevant relationships as suggested by earlier studies were investigated.

Threats and violence

Threats of physical assault were found to be significantly correlated with actual physical assaults ($r(95) = .24, p=.02$), as were threats and murder attempts ($r(95) = .16, p=.01$). By contrast, sexual threats and actual sexual assaults were not significantly associated.

There was a significant relationship between threats made to third parties and associated assaults on third parties ($r(95) = .45, p < .001$). A strong correlation also existed between threats made to the victim and threats made toward third parties ($r(95) = .37, p < .001$).

Escalation

No significant associations were found between the escalation of the stalking over time (as perceived by the victim) and threats, physical and sexual assaults, murder attempts, or threats and assaults on third parties.

Interpersonal and property violence

The frequency of physical assaults did not correlate with damage to the victim's car, home, or other property.

Violence and criminal charges

As noted earlier, the stalker's activities led to them being successfully prosecuted for stalking and stalking-related offences in 36.1% of cases (34). Frequency of criminal conviction was significantly associated with physical assaults on the victim ($r(95) = .35, p = .001$) and threats made to third parties ($r(95) = .32, p = .002$) but not with sexual assaults or attempted murder of the victim, assaults on third parties, or threats made to the victim.

Criminal conviction of stalkers was however, associated with damage to the inside of the victim's property ($r(95) = .21, p=.05$), vandalism to the outside of the victim's property ($r(95) = .27, p=.009$) and damage to the victim's car ($r(95) = .26, p=.01$).

Effects of stalking

The sample had been provided with a list of adjectives and were simply asked to tick the one which best described how the stalking had made them feel. However, 41% (39) were unable to choose one particular adjective, and instead explicitly stated that they had experienced them all. Of those who were able to choose one emotion, the most frequent choice was 'fear' (18%), followed by 'terrorised' (15%). All of the remaining adjectives were chosen less frequently, i.e.: 'intimidation' (7%), 'imprisoned' (5%), 'powerlessness' (4%), 'upset' (4%), 'anger' (3%), and 'loss of self-esteem' (2%). There were no significant differences between adjectives chosen by victims who had been physically assaulted and those who had not.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the findings would suggest that the 95 respondents constituted a group with a high violence risk, with almost half having been the victim of a physical or sexual assault, a murder attempt, or combinations of these acts. This figure is substantially higher than the overall violence rate of 8.5% reported by Meloy (1997), and closer to more recent figures. For instance, forty-six percent of Harmon et al.'s (1998) stalkers had been violent toward their victims, as had 36% of Mullen et al.'s (1999) sample. As predicted, a higher proportion of ex-partner stalkers were found to act out violently

than was the case for acquaintance and stranger stalkers. This finding is a British confirmation of results produced by Australian and North American researchers as outlined in the introduction (e.g. Pathé and Mullen, 1997; Harmon et al., 1998).

Analyses of the degree of prior intimacy between stalker and victim and a host of additional variables presented a multi-faceted picture. Ex-partner stalkers utilised the widest range of harassment methods (Mullen et al., 2000), and directed the most polarised activities toward their target. For instance, they were the most likely subgroup to send letters with 'pleasant' content and to make conversational telephone calls, but they were also the most likely to try to kill their victims and make offensive or abusive telephone calls. Stranger stalkers appeared to engage in the narrowest range of harassing activities, but they were the most likely group to be assisted by family and friends in their campaign. This was surprising, given that 42% of the acquaintance stalking cases had come about as a result of neighbourhood disputes, where there may be a higher expectation that groups of harassers would be operating together. The question of whether the present finding has any wider currency or whether it is erroneous and due perhaps to amplification in the reports of distracted victims cannot be satisfactorily answered here due to sample limitations (there were but 12 stranger stalkers).

Acquaintance stalkers did not have any particularly distinctive features. They were less likely than stranger stalkers to physically attack their victims, but were more likely than strangers to threaten third parties, make telephone calls, and send gifts and letters. Thus, there was no clear positive trend between the degree of prior intimacy between victim and stalker and the scale of intrusion perpetrated by the stalker. In

terms of the steps taken by victims to curtail the stalking however, such a trend was seen. Victims were most likely to speak to the stalker and his/her relatives in an attempt to alleviate the situation if their stalker was an ex-partner, and least likely to do so if their stalker was a stranger. Some of the above findings could have quite prosaic explanations. Ex-intimate stalkers, for example, may be more likely than acquaintances and strangers to telephone their victims simply because they are more likely to have access to the victim's telephone numbers. Similarly, victims who know their stalker well may feel more confident in trying to reason with them and their family in an effort to resolve the situation.

Along with the differences found between the relational subgroups, a number of similarities were also seen. These non-significant findings may be due, at least in part, to the size of the sample. The very low number of respondents who had experienced some of the behaviours (such as sexual assault) did not allow a robust statistical analysis of further possible differences between stalker subgroups.

Additional analyses of such similarities and differences need to be conducted with a larger pool of stalking victims before any firm conclusions can be reached. There is however, at least one alternative explanation for the non-significant findings. It may be that there exists a 'core' of factors and behaviours which are common to the majority of stalking cases, regardless of the prior victim-stalker relationship.

Instances of both watching and following were not found to differ significantly across stalker subgroups and this was because these behaviours were experienced by almost all victims. Escalation over time was also found to be a common feature across almost all cases included in this study, but this was perhaps because the sample were sufficiently alarmed to contact the charitable Trust in the first instance. Further

investigations with larger and more representative samples may clarify whether there are indeed a set of 'core' factors that are common to the majority of stalking cases, despite the degree of prior intimacy between victim and stalker.

A number of statistically significant interrelations were found between aspects of stalker threats and violence. In short, these correlations indicated that when stalkers threaten their victims with violence or murder they should be taken seriously, as should threats made by stalkers toward third parties. Threats and assault in any form were not found to be related to the victim's perceived intensification of the stalking, suggesting that law enforcement should not 'wait and see' how a case develops, but should instead play an active role from an early stage. Although criminal convictions were associated with physical assaults on the victim and threats made to third parties, they were not correlated with other forms of threat, assault or attempted murder. Convictions *were* however related to vandalism and property damage.

In this sample, there were no significant differences between the nature of the victim-stalker former relationship and whether the victim reported the case to the police, but there *was* a significant difference in conviction rates. Strangers who were violent were most likely to incur a criminal conviction, followed by ex-intimates who vandalised the property of their victim. Overall, acquaintance stalkers were those least likely to be convicted. This is a finding that warrants concern, given the strength of evidence that exists to argue that levels of stalker violence are positively related to closeness of former victim-stalker relationship. However, there is at least one alternative explanation. It may be that although violence perpetrated by acquaintances is rare, when it does occur, it is more severe and therefore more likely

to warrant serious repercussions. Alternatively, it may be that stranger cases are erroneously viewed by the legal authorities as far more dangerous than ex-intimate cases (Davies and Noon, 1991; Meloy, 1997). Further analyses of other samples of actual stalking cases are necessary to resolve this.

There is a real need for thorough examination of the impact that stalking has on its victims. The current study did not investigate this area in any detail, and it did not test for the presence or absence of mental disturbance or illness in the victim. It may be argued that stalking is unlike many other intrusive crimes in that by its very nature it does not constitute a single distressing event. Rather, stalking often takes place over an extended time period. It may be expected then that the psychological toll that stalking has on its victims may differ from that experienced by the victims of other crimes that are intrusive or violent, but tend to occur just once and for a relatively short duration. The present work did ask the sample to choose an adjective that best described how the stalking made them feel. It is of note that although 33% chose 'fear(ful)' or 'terrorised', 41% stated that their experiences had made them feel fearful, terrorised, intimidated, imprisoned, powerless, upset *and* angry, as well as resulting in a loss of self-esteem. The psychological effect of stalking is an area of investigation that deserves immediate attention, as any results are likely to be of use to practitioners who work with the victims of this protracted and insidious crime.

There are a number of limitations present in the current work that need to be noted. Although the findings did replicate those from previous investigations that were based on both stalker case files and victim accounts, the present respondents were victims who had contacted a national charity with a known interest in stalking. It may be that

because of their self-referred nature, this sample may represent more motivated victims or those who have experienced more severe and prolonged harassment. As such, the sample is unlikely to represent all levels of stalking experience and so generalisations may not be made to all victims of stalking in the British population. Even so, it may be argued that victims who are more motivated to report their experiences and who have encountered perhaps the more extreme end of the stalking spectrum are likely to be those who come to the attention of the legal authorities and to clinicians, as with previous samples cited in the introduction.

Further limitations of the study concern possible confounding variables that were not known. For instance, it may be that the ex-partner stalkers in this sample had a higher rate of past convictions than did the acquaintance or stranger stalkers, or that stranger stalkers were suffering from mental illnesses that would impact on their capacity for violence. Indeed, categorising the dangerousness presented by stalkers according to prior relationship alone cannot allow an illustration of the diverse psychopathology and motivations of different stalkers.

In conclusion, the main finding of the current study was to provide British data supporting previous North American and Australian findings that ex-intimate stalkers act out violently toward their victims more often than do acquaintance or stranger stalkers. There is also need to further consider variations in conviction rates resulting from stalkers with differing prior relationships to their victim. At present, these do not seem to be associated with the level of violence likely to have occurred. Indeed, the present study has also highlighted the urgent need to consider the potentially considerable psychological distress experienced by victims of stalking.

CHAPTER 11

“THERE’S NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE”: ARE MALE EX-PARTNERS PERCEIVED AS MORE ‘ENTITLED’ TO STALK THAN ACQUAINTANCE OR STRANGER STALKERS?

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter showed that ex-partners are more likely to act out violently toward their victims than acquaintance or stranger stalkers, but are least likely to be prosecuted for doing so. Given this finding, the present chapter examines whether people assign more culpability to victims of ex-partner stalkers, relative to victims of acquaintance or stranger stalkers. It also examines one possible (social psychological) factor that might explain why this should occur, the so-called ‘Just World’ hypothesis.

Research in social psychology demonstrates that a range of factors affect how the general public perceive the seriousness of crime and how far people will attribute blame to the victim. Work on bystander intervention for instance, has shown that the level of perceived intimacy between attacker and victim negatively correlates with the likelihood that aid will be offered to the victim of an assault (e.g. Shotland and Straw, 1976). The ‘Just World’ hypothesis (Lerner, 1980) would explain these findings in terms of the attribution of blame. That is, a man who assaults his wife may be perceived as more ‘entitled’ to do so due to her past transgressions, but a stranger who makes a similar attack on a woman has no just entitlement because no history exists between the two. This chapter aims to discover whether the nature of the supposed former relationship between a stalker and victim impacted on perceptions of a typical

case of stalking. The gender of both stalker and victim was also manipulated in order to examine whether male-female and female-male stalking were perceived differently.

Research into bystander intervention was inspired by the murder of Kitty Genovese in New York in 1964. The aspect of this murder that horrified the world was the discovery that 38 of Kitty's neighbours witnessed the event, but none had responded, even by telephoning the police. The concept of the 'unresponsive bystander' was born and soon after Latané and Darley began their investigation of the phenomenon. They suggested (1969) that bystanders take their cues from others to determine their own response, and that bystanders may also decide that it is not their individual responsibility to take action by aiding the victim (diffusion of responsibility). However, it has been suggested that other factors may also be involved in bystander apathy towards attacks on women. One such is the perceived relationship between the attacker and the victim.

Bystanders stated that they failed to intervene in Kitty Genovese's killing because they believed it to be a 'lovers' quarrel' (Rosenthal, 1964). Subsequent newspaper reports have suggested that even when the witnesses did not explicitly mention the possibility of an intimate relationship between attacker and victim, the descriptions they gave suggested a belief that such a relationship existed (e.g. McFadden, 1974).

Shotland and Straw (1976) staged male attacks on women where the participant was situated in a room nearby with a telephone close to hand. The woman was violently shaken as she resisted the attack and screamed and shouted. In one condition the woman cried out 'I don't know you' and in a second 'I don't know why I ever married

you'. Interventions occurred far more frequently when participants perceived the attacker and victim as strangers (65%) rather than as a married couple (19%). Further, 30% of the female participants in the 'stranger' condition took precautions, such as locking the door to the room they were in, but this type of action did not occur in the 'married' condition. Additional experiments showed that participants perceived the victim as more likely to be injured in the 'stranger' condition, suggesting that perceptions of the potential injury to the victim were affected by the supposed victim-attacker relationship.

Shotland and Straw (1976) concluded that when a victim is attacked by a stranger, it is harder to place blame on the former than when the victim is attacked by a person known to them. A bystander can assume for example that the wife's previous behaviour led to her attack, or that she is foolish to stay married to her husband if he frequently beats her. The authors invoked the Just World hypothesis to argue that the married woman is seen as at least partially responsible for her own misfortune.

