

LIFESTYLES AND VICTIMIZATION

by

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(Under the Direction of Jody Clay-Warner)

ABSTRACT

Routine activities theory and lifestyle theory propose that victimization rates differ across demographic groups because individuals in these groups engage in different activities. Although this core assumption underlies both theories, few researchers have attempted to test its validity. Unlike past studies, which have used cross-sectional, non-generalizable data with limited measures of routine activities, I examine this issue using a longitudinal dataset created from the National Crime Victimization Survey that includes additional routine activities not considered in previous work. The current study examines how routine activities—riding public transportation, attending work or school, going shopping, or going out at night—mediate the associations between demographics—age, gender, socioeconomic status, and marital status—and personal victimization. The results suggest the effects of gender, income, and marital status on victimization are mediated by routine activities. I discuss the theoretical implications of these findings for future research on the relationship between lifestyles and victimization.

INDEX WORDS: Routine activities, Lifestyles, Victimization, Demographics

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To Jerry Bunch and Susan Malone: thank you for everything.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Criminal victimization is distributed unequally across our society. Some groups of people experience significantly higher levels of victimization than others. This begs the question: Why? Why are blacks assaulted more than whites? Why are young people robbed more than older individuals? Why are poor households more likely to be burglarized than more affluent households? In an attempt to explain these differences—and victimization in general—sociologists have developed theories to describe the phenomenon of victimization. The two dominant theoretical explanations of criminal victimization are routine activities theory (Cohen and Felson 1979) and lifestyle theory (Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo 1978). Both theories posit that individuals have different risks of victimization depending on their lifestyle patterns. Therefore, these theories assume that victimization rates differ across demographic groups because individuals in these groups engage in different daily activities. For instance, young men are assaulted more than elderly women because they stay out late at night in dangerous places, like bars, whereas elderly women spend their evenings watching television in the relative safety of their homes.

In general, routine activities and lifestyle theories have received strong empirical support: research has consistently demonstrated that people's daily activities affect their risks of victimization (e.g., Fisher, Sloan, Cullen, and Lu 1998; Kennedy and Forde 1990; Lynch 1987; Miethe, Stafford, and Long 1987; Mustaine & Tewksbury 1998; Sampson and Wooldredge 1987). However, the implicit assumption underlying both theories—that demographic differences in victimization are caused by demographic differences in routine activities—has

remained relatively untested. The few studies that have examined this core assumption have produced mixed and weak findings, resulting in fairly uncertain support for this claim (Corrado, Roesch, Glackman, Evans, and Ledger 1980; Miethe et al. 1987).

This assumption is so taken for granted within routine activities and lifestyle theories that many researchers have simply used demographics as proxy measures of routine activities, concluding that any demographic differences in victimization reflected underlying demographic differences in lifestyles (e.g., Cohen and Cantor 1980; Cohen, Kluegel, and Land 1981; Hindelang 1976; Hindelang et al. 1978; Messner and Tardiff 1985). The theories presume that demographics should be acceptable indirect measures of routine activities; however, the empirical evidence is unclear. This raises the concern that it is, perhaps, not appropriate to rely on demographics as proxies for lifestyles. The lack of independent measures of lifestyles creates findings that are vulnerable to alternative theoretical explanations. Further, because routine activities and lifestyle theories rest on the assumption that demographic differences in victimization are the result of variations in routine activities, it is necessary to test this assumption to determine the validity of the theories.

Existing research provides mixed results, so the question remains: Do routine activities mediate the relationship between demographics and victimization? Older studies have suffered from several data and conceptual limitations (Corrado et al. 1980; Miethe et al. 1987). Unlike these past studies, which used cross-sectional, non-generalizeable data with limited measures of routine activities, I examine this question using a longitudinal dataset created from the National Crime Victimization Survey that includes additional daily activities not considered in previous work.

This study seeks to examine empirically how routine activities mediate the relationship between age, gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, and victimization. First, I examine routine activities and lifestyle theories and the extant research on the relationship between routine activities, demographics, and victimization. Next, I present my hypotheses regarding demographics, routine activities, and victimization. Then, I discuss my data and present my analysis plan. Finally, I present and discuss my results.

CHAPTER 2

ROUTINE ACTIVITIES AND LIFESTYLE THEORIES

Routine activities theory and lifestyle theory both examine the connection between people's mundane daily activities and their risk of victimization. People's daily lifestyles either place them in the path of crime or insulate them from it. The theories maintain that different groups of people are involved in different activities; therefore, these groups of people are exposed to differential risks of criminal victimization.

Routine activities theory, developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), focuses on the circumstances in which a crime takes place rather than on the characteristics of the criminal. According to the theory, in order for a crime to occur, three necessary elements must converge in space and time: (1) motivated offenders (2) suitable targets, and (3) the absence of capable guardians against a violation. An individual's daily activities—such as going to work or riding the subway—can affect the degree to which he or his property is a suitable target for victimization and whether either possesses capable guardians. For instance, when a person leaves home, he simultaneously increases his risk of both property and personal victimization. Because he is not home, his belongings are more suitable targets lacking capable guardians. Because he has left the safety of his home, he himself has become a more suitable target with decreased guardianship. Though all three elements—motivated offenders, suitable targets, and a lack of capable guardians—must be present for a crime to take place, Cohen and Felson maintain that an increase in only one can cause an increase in the crime rate. For example, if the number of capable guardians decreased, the crime rate would increase even though the number of suitable targets and motivated offenders remained unchanged. Because the theory assumes that

motivated offenders will always exist, most researchers in this area focus on changes in suitable targets and capable guardians as predictors of crime.

The other major theory of victimization—lifestyle theory—was developed by Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978). This theory holds that differences in victimization are caused by differences in individuals' lifestyles. Certain demographic characteristics are associated with certain role expectations and constraints, which, in turn, lead to different lifestyles. These lifestyles involve certain daily vocational and recreational activities, which increase or decrease the individual's exposure to victimization. Routine activities theory and lifestyle theory fit together nicely. In fact, because they rest on such similar assumptions, many researchers treat them as a singular perspective. Both focus on how daily activities affect the risk of victimization.

Demographics and Routine Activities

Routine activities and lifestyle theories suggest that different groups of people experience different rates of victimization due to the differences in their lifestyle patterns (Cohen and