The Just World hypothesis (Lerner and Simmons, 1966) posits that unjust situations are reinterpreted to ensure a belief in a controllable and 'just world'. In a just world, people 'get what they deserve' and therefore when we become aware of a person's fate, we assimilate new information and interpret it in accordance with these so-called 'rules of entitlement'. Aspects of events, including personal attributes of the victim, will be construed so that the victim appears to 'deserve' their suffering.

Summers and Feldman (1984) investigated under which situations observers of a violent encounter would blame the victim or blame the perpetrator. Participants were

shown a videotape of a violent incident between a male attacker and a female victim. Supplementary information was varied in that the actors were described as either married, living together, or acquainted. It was discovered that as the intimacy of the relationship increased, so participants' ratings of the culpability of the female victim as the cause of the abusive behaviour also increased.

The question addressed by the present study is whether the same is true for cases of stalking. Is blame more likely to be attributed to the victim if they are an ex-partner of the stalker, rather than an acquaintance or a total stranger? Existing research would suggest that whilst ex-partners are more likely to be violent toward their victims than are acquaintance or stranger stalkers (e.g. Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stuart, 1999; Palarea, Zona, Lane and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Farnham, James and Cantrell, 2000), they are significantly less likely than strangers to be convicted for their stalking-related activities (e.g. Sheridan and Davies, in press). A possible interpretation of this is that the sentencing of stalkers reflects the workings of the Just World hypothesis. That is, the legal authorities may perceive that stalkers who are known to the victim have a greater 'entitlement' to harass them than those who share no prior history with their victim.

The current study manipulated the gender of the offender and victim in a written vignette to explore whether stalking is perceived as more severe when it is portrayed in the 'classic' form of a female victim and a male perpetrator, rather than the reverse. Studies which have examined the female-male victim ratio in stalking cases have invariably found that females appear to represent the majority of victims (e.g. both Pathé and Mullen's 1997 and Hall's 1998 victim surveys reported only 17% male

victims, while Sheridan, Davies and Boon's 2000 survey of male members of the public found that stalking had been experienced by just 7%). Sex differences in criminal participation have been described as so sustained and marked as to perhaps form the most significant feature of recorded crime (e.g. Wootton, 1959; Heidensohn, 1985). Statistics world-wide have long demonstrated that recorded crime is predominantly a male activity. However, when women do engage in criminal activity of a pseudo-sexual nature, are their actions taken seriously? A number of studies have concluded that in general, female criminals receive lesser sentences than do their male counterparts (e.g. Angira, 1991; DeSantis and Kayson, 1997) and it is widely accepted that male offenders are far more likely than female offenders to be regarded as dangerous (e.g. Allen, 1987).

Participants were provided with a vignette that described a typical stalking case. Vignettes were identical excepting a single embedded reference to the relationship between the stalker and the victim, and the gender of the two characters. A 3x2 independent design was employed where the victim-stalker relationship had three levels (ex-intimate, acquaintance, stranger) and victim-stalker gender had two levels (female victim/male stalker, male victim/female stalker). Several predictions are made on the basis of previous findings related to bystander intervention, the Just World hypothesis, and public perceptions of female and male criminals. These hypotheses fall into two groups. First, as the supposed level of intimacy between victim and stalker increases:

- the scenario will be judged as exemplifying a less severe case of stalking, and as less likely to result in bodily injury to the victim,

- the victim will be judged as more responsible for encouraging the perpetrator's behaviour,
- police intervention will be regarded as less necessary, and
- the victim will be viewed as possessing greater ability to alleviate the situation.

The likely length of continuation of the stalking will also be examined, but no prediction as to the direction of the results is made.

Second, stalking perpetrated by a female toward a male:

- will be judged as less serious and less likely to result in injury than when exactly the same actions are directed by a male toward a female victim, and
- police intervention will be seen as less necessary than when the perpetrator is male.

Four more issues will be explored in relation to gender but no directional predictions are made. These are: perceptions of the extent to which vignette describes a stalking case, the degree of culpability attributed to the victim, how far the victim could help him / herself, and how long the situation would be likely to continue.

METHOD

Participants and design

Participants were 168 undergraduates at the University of Leicester. All were enrolled as psychology students and received no credit for taking part in the study. They

ranged in age from 18 to 54 years, with a mean age of 20.73 years (SD 5.48). One hundred and twenty (71.4%) were female; 48 were male, commensurate with the population of psychology students from which they were drawn. This study formed a 3 (prior victim/perpetrator relationship: ex-intimate, acquaintance or stranger) x 2 (perpetrator gender) independent design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the six conditions, each of which was supplied with a different version of a vignette. The participants were recruited in two ways: in a lecture theatre, and via the internet as described below.

Materials and procedure

Participants tested in person

Participants were addressed in a lecture theatre following a timetabled lecture and asked if they would like to take part in 'ongoing departmental research'. All 129 who were present agreed. The experimenter handed participants a single sheet of paper containing a vignette and seven rating scales (see example in Appendix 5). The vignettes described an incident of 'stalking' as follows:

For the past 12 months, Susan has received on average 40 letters each week from Michael. Michael also follows her to and from work regularly, and has made repeated attempts to approach her. Sometimes Michael asks Susan to go out with him, at other times he will make obscene suggestions and verbally abuse her. On six occasions, Michael has left flowers with 'Valentines' style notes attached on Susan's car windscreen. He has declared his love for her in these notes and has stated that 'I will not go away easily'. Since Michael became an employee at Susan's workplace, she has been contacted by him at least four

times each week. She has recently heard a rumour that Michael is planning to buy a property on Walnut Avenue, where Susan lives with her children.

The vignettes were identical in all six experimental conditions except for two factors.

First, the gender of both victim and perpetrator varied, so in half of the vignettes

Michael was the 'target', and in the other half the target was Susan (as above).

Second, the nature of the prior relationship between the two characters was

manipulated, by altering the penultimate sentence of the vignette. They were

described as former intimates, acquaintances (as above), or as strangers. In the ex-

intimates condition, the prior relationship was described as follows:

Since their divorce, she has been contacted by Michael at least four times each week.

And in the strangers condition:

Since Michael first noticed Susan whilst she was shopping in her local supermarket, she

has been contacted by him at least four times each week

Participants were given five minutes to read through their vignette, and were given the opportunity to raise questions. After being instructed to read the vignette at least twice, they indicated their opinions on the following seven items, using 11-point (0-10) Likert rating scales (where, for example, 0 represented 'not at all severe' and 10 represented 'extremely severe').

- How far do you think this a case of stalking?
- If you think this is a case of stalking, how severe do you believe it to be?
- How likely is this scenario to result in bodily injury to (the victim)?
- To what extent is (the victim) responsible for encouraging (the perpetrator's) behaviour?
- To what extent are police intervention/criminal charges necessary for the resolution of this case?
- How far could the actions of (the victim) alleviate the situation?
- How long do you believe this situation will continue for?

Participants tested via the internet

A further 39 participants were recruited via an Internet announcement that was posted on the University of Leicester Psychology web site. Participants recruited by this means clicked on a link that took them to the web page for the experiment. This page presented one of the six vignettes and a set of standardised instructions on completing the ratings scales. Vignettes were presented in rotation, so that each successive participant received a different scenario. Participants were asked to provide their name and e-mail address - as well as their age and sex - to ensure that no individual took part in the study more than once.

The questions, which were written in HTML, used labelled radio buttons to indicate strength of response. On completing the questionnaire, participants pressed a

'Submit' button to return their responses. A Java program was written to automate the presentation and rotation of the vignettes and to collect and record the responses in a file on the web server. All the Internet data proved to be usable, and subsequent analyses indicated no significant differences in ratings assigned by participants recruited via the internet and those recruited in the more traditional manner.

RESULTS

A three (prior victim-perpetrator relationship: ex-intimate, acquaintance or stranger) x two (gender of perpetrator) MANOVA explored participant ratings on the seven Likert scales. This gave rise to a significant interaction of prior victim-perpetrator relationship and perpetrator gender ($F(14, 304) = 2.37, p < .005$). Just one dependent variable gave rise to a significant interaction between prior relationship and perpetrator gender, namely the perceived duration of the scenario ($F(2, 157) = 6.21, p < .004$). An examination of the means revealed that: (i) respondents judged that male stalkers who were ex-partners would harass their victims for a shorter period ($M = 6.16$) than male acquaintances or strangers ($M_s = 7.48$ and 7.57 respectively), whilst (ii) female ex-partner stalkers would harass for a longer period ($M = 7.81$) than would female acquaintances or strangers ($M_s = 7.13$ and 7.25 respectively).

Three of the seven rating scales gave rise to significant univariate results concerning the main effect of the prior victim-perpetrator relationship. First, the vignette was judged to represent a case of stalking to a greater degree when the perpetrator was described as an acquaintance ($M = 8.97$) or a stranger ($M = 8.71$), rather than an ex-partner ($M = 7.94$), $F(2, 157) = 9.41, p < .001$. Second, the victim was seen as more

responsible for encouraging the perpetrator's behaviour when their harasser was an ex-intimate ($M = 3.37$) or an acquaintance ($M = 2.28$) rather than a stranger ($M = 1.64$), $F(2,157) = 12.25$, $p < .001$. Third, police intervention was felt to be more necessary when the harasser was a stranger $F(2,157) = 10.41$, $p < .001$, (M s = 5.73, 6.83 and 7.41 for the ex-partner, acquaintance and stranger conditions respectively).

The gender variation of the perpetrator and victim produced significant univariate findings on four of the seven rating scales. Bodily injury was seen as more likely to occur when the perpetrator was male ($M = 5.43$) rather than female ($M = 4.74$), $F(1,157) = 4.16$, $p < .05$. Male victims were viewed as more responsible for encouraging the perpetrator's behaviour ($M = 2.69$) than were females ($M = 2.09$), $F(1,157) = 3.90$, $p = .05$. Police intervention was judged to be necessary to a greater extent when the perpetrator was male (M s = 7.16, compared to 6.24), $F(1,157) = 9.05$, $p = .003$. Finally, male victims were judged as having a greater capacity to alleviate the situation ($M = 5.14$) than were female victims ($M = 4.40$), $F(1,157) = 5.06$, $p < .03$.

DISCUSSION

The current study has found that the perceived prior relationship between stalker and victim, and the gender of the two protagonists, significantly impacted on judgements concerning the locus of responsibility for the stalking and the extent to which the victim required external aid.

Seven hypotheses were formed concerning the level of prior intimacy between victim and stalker and perceptions of a typical stalking case. Three of these hypotheses were supported. First, the vignette was recognised as an exemplar of stalking to a greater extent when the 'stalker' was thought to be a stranger or a former acquaintance, rather than an ex-intimate. Second, the victim was judged to be more responsible for their situation when they had previous knowledge of their stalker - either as an ex-partner or as an acquaintance, and this was particularly the case for ex-partners. This indicates a positive association between perceptions of victim culpability and prior knowledge of the perpetrator. Third, police intervention was seen as most necessary for the resolution of the case when the stalker was a stranger to the victim.

Lerner's (1980) Just World hypothesis can explain these findings. Perhaps participants thought that a victim who knew their stalker bore a greater responsibility for their own harassment as they must have perpetrated some misdeed(s) in the past in order to trigger it. As the old adage goes 'There's no smoke without fire.' In a just world, no person is perceived as irrational enough to stalk someone without just cause: if everyone avoids wrongdoing, then (almost) nobody will be stalked. A just world is a reassuring one. In a just world, there is less need for the police to be called out to intervene in a domestic dispute than in a non-domestic dispute. The victim in the domestic scenario is (at least partly) responsible for their own plight, and thus *both* perpetrator and victim bear culpability and should be left to their own devices.

The former victim-stalker relationship was *not* found to be significantly related to four further variables, namely: the likelihood of injury to the victim, the power the victim had to alleviate their predicament, the perceived severity of the situation described,

and the likely duration of the case. The non-significance of the latter two variables was perhaps due to ceiling effects, with participants' mean ratings being above 7.18 in both cases (on a scale of 0-10). It is of interest however, given the recognition that the scenario was viewed as a serious and protracted situation, that participants still judged victims to be more culpable when harassed by ex-intimates. Further, the perceptions of our respondents failed to reflect the real world finding (e.g. Mullen, Pathé, Purcell and Stuart, 1999; Palarea, Zona, Lane and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Farnham, James and Cantrell, 2000) that ex-intimate stalkers present the highest risk of violence toward their victims. This would suggest that this is not an intuitive finding, and that there may be a need for police training on the dangers presented by various stalker 'types' (see previous chapter).

Seven hypotheses were put forward regarding gender of victim and stalker and participants' perceptions. Four of these were supported. Respondents judged that injury was more likely to occur when the stalker was male and his victim female; that male victims were more responsible for the stalking and could more effectively alleviate the situation, and that female victims were in greater need of police intervention.

That male stalkers were viewed as more likely to be injurious than female stalkers is not surprising, given the male perpetrator-dominated statistics and reportage on violent crime. That male victims were seen as more responsible for their plight was also predictable, given the conclusions from previous studies that male offenders are regarded as more dangerous than female offenders (e.g. Allen, 1987). Also,

participants may have been conforming to stereotypes of males as criminals and females as their modal victims.

Can the Just World hypothesis also explain these latter findings? In the real world, it would appear that the stalking of men is far rarer than is the stalking of women, and numerous media reports would support this assumption (see also Chapters 3 and 4). In a 'Just World', because men are not expected to be stalked, male stalking victims may be perceived as taking a greater share of blame than their more abundant female counterparts. The Just World hypothesis allows that an observer who expects to share the same fate as another individual are in less of a position to malign them. A just world is not necessarily a logical world, as few would try to argue that the estimated 1 in 45 men who are stalked in the United States alone (Tjaden and Thoennes, 1998) are all responsible for their plight. Male victims were also rated as having more power to assuage the situation themselves. Again, this would suggest that male victims were somehow more responsible for their predicament than their female counterparts.

Gender of victim and stalker was not related to perceptions of severity or the extent to which the scenario constituted 'stalking'. Neither was sex significantly related to the estimated duration of the stalking. This was probably due to ceiling effects, with the lowest overall mean rating for these three variables being 7.18. Future investigations could attempt to avoid ceiling effects by presenting participants with a vignette that describes an incident that is intrusive but is a more ambiguous case of stalking than that described by the current scenario.

Although stalker gender and the perceived level of former stalker-victim intimacy were not individually related to the estimated duration of the scenario, an interaction effect *was* seen. Male ex-partner stalkers were predicted to continue their harassment campaign for the shortest period, whilst female ex-partner stalkers were judged as likely to harass for the longest duration. The Just World Hypothesis is not able to account directly for this finding, although gender stereotypes may be able to do so. Male stalkers were perceived as more likely than female stalkers to inflict bodily injury. Perhaps then, participants felt that the more intense stalking methods employed by males may lead more swiftly to a dramatic climax, resulting in the earlier apprehension of male stalkers by the relevant authorities. More targeted research is necessary to clarify this

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that hypothetical victims of ex-partner stalkers are seen as having greater culpability and as requiring less outside assistance than victims of stranger stalkers. Manipulation of stalker-victim gender led to male stalkers being viewed as more dangerous than female stalkers and male victims as less defenceless than female victims. The Just World hypothesis and stereotypes of criminality are able to explain these judgements. These findings now need to be taken from the laboratory and applied to the legal system to determine whether these judgements significantly impact upon conviction rates and patterns.

CHAPTER 12

STALKER TYPOLOGIES: A LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter advances a new taxonomy of stalkers. It departs from the typologies discussed earlier in Chapter 9 in two major ways. First, it is based directly on data obtained from British victims of stalking. Second, it is aimed explicitly at law enforcement practitioners with a view to assessing and managing individual real world stalking cases. Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000) have suggested that the most valuable stalker taxonomy is the one that best serves the needs of the user group. This is a valid argument so long as typologies have been tested and are based on adequate samples. Whilst many of the classifications outlined in Chapter 9 have their origins in the fields of mental health, the system that is advanced here chapter is geared to being of greatest use to those in the law enforcement professions. That is, those who require guidance as to understanding patterns in offender motivation and deciding on the contingent course of best practice in case management.

It is worth stating the rationale behind creating a stalker classificatory system that is specifically geared toward law enforcement. Such a system should be of use in that it can help investigators to prioritise from the large number of potentially important factors present in any given case. Further, the system should enable its users to better understand the motivations behind various stalking activities. This is especially important given that the same behaviours may present different levels of danger when perpetrated by different stalker types. For example, an 'infatuation harasser' and a

'sadistic stalker' may both send unwanted flowers and letters, follow their victim, and attempt to glean information from the victim's friends and relatives. However, the motivations for these acts differ markedly. Once law enforcement officers are aware of these differing motivations, they will be equipped with relevant information pertaining to the context for the behaviour, the degree and nature of the threat (if any) faced by the victim, and the criteria for selecting and adopting case management strategies.

Chapters 7 and 8 have demonstrated that a wealth of data may be obtained from the victims of stalking themselves. It is perhaps surprising then, that the majority of the stalker classifications outlined in Chapter 9 were based on literature reviews or on case files held by the police and mental health services. There are two main problems associated with building an offender taxonomy from these types of case files. First, the sample on which the taxonomy is based will not be representative of the entire population of stalkers. Rather, it will only represent stalkers who have been charged or convicted with stalking and harassment related offences, and/or stalkers who suffer from serious mental illnesses. Second, such a classification would be forced to rely on archival data, which may be scanty, incorrect or incomplete. Although the current technique of basing a typology of stalkers on the accounts of victims also has associated pitfalls, the victims did provide abundant data pertaining to their experiences. Also, the majority of respondents supplied contact details so that their accounts could be followed up and additional information obtained.

METHOD

The methodology employed consisted of three distinct stages, and these are detailed below.

Stage one - 124 Stalking cases

An Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) accredited psychological profiler was consulted to assist in the construction of the typologies. The profiler had experience of working with the Police on relatively minor stalking cases through to those involving homicide. The author and the profiler had access to a database of 124 stalking cases, these being the cases that are described in Chapters 7 (n = 95) and 8 (n = 29). Pertinent details of these cases were detailed on questionnaires, as described in the method and findings sections of Chapters 7 and 8. To summarise, the areas explored by these research instruments explored a number of diverse facets of stalking, which included detail relating to:

- demographic data for the victim and the stalker,
- full details of the stalking: how it began; qualitative changes and constants over time,
- how the stalking ended (if applicable),
- perceived exacerbating and alleviating factors,
- the primary emotions experienced by victims and how these evolved over time,
- the reactions of significant others in the victim' life,

- the response of the professional agencies involved.

The data had originally been collected from members of two prominent UK self-help groups which had been set up to specifically aid victims and ex-victims of stalking.

Stage two - Stalker taxonomy

The profiler and author each reviewed the entire 124 case data set with a view to producing a system of classification that would be most applicable to law enforcement practitioners. Because the profiler and the author ('the raters') reviewed the data set separately, it was necessary to agree some basic assessment criteria which would best serve the needs of this objective. Two primary 'rules' were identified. The first was that, essentially, the system should be developed in a way that would best serve the investigative needs of law enforcement agencies. Specifically, that the system should be: (i) jargon-free and comprehensible for officers; (ii) readily applicable to cases as they emerge and unfold in the field; and (iii), capable of generating specific guidelines for good practice in the management of individual and unique cases. The second 'rule' was that the taxonomy relate to the 124 cases in as simple a manner as possible. It may be argued that the closer the taxonomy related to the 124 stalking cases, then the greater its accuracy and goodness of fit to real life stalking investigation.

In addition to these guidelines for developing the classification system, two further principles were adopted by the raters when they first set out to create their respective systems. The first of these was that there should be no pre-set number of stalker categories. In principle then, the raters could specify just one category that contained

all 124 stalking cases, or alternatively, define 124 categories which considered each individual case to represent a functionally distinct form of stalking. Second, there was no pre-agreement on the relative proportions of the data that would go to form each category. In other words, it was accepted that some forms of stalking may be far more prevalent than other forms.

Once the two raters had examined the data in accordance with the guidance outlined above, they independently arrived at their separate classification systems. These two systems both consisted of four categories, and further, there was a great deal of overlap between them (see part 1 of the results section below). Next, the raters discussed the respective terminology that they had employed and agreed a common nomenclature for the purpose of stage three of the analysis. When deciding upon the most appropriate terms, one particular concern took precedence. This was that the terms adopted were to be readily understandable to an audience who had no background in psychology. Finally, the two raters agreed a set of common characteristics for each of the four typologies. These characteristics were based directly on those described by the victims who completed the 124 questionnaires. In addition, the raters generated associated case management interventions, again based on the data contained in the victims' reports. Specifically, this information related to the context of and motivations for the underlying threat in any given typology, and the associated effective, non-effective, and potentially exacerbating intervention strategies.

Stage 3 - Assessing the taxonomy

This concluding phase of the analysis was aimed at testing the reliability of the new classification. A further two raters, both non-forensic psychologists, independently categorised each of the 124 cases according to the system. Inter-rater concordance rates were then calculated, and these are illustrated in the results section below.

RESULTS

Initial classifications

At the second stage of the method, the two raters produced provisional stalker categorisations from the 124 cases. These emerged as follows (in order of perceived prevalence, most prevalent listed first):

| Profiler | Author |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Ex-intimate stalking | The ex-partner harasser/stalker |
| Infatuation harassment | The romantic attachment stalker |
| Delusional fixation stalking | The psychotic stalker |
| Sadistic stalking | The psychopathic stalker |

Agreed terminology

Following discussion, the titles of the four main typologies was agreed as follows:

Ex-partner harassment/stalking

Infatuation harassment

Delusional fixation stalking

Sadistic stalking.

Reliability assessment

As described above, the 124 real-life sample stalking cases were assessed by two independent raters who were asked to divide them in accordance with the new typologies. Table 12.1 shows that there were high levels of concordance among the raters. This would suggest that the inherent reliability of the system was also high.

Table 12.1: Inter-rater reliability assessment

| | Author 1: ACPO accredited profiler | Author 2: Stalking researcher | Independent rater 1: Non-forensic psychologist | Independent rater 2: Non-forensic psychologist |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Author 1: ACPO Accredited profiler | / | 98.4% | 96% | 95.2% |
| Author 2: Stalking researcher | 98.4% | / | 95.2% | 94.4% |
| Independent rater 1: Non-forensic psychologist | 96% | 95.2% | / | 92.7% |
| Independent rater 2: Non-forensic psychologist | 95.2% | 94.4% | 92.7% | / |

The typologies

On the basis of the 124 stalking cases, the raters produced a stalker classification system. There are four major stalker typologies, two of which are comprised of two further sub-sections. The system was geared toward law enforcement practitioners and as such, the characteristics of each category are followed by unambiguous suggestions for case management. These suggestions originated from an assessment of measures that had been shown to be successful and unsuccessful in the 124 stalking cases. The extent to which each category was represented in the sample of 124 cases is shown in parentheses following their respective titles. These were calculated on the basis of the mean average ratings of the four raters who took part in phase 3 of the analysis.

Typology 1: Ex-partner harassment/stalking (50%)

Characteristics

- bitterness/hate = linked to relationship's history (past orientation)
- hot-headed anger/hostility (cf. sadist's cold need for control)
- prior relationship involving domestic violence which turns to more public violence and verbal abuse
- overt threats, particularly where placed in conjunction with recrimination and reference to perceived issues of contention
- recruitment of friends and family to perpetuate a campaign of hate
- motivating issues relate to custody/property/finance (associated issues of power/control/freedom)
- new relationships engender jealousy and aggressive behaviour
- third party abuse (verbal and physical), e.g. family members of and known supporters of the victim
- partisanship on both sides
- nature of harassment characterised by: high levels of physical violence, high levels of verbal threat, property damage
- triggers for harassment both spontaneous (e.g. following a chance encounter) and pre-meditated (e.g. sitting in a car outside the victim's home)
- activity tending towards being anger driven and impulsivity with corresponding lack of concern about coming to Police attention

- perpetrator age emerged as diverse and reflective of time of onset of strife in relationship

Case management implications

- high risk of violence
- high risk of property damage
- generalised anger, but the results show a need to take seriously any specific threats made
- any unnecessary retaliation - financial, legal, physical or verbal - should be curbed to an absolute minimum
- victim should avoid wherever possible frequenting same venues as offender
- in extremis consider re-location with physical distance being even more important than secrecy

Typology 2: Infatuation harassment (18.5%)

Characteristics

- target is 'beloved' rather than 'victim'
- beloved is all pervasive in thoughts
- world and events are interpreted in relation to beloved
- beloved is focus of fantasy
- focus of fantasy romantic and positive
- intense yearning (cf. anger)
- particular emphasis on hope of what might be (future orientation)
- beloved sought out with *non-malicious* ruses e.g. billet-doux under windscreen wiper, hanging around and pretending it's a chance encounter, quizzing friends and associates regarding any aspects of the beloved
- low levels of danger
- harassment *not* characterised by threats, macabre gifts and negative intervention (cf. sinister and intrusion of sadist below)
- perpetrator age typically teenage or mid-life

Case management implications

Young love

- Elevation of the cognitive perspective
 - careful and thorough explanation regarding the law and how upsetting the whole thing is to the victim
 - adoption of sympathetic stance in explaining how the relationship has been misconstrued

Midlife love

- Again cognitive elevation but with:
 - possible exploration of placing physical distance between parties e.g. a work transfer
 - also address possible difficulties resulting from 'storge' or discord in existing relationship through counselling

Typology 3: Delusional fixation stalking (15.3%)

Where dangerous

Characteristics

- stalker tends to be incoherent yet victim fixated (orientation toward the present)
- victim tends to be at high risk of physical violence and sexual assault
- perpetrator likely to have come to the notice of police and mental health e.g.
borderline personality disorder, episodic schizophrenia
- perpetrator likely to have a history of sexual problems and offences, including
stalking
- activity is characterised by the incessant bombarding with telephone calls, letters,
visits to workplace
- behavioural patterns lacking in coherence, appearing in diverse places, at irregular
times
- content of material sent by and conversation of perpetrator => unsubtle,
sexual/obscene, and disjointed semantically
- stalkers tend to couch their statements of love in terms of sexual intent towards
victim (cf. romantic stance of infatuated harasser)
- stalkers held belief in relationship even though there has been no prior conversation
- victims are male or female and tend to have some form of elevated/noteworthy
status:
 - professionals (e.g. GPs, University lecturers)

- celebrities (ibid.)
- unfamous but local and attractive figures

Case management implications

- not responsive to reason or rejection
- refer to a forensic psychiatrist for assessment (although likely to have been assessed already)

Where less dangerous

Characteristics

- stalkers hold the delusional conviction that there is an extant, idealised relationship (present and future orientation)
- stalker scarcely knows victim
- activity not characterised by threats - just the stated belief that the victim wants to be with him (cf. sadistic stalkers' similar statements but with sinister twists such as "in heaven" or simply as a means of accentuating the victim's feelings of despair that nothing works)
- stalker not amenable to reason from the victim (cf. (i) infatuation harassment where clarity can attenuate the behaviour and (ii) sadistic stalking where the perpetrator consciously exploits non-response to victims' appeals as a means of demonstrating helplessness)

- stalker capable of a complete construction of a fantasy of an extant, reciprocated relationship as though victim was in accord and consensual
- in the event of an eventual submerged perception that relationship is not fitting with the perpetrator's deluded perception - with rationalisation that it is someone else's fault (e.g. victim's husband putting demons in her head)
- in the event of an individual being identified as thwarting the relationship, there is contingent element of danger - particularly where that individual is perceived by the stalker as being dangerous to victim
- victims tended to be female professionals

Case management implications

- victim should seek legal remedy
- victim should be advised not to respond as far as possible
- if absolutely necessary to respond to the offender, the victims should be advised to do so with a clear negation of the situation and non-angry requests for him to go away
- again if absolutely necessary to respond to the offender, the victim should never argue and keep the encounter down to a minimum
- legal agencies should be aware that the stalker is not responsive to reason or rejection

Typology 4: Sadistic stalking (12.9%)

Characteristics

- victim is an obsessive target of the offender, and who's life is seen as quarry and prey (incremental orientation)

- victim selection criteria is primarily rooted in the victim being:

(i) someone worthy of spoiling, i.e. someone who is perceived by the stalker at the commencement as being:

- happy

- 'good'

- stable

- content

and (ii) lacking in the victim's perception any just rationale as to why she was targeted

- initial low level acquaintance
- apparently benign initially but unlike infatuation harassment the means of intervention tend to have negative orientation designed to disconcert, unnerve, and thus take power away from the victim

- notes left *in* victim's locked car in order to unsettle target (cf. billet-doux of infatuated harassment)

- subtle evidence being left of having been in contact with the victim's personal items
e.g. rifled underwear drawer, re-ordering/removal of private papers, cigarette ends left in ash trays, toilet having been used etc.

- 'helping' mend victims car that stalker had previously disabled

- thereafter progressive escalation of control over *all* aspects (i.e. social, historical, professional, financial, physical) of the victim's life
- offender gratification is rooted in the desire to extract evidence of the victim's powerlessness with inverse implications for his power => sadism
- additional implication => self-perpetuating in desire to hone down relentlessly on individual victim(s)
- emotional coldness, deliberateness and psychopathy (cf. the heated nature of ex-partner harassment)
- tended to have a history of stalking behaviour and the controlling of others
- stalker tended to broaden out targets to family and friends in a bid to isolate the victim and further enhance his control
- communications tended to be a blend of loving and threatening (not hate) designed to de-stabilise and confuse the victim
- threats were either overt ("We're going to die together") or subtle (delivery of dead roses)
- stalker could be highly dangerous - in particular with psychological violence geared to the controlling of the victim with fear, loss of privacy and the curtailment of her social world
- physical violence was also entirely possible - especially by means which undermine the victim's confidence in matters normally taken for granted e.g. disabling brake cables, disarming safety equipment, cutting power off
- sexual content of communications was aimed primarily to intimidate through the victim's humiliation, disgust and general undermining of self-esteem

- the older the offender, the more likely he would have enacted sadistic stalking before and would not be likely to offend after 40 years of age if not engaged in such stalking before
- victim was likely to be re-visited after a seeming hiatus

Case management implications

- should be taken very seriously
- acknowledge from outset that the stalker activity will be very difficult to eradicate
- acknowledge that there is no point whatsoever in appealing to the offender - indeed will exacerbate the problem
- never believe any assurances, alternative versions of events etc. which are given by the offender
- however, record them for use in legal action later
- the victim should be given as much understanding and support as can be made available
- the victim should not be given false or unrealistic assurance or guarantees that s/he will be protected
- the victim should carefully consider relocation. Geographical emphasis being less on distance per se, and more on where the offender is least able to find the victim
- the police should have in mind that the sadistic stalker will be likely to:
 - (i) carefully construct and calculate their activity to simultaneously minimise the risk of intervention by authorities while retaining maximum impact on victim,

(ii) be almost impervious to intervention since the overcoming of obstacles provides new (iii) and potent means of demonstrating the victim's powerlessness (and thus is self-perpetuating) and,

(iii) if jailed will continue both personally and vicariously through the use of a network.

Overview of the new system

An overview of the entire system as listed above is provided in Table 12.2. This table has been constructed in a form most appropriate for law enforcement practitioners.

Table 12.2: Overview of classification system

| Category and <i>Status</i> | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| | Ex-partner <i>Harassment/ Stalking</i> | Infatuation <i>Harassment</i> | Delusional -fixated <i>Stalking</i> | Sadistic <i>Stalking</i> |
| Attribute | | | | |
| Duration | Long term | Short (if addressed) | Long (while in vicinity) | Long |
| Victim perception | Anger/fear/ hate | Nuisance/ Embarrassment | Fear/ bewilderment | Fear/ helpless |
| Victim risk | Proximity/ personal circumstance dependent | Low | High | High |
| Ability to intervene | Potential | High | Low | Very low |
| Techniques to minimize threat (eg) | re-location (distance criterion) reasonable settlements | Sensitive explanation (young)/job re- location (adult) | Perpetrator referred to forensic psychiatrist | Secret re- location/ maximum support |
| Motive | Hate/resentment | Love | Fixation | Control |
| Victim selection criteria | Hate/ resentment/ resources | Object of desire | Proximity/ physical attraction | Lack (sic.) of apparent obvious reason |
| Probability of victim re-visit | Geography/ circumstance specific | Low | Opportunity related | Very high |

ANALYSES

A series of chi-square analyses were carried out between the data on the 124 stalking cases as detailed in Chapters 7 and 8 and the four typologies. The significant results are provided in Table 12.3 on the following page.

Table 12.3: Stalker category and stalker-victim variables: significant chi-square analyses

| | Infatuation harasser | Ex-partner stalker/ harasser | Delusional fixation stalker | Sadistic stalker | Mean % | χ^2 | <i>p</i> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Had stalker stalked any other person(s)? | 52.2% (12) | 41.9% (26) | 10.5% (2) | 37.5% (6) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker approached victim? | 52.2% (12) | 83.3% (50) | 68.4% (13) | 37.5% (6) | 60.4 | 16.12 | <.01 |
| Had stalker trespassed on victim's property? | 52.2% (12) | 83.6% (51) | 42.1% (8) | 68.8% (11) | 61.2 | 15.53 | <.01 |
| Had stalker made silent telephone calls? | 39.1% (9) | 76.7% (46) | 42.1% (8) | 50% (8) | 52 | 18.92 | <.01 |
| Had stalker made conversational calls? | 39.1% (9) | 76.7% (46) | 26.3% (5) | 18.8% (3) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker made offensive calls? | 30.4% (7) | 70% (42) | 10.5% (2) | 12.5% (2) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker made pleasant and unpleasant calls? | 39.1% (9) | 76.7% (46) | 10.5% (2) | 18.8% (3) | / | / | / |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| Had stalker sent threatening mail? | 21.7% (5) | 45% (27) | 21.1% (4) | 12.5% (2) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker sent pleading mail? | 17.4% (4) | 70% (42) | 15.8% (3) | 6.3% (1) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker sent conversational mail? | 13% (3) | 33.3% (20) | 10.5% (2) | 6.3% (1) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker sent pleasant and unpleasant mail? | 8.7% (2) | 46.7% (28) | 15.8% (3) | 6.3% (1) | / | / | / |
| Had stalker sent gifts? | 34.8% (8) | 66.7% (40) | 42.1% (8) | 18.8% (3) | / | / | / |
| Did the stalker use obscene language? | 39.1% (9) | 63.3% (38) | 42.1% (8) | 25% (4) | / | / | / |
| Did the stalker threaten the victim? | 34.8% (8) | 70% (42) | 42.1% (8) | 37.5% (6) | 46.1 | 12.45 | <.01 |
| Was the victim physically assaulted? | 4.2% (1) | 55% (33) | 10.5% (2) | 37.5% (6) | / | / | / |
| Did the stalker try to kill the victim? | 0 | 38.3% (25) | 5.3% (1) | 43.8% (7) | / | / | / |
| Did the stalker involve the victim's family? | 47.8% (11) | 68.9% (42) | 31.6% (6) | 31.3% (5) | 44.9 | 12.94 | <.01 |
| Were friends/family of the victim assaulted? | 0 | 28.3% (17) | 5.3% (1) | 6.3% (1) | / | / | / |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------|-------|------|
| Were friends/family of the victim threatened? | 0 | 55% (33) | 15.8% (3) | 6.3% (1) | / | / | / |
| Was the victim's home damaged? | 17.4% (4) | 50% (30) | 10.5% (2) | 25% (4) | / | / | / |
| Was the victim's car damaged? | 34.8% (8) | 55% (33) | 15.8% (3) | 18.8% (3) | / | / | / |
| Was the victim's home bugged? | 4.3% (1) | 8.3% (5) | 10.5% (2) | 31.3% (5) | / | / | / |
| Did the victim try to reason with the stalker? | 56.5% (13) | 65% (39) | 42.1% (8) | 18.3% (3) | / | / | / |
| Did the victim speak to the stalker's family? | 21.7% (5) | 46.7% (28) | 10.5% (2) | 0 | / | / | / |
| Did the victim inform their telephone company? | 56.5% (13) | 30.5% (18) | 73.7% (14) | 62.5% (10) | 55.8 | 14.15 | <.01 |
| NB. In some cases the expected cell count frequencies were <5, and so in these cases, the chi-square analyses have been omitted. | | | | | | | |

Most of the findings detailed in Table 12.3 were to be expected. For instance, infatuation harassers only very rarely resorted to physical violence, whilst over two thirds of the ex-partner stalkers physically assaulted their victims. Sadistic stalkers were the least likely category to implicate themselves by sending missives and gifts to their victims, whilst they were the most likely grouping to place listening devices in their victim's home. Indeed, the results detailed in Table 12.3 contained few surprises, given that the stalker taxonomy derived from this same data set. Even so, some of the findings did not entirely correspond to the stalker categories as outlined above. For instance, the infatuation harasser is described as presenting a low risk of violence, yet the table indicates that eight (35%) threatened their victims. This can be explained by the fact that the more subtle differences between, for instance, infatuation harassers and sadistic stalkers were masked by the crudeness of the variables listed in the table. Infatuation harassers, for example, were seen to make threats in the 'heat of the moment' and which they did not later act upon. The threats made by sadistic stalkers on the other hand, were likely to be both disturbing and acted upon (although a relatively long duration was usually seen between a sadistic stalker's threats and any actual violence).

Many of the chi-square analyses fell just short of significance, probably due to the relatively small sample size and in some cases, low cell frequencies. Others were not significant due to floor and ceiling effects. For instance, only one stalker informed his victim that the stalking had ended (floor effect), and all of the victims reported being frightened by their stalker (ceiling effect). There were however, a number of trends seen in the expected direction. Ex-partner stalkers for example, were the group who

were most likely to be aided by others. Further analyses are necessary with a larger victim sample.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this work was to produce a classificatory system of stalking that would best serve the needs of law enforcement agencies. A particular objective was to provide a system which could aid the comprehension of the offender behaviour of stalkers and to use this understanding to provide clear strategies for the management of individual cases. It is important to note that the current taxonomy is not being put forward as in any sense 'superior' to the classification systems detailed in Chapter 9. Rather, its distinction is that it had been developed to specifically suit the needs of law enforcement officers who are tasked with investigating stalking crimes.

There are three major concerns to be addressed when assessing the utility of the current system. First, there is the question of its reliability, in respect of whether the taxonomy may be consistently applied to real life stalking cases by different raters. Second, it is necessary to assess whether the system is readily comprehensible. Table 12.1 above shows that there existed high levels of agreement across four raters as to which of 124 stalking cases represented examples of the four stalking categories. Given that two of the raters did not have a background in forensic psychology, these results would suggest that the taxonomy was not difficult to apply and that the language employed was not confusing to users. However, these two raters were psychologists, not police officers, and so it is suggested that the same reliability

exercise be conducted using police officers, given that these are the user group at whom the typology is aimed.

The third and final assessment of the system's validity is whether the categories can accurately identify different stalkers and suggest appropriate case management suggestions. This has not been dealt with in this chapter. To make this type of assessment it would be necessary to monitor how effectively the taxonomy can be deployed by police officers in real-life cases. Although preliminary, early indications and comments from professionals involved in both identifying stalkers and handling stalking cases have been encouraging. There are also indications that the system can be helpful across different legal systems - positive feedback has been received from officers working in the US (Maxey, 2000; Wells, 2000) as well as the UK (Brown, 2000).

As described earlier, one potentially attractive feature of a typology of the type set out here is that a given individual stalking act can, in isolation, correspond with more than one type of stalker. However, viewing that act as part of the more general framework of a 'type' of stalker has important case management implications. A more detailed example of how one particular stalking behaviour can be interpreted differently according to stalker category will now be provided. Previous work (see Chapters 2 and 3) has shown that it is common for stalkers and harassers to send letters and notes to their victims. The nature of this type of communication however, will differ, depending on which category of stalker wrote the letters or notes. An ex-partner stalker/harasser would be most likely to send a communication that was volatile in tone and which referred to the ownership of property, possessions, parental access and

rights and past grievances such as extra-marital affairs. In contrast, written communications sent by an infatuated harasser would tend to be of a 'harmless' and romantic nature. Letters sent by a delusional-fixated stalker to their victim would differ again in that the content would likely be incoherent with a strongly sexual element. Finally, a sadistic stalker's written communications may on the face of it appear to be relatively innocuous. When taken in context however, with other reports and evidence from the case, it is likely that these letters would actually be threatening. Unlike letters sent by the other stalker types, those written by a sadistic stalker would be carefully couched so as to contain no direct threat that could later be used as evidence against the stalker. What this example illustrates is that it is not sufficient just to examine the actual behaviour of a stalker. Rather, any stalking investigation should aim to look beyond the physical evidence and into the context for the individual offender's behaviour. What may at first seem to be innocuous may actually represent a threat to the victim, whilst a barrage of 'romantic' material may be no more than harmless longings in written form.

The typology would indicate that all of the stalker types, with the exception of the infatuation harasser, have the potential to be a danger to their victim. The nature of the danger and factors that are likely to trigger it however, differ across the categories. Ease of prediction of the level and the likelihood of danger presented by the three 'dangerous' stalker types will also differ. The most predictable of the three is the ex-partner stalker/harasser. Examination of the 124 stalking cases revealed that physical proximity between stalker and victim, legal disputes and chance meetings all emerged as triggers for both verbal and physical abuse. Ex-partner stalkers also emerged as the group for which means of avoiding stalker danger were easiest to implement.

Included among effective case management strategies were measures which limited any chance of grievances being aired and re-aired (such as the victim removing further items of furniture from the former marital home) and placing increased geographical distance between the stalker/harasser and their target.

In those cases classified as sadistic stalking however, putting geographical distance between stalker and victim was not usually seen to have any beneficial effect. Instead, attempts made by the victim to hide from a sadistic stalker tended to cause an intensification of the stalker's activities and a more determined effort to impact upon all aspects of the victim's life. Only two victims in this group were actually seen to 'escape', and in both cases this was due to the victim relocating to secret addresses over 300 miles away, with the help of the police. Both of these victims still expressed the belief that their stalker would eventually track them down. The main factor that distinguished the sadistic stalker from the other three stalker groups was the planned, calculated, meticulous aspect to their approach (for a full description of the sadistic personality and its relationship to stalking see Boon and Sheridan, in press).

As outlined above, the delusional fixated stalker is, in contrast to the sadistic stalker, more likely to have committed and continue committing criminal offences. Although the delusional fixated stalker did not emerge as having the meticulous and planned approach of the sadistic stalker, they still demonstrated that they posed a definite risk to their victims. Those intervention techniques that did appear to alleviate the activities of the delusional fixated perpetrator tended to come from a mental health management approach, such as ensuring that the offender was taking their prescribed medication. In the 'less dangerous' sub-group of delusional fixated stalkers there was

little evidence that any intervention was effective in eradicating the offender's fixation on the victim. As in other studies relating to erotomania there was however some evidence that over lengthy time periods the offender eventually can change his/her perspective regarding the victim's motivation.

This latter point be illustrated by an example from one of the 124 cases. A married male formed a delusional fixation for a married female bank clerk whom he barely knew. His delusional orientation moved over time through three phases. Initially he behaved as if she would immediately leave her husband for him. After several weeks he came to believe that she refused to leave the family home as she did not want to cause her husband to be upset. Several months later, the stalker's orientation changed again. Now he felt that the target's husband was putting voices into her head to prevent her from having a relationship with the offender. The stalker did not threaten his victim or her husband at any point, but the fixation did continue for many more months and the offender's own working and family life suffered considerably.

LIMITATIONS

It is likely that the 124 cases on which the taxonomy was based are not representative of all stalking cases in a given population. All 124 victims had self-referred to anti-stalking charities, and as a result may represent the more severe cases of stalking.

Therefore, the true proportion of sadistic stalkers may be lower than the figure of 8% produced by the current sample. There is some evidence for this argument. In the first year of its enactment, 2,165 persons were convicted under the Protection from Harassment Act, and not all of these had been charged with stalking activities. In the

sample described in Chapter 7 alone, 27 of 95 of the stalkers were convicted expressly for stalking their victims. When this data is compared with the prevalence data from Chapter 3 which suggests that 24% of British women have been stalked at least once in their lifetime, it may be plainly seen that the 124 cases are representative of the more serious stalking cases that are likely to be reported to the police. The nature of these cases however, fits with the aims of the stalker taxonomy. Because the system is aimed at law enforcement practitioners, it was prudent to base the system upon those cases that are most likely to be reported to, and subsequently investigated by, the police.

SUMMARY

This section of the thesis has produced a number of interesting findings that go some way towards classifying stalkers, stalking, the likely severity of a stalking episode, and also public perceptions of the latter. The current chapter provided a means of classifying stalkers, with particular reference to the likely implications of this classification for policing techniques. Consistent with this, Chapter 10 provided data indicating that ex-intimate stalkers are more likely to act violently towards their victims, but are also perhaps less likely to be convicted as a consequence of this. Chapter 11 provided at least one possible explanation as to why this should be so, namely the 'just world' hypothesis. As argued in Chapter 9, any attempt to classify stalking behaviour and its consequences is to a certain extent only of practical use if it can be used to predict which cases are likely to represent particular danger to the victim, provide law enforcement agencies with some idea of best practice in minimising these risks, and alert these same agencies to the potential (incorrect) biases

that their staff may employ in assessing instances of stalking. This final research section has achieved these aims.

As noted at the beginning of this thesis, one of the potentially most dangerous aspects of stalking is that it constitutes what might be regarded as individually innocuous acts. Appropriate means of classifying these disparate behaviours as instances of stalking of varying severity they may help to shed some light upon legal practice and even assist in future developments of this. Research on classifications of stalking may also provide some insight regarding the public's perception of anti-stalking interventions, and ultimately the extent to which they are prepared to support the enhancement of these.

CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSIONS

The past decade has seen sudden moves in the developed world to legislate against stalking, such that legislators have failed to take into account the nature of the crime and have essentially outlawed an unknown quantity. Many authors have argued that the nebulous nature of the crime is the main difficulty associated with legislating against stalking. Indeed, this issue has caused concern to legislators engaged in drawing up legal definitions of the crime. The first section of this thesis however has demonstrated that stalkers do in fact engage in similar patterns of behaviour, and moreover, that the general public hold shared ideas on what does and does not constitute a stalking act. This is despite there being no definition of stalking supplied in English and Welsh or in Scottish law. Further, although researchers and clinicians do not share a definition of stalking, they are researching the same phenomenon in that studies have investigated the activities of individuals who carry out similar patterns of behaviour.

Section 1 employed three differing methodologies: a review of the literature, questionnaire surveys of both female and male members of the British population and an experimental study. When taken together, the results of these investigations suggested that the England and Wales Protection from Harassment Act 1997 represented perhaps the most favourable type of anti-stalking sanction, simply because it fails to offer a strict definition of stalking. The modal Australian and US anti-stalking legislation were limited in that they required intent on the part of the stalker or that a strict definition of stalking behaviour be met. Stalking is an extraordinary

crime in that it often consists of no more than the targeted repetition of what is ostensibly routine and harmless behaviour, and theoretically, any behaviour can represent a stalking act. The first section of this thesis then, has provided evidence that respondents understood what constituted a stalking crime, that lay persons were proficient in interpreting and applying anti-stalking laws of varying complexity, and that it is not possible to capture the diverse forms of stalking via a highly prescriptive legal definition. These issues have been shown to be worthy of study and as having practical application and public interest given the relatively high prevalence rates of stalking behaviour indicated by the studies detailed in Chapters 3 and 4.

The findings from Section 2 of the thesis added further weight to the argument that it would not be prudent to seek to legally define and thus prosecute a series of tightly defined 'stalking' activities. This is because two surveys of actual stalking victims revealed that there is essentially no such thing as a 'stalking' act. The majority of respondents reported that they had been watched, followed and approached and that the stalker had trespassed on their property. However, the same respondents reported that their stalker had also engaged in a variety of less common stalking methods, such as posting insects through their letterboxes, moving their garden furniture, unearthing human remains and depositing them on their doorsteps, placing statues in their front gardens and buying the house next door to where they lived. Essentially, when the findings from Sections 1 and 2 of this thesis are considered together, they would suggest that *any* behaviour may be interpreted as a stalking behaviour, so long as it is repetitive, intrusive and unwanted.

Furthermore, Section 2 provided a preliminary picture of the experiences of stalking victims in the United Kingdom. The most important conclusion reached by the two victim surveys was that any person can become a victim of stalking, and that the stalkers themselves are a diverse and nebulous group.

Given that Section 2 provided the first UK overview of what stalking actually consists of and how it can develop over time, Section 3 set out to provide a new classification of stalkers. Unlike earlier classifications, the taxonomy presented in Chapter 12 was explicitly created for the use of law enforcement practitioners, and offered recommendations for the management of individual stalking cases. The typology was constructed via an assessment of the real life stalking cases that formed the basis of Chapters 7 and 8. This methodology resulted in a deeper understanding of the course and nature of stalking in the United Kingdom, as it allowed further analysis of the importance of individual factors. For instance, although factors that may exacerbate or alleviate an individual stalker's behaviour were listed in Chapter 8, no clear conclusions could be reached nor recommendations made. This was because the same measures appeared to cause some stalkers to intensify their campaigns, whilst having the reverse effect on others. With the development of the new stalker taxonomy, it became clear that different measures had varying effects according to the type of stalker involved, and these factors were incorporated into the taxonomy. Thus, only with this refinement did some of the earlier data become of practical utility.

Chapters 10 and 11 concentrated on just one factor by which stalkers and their victims may be classified, that is, the nature of any prior relationship between them. Evidence that ex-partner stalkers are the relational group who were most likely to act out

violently toward their victims was provided in Chapter 10, even though it was stranger stalkers who were most likely to be convicted for their stalking activities. The data and the earlier literature also suggested that as a whole, stalkers are not misguided and essentially harmless individuals, but are instead a criminal population who pose a high risk of danger and injury toward those they target. Chapter 11 investigated why this may be, via a vignette study. Social psychological theory accounted for the misattribution of stalkers' behaviour, in that people believe in a 'just world' and if a person is stalked by someone known to them, then the victim must be culpable to some extent due to their own past misdemeanours. Conversely, if there exists no shared history between victim and stalker, then the victim is perceived as less culpable as they have had no opportunity to contribute to a potentially abusive situation.

There are at least four limitations to the research reported in this thesis. The first is that the research has relied heavily on questionnaire data and on the accounts of stalking victims, the majority of which were uncorroborated by police files or any alternative sources. In particular it is difficult to produce reliable prevalence rates concerning stalking given that the victims in the present study were self-nominated: those members of the public who declined to complete the questionnaires (distributed in an attempt to produce prevalence data) may have done so because they had not been stalked themselves and consequently lacked the motivation to participate in research. Nevertheless, it proved impossible to devise methods that might alleviate this difficulty within the time and resource constraints endemic to postgraduate research (in addition to those practical and ethical constraints imposed by researching experiences of stalking that are of course very upsetting to victims). Future research however may be able to overcome these difficulties through improved access to

victims, utilising the contacts made during the research presented here, and the potential to carry out larger-scale studies over longer time periods.

A second limitation of the research presented here is caused by Scotland enjoying a different legal system to that of England and Wales. At the risk of oversimplification, convictions for stalking-related behaviours in Scotland are usually made under that country's widely-drafted Breach of the Peace legislation. As such, it is possible that Scottish stalkers and victims of stalking might perhaps exhibit different behaviours and responses to their English and Welsh counterparts. Despite this, Scottish participants were not differentiated in the present research: this was (a) because participants may not have lived in Scotland all their lives and (b) because of the importance attached throughout the research to safeguarding participant anonymity (in an attempt to minimise any opportunity for stalkers to use the present data in an attempt to track down victims who have re-located). It is only possible to speculate on how responses from participants living in Scotland might differ from the sample as a whole.

Another limitation is that the thesis has not included any data obtained directly from stalkers themselves. This was for two main reasons. First, stalkers are difficult to identify as no specialist clinics or self-help groups aimed specifically at stalkers currently exist in the United Kingdom (although one clinic is in the process of being established). Even with the help of the legal authorities, the most dangerous and violent stalkers are difficult to identify within the criminal justice system as they may have been charged with crimes other than harassment, such as rape or murder. The second reason for not conducting interviews with stalkers is that the author, not being

a clinician, was unqualified to approach and attempt to build a rapport with individuals who may potentially be disturbed and dangerous. British research in this area is particularly scarce, and it is recommended that suitably knowledgeable, qualified clinical researchers undertake detailed observations of this intriguing population.

Finally, the findings from this thesis are to a large extent preliminary, and so need to be tested in real world circumstances. For example, the validity of the stalker typology advanced in Chapter 12 should be assessed by the user group at which it was aimed, namely law enforcement officers. This group are best able to assess whether the classification could be easily applied to the investigation of stalking cases and whether the contingent case management suggestions are appropriate. Although at an early stage, the San Diego Police Department have utilised the system in officer training, and initial feedback has been encouraging. Personal communications (Maxey, 2000; Wells, 2000) suggest that the classification could be smoothly deployed within a different legal framework from that in which it originated, and that it is useful in introducing police officers who are unacquainted with the area to the various methods employed by stalkers. Nevertheless, the results presented in other chapters might also be usefully subjected to 'real world tests' by appropriate legal professionals.

These limitations offer some obvious areas for future investigation. Nevertheless it might be argued that the research reported in this thesis has succeeded in its more limited aim of providing some initial British data concerning issues of definition, prevalence, anti-stalking legislation, the reactions of victims, classification, and

guidance to law enforcement agencies. Where precedents from other countries and cultures exist, the present findings have largely confirmed the conclusions of this worldwide research. The studies reported here have also opened several new potential lines of inquiry: for example, the application of mainstream social psychological theories to the public perception of stalking allows research on the latter within an already well-established theoretical and methodological framework. As has been argued throughout, stalking is a nebulous crime that is extremely difficult to define, legislate against, and ultimately prevent. It is hoped that the research reported here can be used by academics and appropriate professionals working towards these ends.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE EMPLOYED IN CHAPTER 3

I am a postgraduate at Leicester University, conducting research into the area of stalking. This is an issue which featured extensively in the media last year, mainly due to the new legislation drawn up to deal with the problem. I am interested firstly in what behaviours people do and do not consider to constitute stalking. Secondly, I am interested in the prevalence of various behaviours directed by men towards women. If at any point during filling in the questionnaire you should feel uncomfortable about continuing, then please do not feel pressured to do so. I very much hope that you are able to help me with my research as no such data currently exists, and my findings may have implications for the way in which the new Protection from Harassment Law is implemented. Please be assured that all information obtained from the questionnaire will remain entirely confidential.

1. Firstly, some information about yourself:

Please circle those responses which apply to you.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status: a) not employed b) student
c) part-time employed d) full-time employed

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements: a) alone b) with partner/partner and children
c) single parent d) with parents
e) shared (including student's or nurse's)
accommodation

f) other - (please specify):

Ethnic origin: a) Black b) Asian c) White d) any other ethnic origin -
(please specify):

2. Now read through the list of behaviours below, and circle the numbers beside any which you do consider to be stalking behaviours.

That is, ways in which you consider that a stalker may behave or act. Stalking may be defined as: Unwanted, persistent harassment which causes distress - whether intentional or not - to the person experiencing it. Please note that for the purposes of this questionnaire, we are dealing strictly with males carrying out the behaviours and

females being the recipients. The word 'target', refers to any female recipient of a particular behaviour. Remember - it is your own opinions which count here - there are no right or wrong answers. Unless otherwise indicated, the behaviours listed below may be carried out by someone known to the woman (e.g., a work colleague, friend, current or ex-partner) or a stranger.

1. Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters.
2. Agreeing with the target's every word (even when she is obviously wrong).
3. Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other men (friends or partners).
4. A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop.
5. Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood.
6. Threatening suicide if the target refuses to go out with him.
7. Repeated personal approaches by a stranger.
8. The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace.
9. The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation.
10. Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting her just once.
11. Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts.
12. Telephoning the target after one initial meeting.
13. Following the target.
14. Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content.
15. Often purposefully visiting places he knows that the target frequents.
16. Furtively taking photographs of the target without her knowledge.
17. Death threats.
18. Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, her house, workplace, etc.)
19. A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria.
20. Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused).
21. Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property.
22. A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion.
23. A man met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if she is interested in sexual intercourse.
24. Constantly watching/spying on the target.
25. Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over.
26. Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller.
27. He is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day.
28. 'Wolf-whistling' in the street.
29. Ex-partner insults the target when he finds out she is in a new relationship.
30. Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis.
31. An inappropriate man sending sexually explicit letters to the target.
32. Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so.
33. Unasked for offers of help: lifts in his car, DIY, etc.
34. A man the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where she lives or places she frequents - just to be nearer to her.
35. Confining the target against her will.
36. Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace.
37. Making arrangements including the target without consulting her first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant).
38. 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house.
39. Intercepting mail/deliveries.
40. Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know her better.
41. Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends.
42. Obscene comments from a stranger.

3. Now look again at the same behaviours, listed below, and circle the number beside any which you have personally experienced. So this time, the 'target' would be yourself. Unless otherwise indicated, the behaviours listed below may have been carried out by someone known to you (such as a work colleague, friend, current or ex-partner) or a stranger.

1. Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters.
2. Agreeing with the target's every word (even when she is obviously wrong).
3. Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other men (friends or partners).
4. A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop.
5. Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood.
6. Threatening suicide if the target refuses to go out with him.
7. Repeated personal approaches by a stranger.
8. The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace.
9. The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation.
10. Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting her just once.
11. Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts.
12. Telephoning the target after one initial meeting.
13. Following the target.
14. Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content.
15. Often purposefully visiting places he knows that the target frequents.
16. Furtively taking photographs of the target without her knowledge.
17. Death threats.
18. Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, her house, workplace, etc.)
19. A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria.
20. Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused).
21. Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property.
22. A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion.
23. A man met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if she is interested in sexual intercourse.
24. Constantly watching/spying on the target.
25. Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over.
26. Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller.
27. He is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day.
28. 'Wolf-whistling' in the street.
29. Ex-partner insults the target when he finds out she is in a new relationship.
30. Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis.
31. An inappropriate man sending sexually explicit letters to the target.
32. Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so.
33. Unasked for offers of help: lifts in his car, DIY, etc.
34. A man the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where she lives or places she frequents - just to be nearer to her.
35. Confining the target against her will.
36. Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace.
37. Making arrangements including the target without consulting her first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant).
38. 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house.
39. Intercepting mail/deliveries.
40. Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know her better.
41. Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends.
42. Obscene comments from a stranger.

4. If you have experienced any of the above behaviours, then could you please tell me some more about what you consider to be the most serious incident. I would be grateful if you could describe the event in some detail - with particular reference to the behaviour of the male party involved (please use the back of the questionnaire and/or additional sheets if you require more space).

If you have described an incident above, then could you please circle the following information about yourself - this time relating to the time of the incident which you have just detailed.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status: a) not employed b) student
 c) part-time employed d) full-time employed

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements:

a) alone b) with partner/partner and children

c) single parent d) with parents

e) shared (including student's or nurse's) accommodation

f) other - (please specify):

If possible, could you also tell me the following information about the man involved in the incident.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status: a) not employed b) student

 c) part-time employed d) full-time employed

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements:

a) alone b) with partner/partner and children

c) single parent d) with parents

e) shared (including student's or nurse's) accommodation

f) other - (please specify):

Ethnic origin:

Finally, which of these choices most closely described the man's relationship to you at the time of the incident:

a) stranger b) former partner (e.g., ex-boyfriend, husband)

c) acquaintance (e.g., work colleague, friend of a friend). Please state the nature of the acquaintance:

Thank you very much for your time and trouble.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE EMPLOYED IN CHAPTER 4

I am a student at Leicester University, conducting research into the area of stalking. This is an issue which has featured extensively in the media recently, mainly due to the new legislation drawn up to deal with the problem. I am interested firstly in what behaviours people do and do not consider to constitute stalking. Secondly, I am interested in the prevalence of various 'intrusive' behaviours. If at any point during filling in the questionnaire you should feel uncomfortable about continuing, then please do not feel pressured to do so. I very much hope that you are able to help me with my research as no such data currently exists, and my findings may have implications for the way in which the new Protection from Harassment Act is interpreted. Please be assured that all information obtained from the questionnaire will remain entirely confidential.

1. Firstly, some information about yourself:

Please circle those responses which apply to you.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status/nature of employment: (e.g. unemployed, student, clerical officer, manager)

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements: a) alone b) with partner/partner and children
c) single parent d) with parents
e) shared (including student's/nurse's) accommodation
f) other - (please specify):

Ethnic origin: a) Black b) Asian c) White d) any other ethnic origin - (please specify):

2. Now read through the list of behaviours overleaf, and circle the numbers beside any which you do consider to be stalking behaviours.

That is, ways in which you consider that a stalker may behave or act. Stalking may be defined as: Unwanted, persistent harassment which causes distress - whether intentional or not - to the person experiencing it. The word 'target', refers to any recipient of a particular behaviour. Remember - it is your own opinions which count here - there are no right or wrong answers. Unless otherwise indicated, the behaviours

listed below may be carried out by someone known to the target (e.g., a work colleague, friend, current or ex-partner) or a stranger.

1. Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters.
2. Agreeing with the target's every word (even when the target is obviously wrong).
3. Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other people (friends or partners).
4. A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop.
5. Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood.
6. Threatening suicide if the target refuses a date/relationship.
7. Repeated personal approaches by a stranger.
8. The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace.
9. The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation.
10. Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting them just once.
11. Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts.
12. Telephoning the target after one initial meeting.
13. Following the target.
14. Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content.
15. Often purposefully visiting places the target is known to frequent.
16. Furtively taking photographs of the target without their knowledge.
17. Death threats.
18. Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, their house, workplace, etc.)
19. A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria.
20. Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused).
21. Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property.
22. A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion.
23. A person met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if they are interested in sexual intercourse.
24. Constantly watching/spying on the target.
25. Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over.
26. Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller.
27. A particular individual is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day.
28. 'Wolf-whistling' in the street.
29. Ex-partner insults the target upon finding out they are in a new relationship.
30. Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis.
31. An inappropriate person sending sexually explicit letters to the target.
32. Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so.
33. Unasked for offers of help: lifts, DIY, etc.
34. A person the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where they live or places they frequent - just to be nearer to the target.
35. Sexual comments from a stranger on the street.
36. Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace.
37. Making arrangements including the target without consulting them first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant).
38. 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house.
39. Intercepting mail/deliveries.
40. Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know them better.
41. Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends.
42. Obscene suggestions from a stranger.

3. Now look again at the same behaviours, listed below, and circle the number beside any which you have personally experienced. So this time, the 'target' would be yourself. Unless otherwise indicated, the behaviours listed below may have been carried out by someone known to you (such as a work colleague, friend, current or ex-partner) or a stranger.

1. Sending the target excessive, unwanted notes or letters.
2. Agreeing with the target's every word (even when the target is obviously wrong).
3. Continuously acting in an uncontrolled, aggressive, or insulting manner upon seeing the target out with other people (friends or partners).
4. A stranger engaging the target in an unsolicited conversation in a public place: such as at a bus stop.
5. Often loitering in the target's neighbourhood.
6. Threatening suicide if the target refuses a date/relationship.
7. Repeated personal approaches by a stranger.
8. The sending of bizarre or sinister items to the target's home or workplace.
9. The use of obscene and/or threatening language when such is entirely inappropriate: i.e. not during an argument situation.
10. Has talked about the target to mutual friends after meeting them just once.
11. Constantly sending the target unwanted gifts.
12. Telephoning the target after one initial meeting.
13. Following the target.
14. Repeated excessive unwanted telephone calls - regardless of content.
15. Often purposefully visiting places the target is known to frequent.
16. Furtively taking photographs of the target without their knowledge.
17. Death threats.
18. Constant 'drive-bys' (i.e. persistently driving past the target, their house, workplace, etc.)
19. A stranger offering to buy the target a drink in a public house or cafeteria.
20. Asking the target for a date more than once (having previously been refused).
21. Criminal damage/vandalism to the target's property.
22. A casual acquaintance engaging the target in 'inappropriate' personal and intimate discussion.
23. A person met at a pub/night-club/party asks the target if they are interested in sexual intercourse.
24. Constantly watching/spying on the target.
25. Refusing to accept that a prior relationship with the target is over.
26. Obscene, threatening, or mysterious telephone calls from an unknown caller.
27. A particular individual is seen by the target at roughly the same time each day.
28. 'Wolf-whistling' in the street.
29. Ex-partner insults the target upon finding out they are in a new relationship.
30. Comes round to visit, uninvited, on a regular basis.
31. An inappropriate person sending sexually explicit letters to the target.
32. Hanging around/telephoning the target's workplace continuously after being expressly told not to do so.
33. Unasked for offers of help: lifts, DIY, etc.
34. A person the target is not involved with moves (house) closer to where they live or places they frequent - just to be nearer to the target.
35. Sexual comments from a stranger on the street.
36. Standing and staring regularly at the target's home and/or workplace.
37. Making arrangements including the target without consulting them first (e.g., booking a table at a restaurant).
38. 'Outstaying welcome' in the target's house.
39. Intercepting mail/deliveries.
40. Trying to become acquainted with the target's friends in an attempt to get to know them better.
41. Threatening behaviour towards the target's family and/or friends.
42. Obscene suggestions from a stranger.

4. If you have experienced any of the above behaviours, then could you please tell me some more about what you consider to be the most serious incident. I would be grateful if you could describe the event in some detail - with particular reference to the behaviour of the other person(s) involved (please use the back of the questionnaire and/or additional sheets if you require more space).

If you have described an incident above, then could you please circle the following information about yourself - this time relating to the time of the incident which you have just detailed.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status/nature of employment: (e.g. unemployed, student, clerical officer, manager)

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements: a) alone b) with partner/partner and children
c) single parent d) with parents
e) shared (including student's or nurse's) accommodation
f) other - (please specify):

If possible, could you also tell me the following information about the other person in the incident.

Age: a) 18-21 b) 22-27 c) 28-35 d) 36-45 e) 46-55 f) 56+

Employment status/nature of employment: (e.g. unemployed, student, clerical officer, manager)

Marital Status: a) Single b) Married c) Separated/Divorced

Living arrangements: a) alone b) with partner/partner and children
c) single parent d) with parents
e) shared (including student's or nurse's) accommodation
f) other - (please specify):

Ethnic origin: a) Black b) Asian c) White d) any other ethnic origin -
(please specify):

Finally, which of these choices most closely described the other person's relationship to you at the time of the incident:

- a) stranger b) former partner
c) acquaintance (e.g., work colleague, friend of a friend). Please state the nature of the acquaintance:

Thank you very much for your time and trouble.

APPENDIX 3

STIMULI EMPLOYED IN CHAPTER 5

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS IN EACH OF THE FOUR CONDITIONS

1. Own opinions condition

Please read carefully through the 20 short transcripts below. They are actual reports of negative experiences obtained from female members of the public. Circle the numbers of any cases which you personally believe to be cases of stalking. There are no right or wrong answers, it is purely your own opinions which count for the purposes of this investigation.

2. England and Wales law condition

Stalking is illegal in England and Wales. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines the crime in the following manner:

A person must not pursue a course of conduct-

- (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and
- (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

Note:

- A "course of conduct" must involve conduct on at least two occasions. So, two or more separate incidents are required. However, these incidents do not have to bear any similarity to each other.
- "Conduct" includes speech.
- Harassing a person includes alarming the person or causing the person distress.
- The person whose course of conduct is in question ought to know that it amounts to harassment of another if any reasonable person in possession of the same information would be expected to think the same.
- Any persistent, unwanted behaviour can be counted as harassment.

Please read carefully through the 20 short transcripts below. They are actual reports of negative experiences obtained from female members of the public. Circle the numbers of any cases which you would judge to be instances of stalking in line with the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. Please discard your personal beliefs for the

duration of the study, assessing each transcript purely on the basis of the way in which stalking is described in the legal definition above. Please be diligent in making your decisions.

To be 'stalking', the case must fulfil all of the criteria set down in the law (i.e. both a and b).

3. USA law condition

Stalking is illegal in most states of the USA. The US federal government Anti-Stalking Code 1993 legally defines the crime in the following manner:

Stalking is: "a knowing, purposeful course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to fear bodily injury or death to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family."

Note:

- The person whose conduct is in question must have knowledge or could be reasonably expected to have knowledge that the target of the behaviours will be placed in reasonable fear of bodily injury or death to himself or herself or a member of his or her immediate family.
- A "course of conduct" must involve behaviour on at least two occasions. So, two or more separate incidents are required. However, these incidents do not have to bear any similarity to each other.

Please read carefully through the 20 short transcripts below. They are actual reports of negative experiences obtained from female members of the public. Circle the numbers of any cases which you would judge to be instances of stalking in line with the Anti-Stalking Code. Please discard your personal beliefs for the duration of the study, assessing each transcript purely on the basis of the way in which stalking is described above. Please be diligent in making your decisions.

To be 'stalking', the case must fulfil all of the criteria set down in the law.

4. Southern Australia law condition

Stalking is illegal in Southern Australia. The state's Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 Sect 19AA defines the crime in the following manner:

A person stalks another if -

(A) on at least two separate occasions, the person-

(i) follows the other person; or

(ii) loiters outside the place of residence of the other person or
some other place frequented by the other person; or

(iii) enters or interferes with property in the possession of the
other person; or

(iv) gives offensive material to the other person, or leaves
offensive material where it will be found by, given to or
brought to the attention of the other person; or

(v) keeps the other person under surveillance; or

(vi) acts in any other way that could reasonably be expected to
arouse the other person's apprehension or fear; and

and

(B) the person-

(i) intends to cause serious physical or mental harm to the other person or a third person; or

(ii) intends to cause serious apprehension or fear.

Please read carefully through the 20 short transcripts below. They are actual reports of negative experiences obtained from female members of the public. Circle the numbers of any cases which you would judge to be instances of stalking in line with the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. Please discard your personal beliefs for the duration of the study, assessing each transcript purely on the basis of the way in which stalking is described above. Please be diligent in making your decisions.

To be 'stalking', the case must fulfil at least one of the criteria from section (A) of the law and at least one from section (B).

APPENDIX 4
QUESTIONNAIRE EMPLOYED IN CHAPTER 8

STALKING QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking time to look at this questionnaire. Please be assured that if you complete the items, all responses will be treated strictly confidentially and anonymously. If at any point you should feel uncomfortable about continuing, please do not feel obligated to do so. However, if you are happy to help us, please give as much detail as possible. If you need more space, please continue your answers on the back of the questionnaire, or additional sheets if you prefer.

1 Details about yourself

1.1 Female/male (Please circle)

1.2 Your age: _____ years

1.3 Your ethnic origin _____

1.4 How long ago did the stalking start? Years _____ and months _____

1.5 What was your occupation when you first met the stalker?

1.6 What is your current occupation? (if different from before)

1.7 Were you in a close relationship when you first met the stalker? Yes/No
If yes, what was the nature of this relationship? (e.g. married, cohabiting, flatmates, etc.)

1.8 If so, was the relationship with the stalker? Yes/No
If yes, what was the nature of this relationship?

1.9 Are you in a close relationship now?
If yes, what is the nature of this relationship? (e.g. married, cohabiting, flatmates, etc.)

2 Details of the stalker

2.1 Female/male (Please circle)

2.2 Their age when the stalking began: _____ years (please estimate)

2.3 Their ethnic origin _____

2.4 What was their occupation at the time the stalking started? _____

2.5 Their occupation now (if known) _____

3 Details of the stalking

3.1 Looking back, did you realise right from the start that you were being stalked?
Yes/No

If yes, what had been happening?

3.2 How did the stalking begin?

3.3 What was your prior relationship with the stalker? (please circle)

(a) stranger

(b) former partner (e.g. ex-boyfriend, husband)

(c) acquaintance (e.g. work colleague, friend of a friend). Please state the nature of the acquaintance: _____

3.4 Did the stalking start immediately after your first meeting? Yes/No

If not, how long after? Years _____ and months _____

3.5 We are interested in establishing how the behaviours of stalkers develop over time. Please could you tell us what the stalker did at each of the following three times:

(i) Initial stages _____

(ii) After the initial stages _____

(iii) Most recent/final stages (whichever is applicable) _____

3.6 Were there any particular ways in which your harassment changed over time?

3.7 Were there any particular actions/factors which you believe helped curb the stalker or some of his/her behaviours? _____

3.8 Were there any particular actions or factors which you think served to provoke or worsen the situation? _____

3.9 Has the stalking now stopped? Yes/No (please circle)
If yes: (i) Have you any thoughts on why the stalking stopped? _____

(ii) How long did the 'stopping process' take? (e.g., suddenly, slow wind-down) _____

(iii) Did the stalker inform you of their intention to stop? If so, how? _____

3.10 Has this stalker, to your knowledge, ever done this sort of thing to anyone else? Yes/No

If yes, please give details, including whether these incidents occurred before, during or after your own experiences: _____

3.11 Did the stalker get anyone else to help him/her harass you? Yes/No.

If yes, please give details of who and what they did: _____

3.12 Did the stalker attempt to harass or gain information about you from members of your family, friends and work colleagues. Yes/No.

If yes, please give details of who and what the stalker did: _____

4 How you felt

4.1 If you knew the stalker before you realised that they were stalking you, what did you think of them? _____

4.2 Looking back, how did you feel when you first became aware that you were being stalked? _____

4.3 How did the stalking make you feel across the following time spans. Please give as much information as you can:

(i) Initial stages _____

(ii) After the initial stages _____

(iii) Most recent/final stages (whichever is applicable) _____

4.4 If applicable, how did you feel when the stalking ended? _____

Reactions of others

5.1 Did anyone try to tell or warn you that something wasn't right? Yes/No.
If yes, who told who and what did they say? _____

5.2 When you first became aware of being stalked, did you tell anyone (other than the Police)? Yes/No.
If yes, who did you tell and what was their reaction? _____

5.3 If other people knew, what was their reaction over the following time spans.
Please give as much information as you can:
(i) Initial stages _____

(ii) After the initial stages _____

(iii) Most recent/final stages (whichever is applicable) _____

5.4 If applicable, how did other people react when the stalking ended? _____

Responses of the authorities

6.1 When you first became aware of being stalked, did you tell the Police?
Yes/No.
If so, what was their reaction? _____

6.2 If the Police knew, what was their reaction over the following time spans.
Please give as much information as you can:
(i) Early stages _____

(ii) After the early stages _____

(iii) Most recent/final stages (whichever is applicable) _____

6.3 If applicable, how did the Police react when the stalking ended? _____

Thank you for helping us in this important research. Your contribution is very much appreciated. Please would you indicate whether you would be interested in participating in any future research.

Yes/No (please circle)

Finally, please use the following page to add any comments or additional information that you think would be of interest to us.

APPENDIX 5
EXAMPLE OF STIMULI EMPLOYED IN CHAPTER 11

About you: M/F (please circle)

Age:

Scenario

For the past 12 months, Susan has received on average 40 letters each week from Michael. Michael also follows her to and from work regularly, and has made repeated attempts to approach her. Sometimes Michael asks Susan to go out with him, at other times he will make obscene suggestions and verbally abuse her. On six occasions, Michael has left flowers with 'Valentines' style notes attached on Susan's car windscreen. He has declared his love for her in these notes and has stated that 'I will not go away easily'. Since Michael became an employee at Susan's workplace, she has been contacted by him at least four times each week. She has recently heard a rumour that Michael is planning to buy a property on Walnut Avenue, where Susan lives with her children.

How far do you think this a case of stalking?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all stalking | | | | | | | | | Definitely stalking | |

If you think this is a case of stalking, how severe do you believe it to be?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all severe | | | | | | | | | Extremely severe | |

How likely is this scenario to result in bodily injury to Susan?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all likely | | | | | | | | Extremely likely | | |

To what extent is Susan responsible for encouraging Michael's behaviour?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all responsible | | | | | | | | Extremely responsible | | |

To what extent are Police intervention/criminal charges necessary for the resolution of this case?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all necessary | | | | | | | | Extremely necessary | | |

How far could the actions of Susan alleviate the situation?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all far | | | | | | | | Extremely far | | |

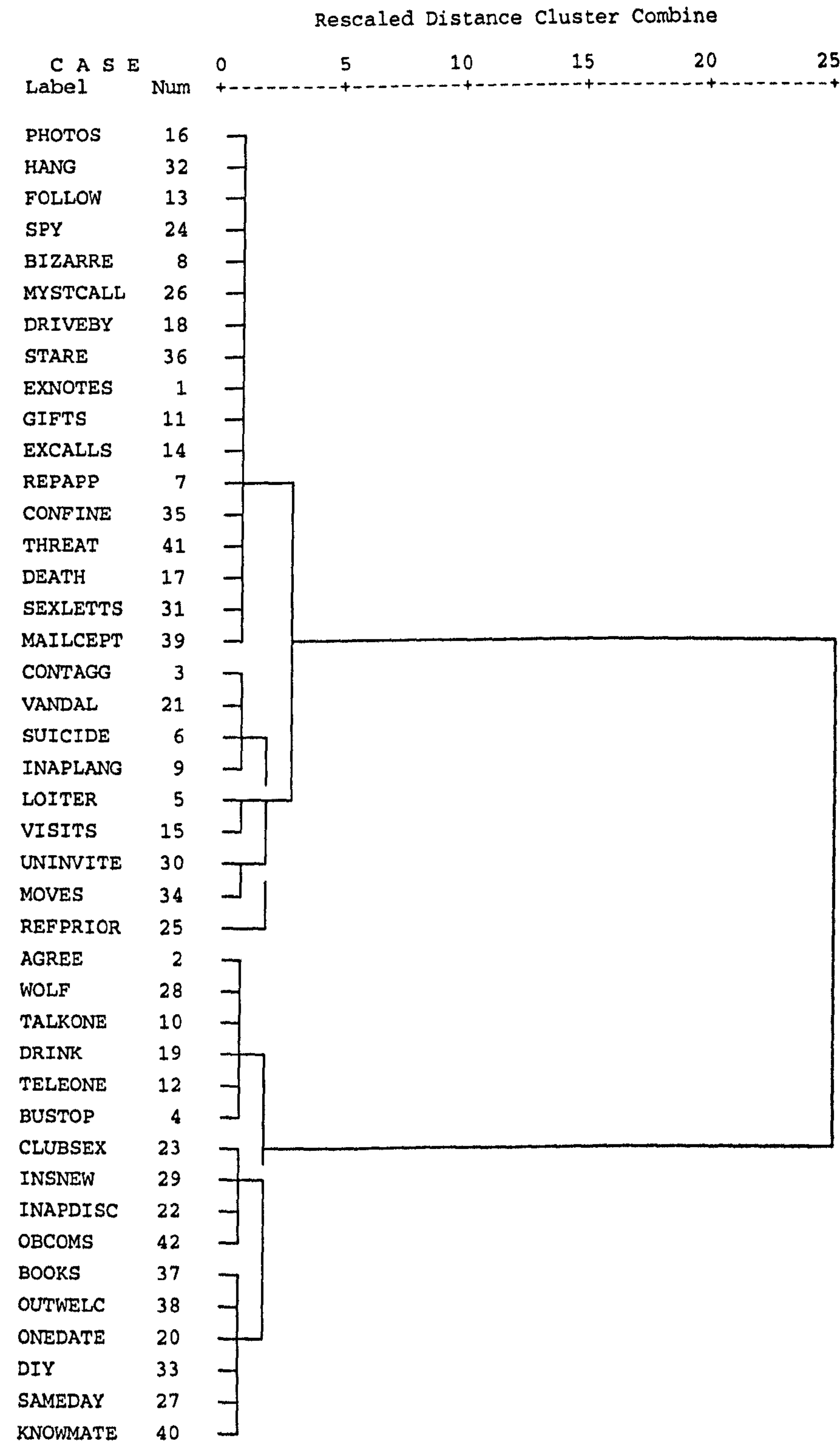
How long do you believe this situation will continue for?

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all long | | | | | | | | A very long time | | |

APPENDIX 6a DENDROGRAM ILLUSTRATING FEMALE PERCEPTIONS OF STALKING BEHAVIOURS

***** HIERARCHICAL CLUSTER ANALYSIS *****

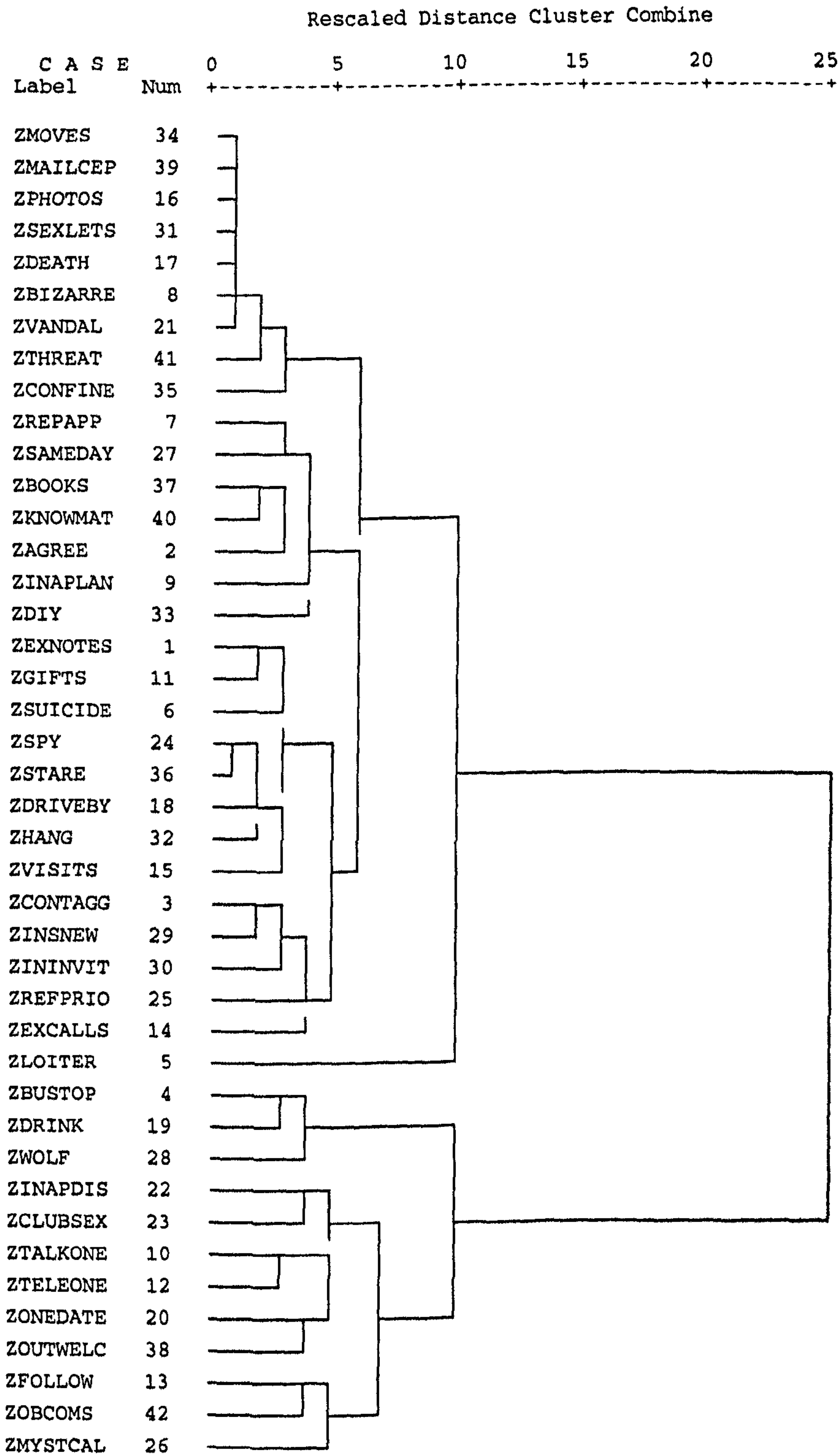
Dendrogram using Ward's Method



APPENDIX 6b
DENDROGRAM ILLUSTRATING FEMALE EXPERIENCES OF STALKING
BEHAVIOURS

***** H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S *****

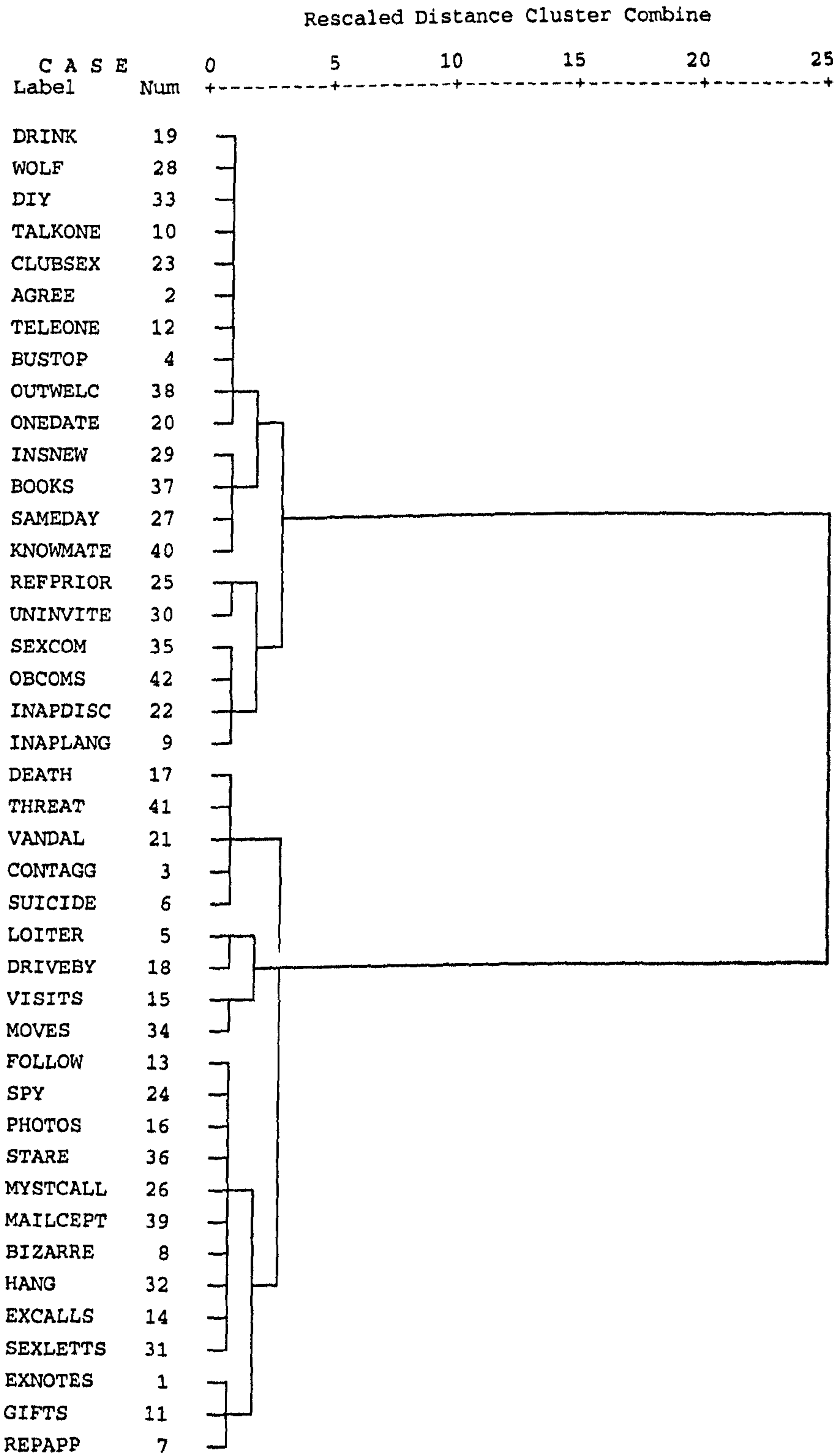
Dendrogram using Ward Method



APPENDIX 6c DENDROGRAM ILLUSTRATING MALE PERCEPTIONS OF STALKING BEHAVIOURS

***** H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S *****

Dendrogram using Ward's Method



APPENDIX 6d DENDROGRAM ILLUSTRATING MALE EXPERIENCES OF STALKING BEHAVIOURS

***** H I E R A R C H I C A L C L U S T E R A N A L Y S I S *****

Dendrogram using Ward's Method

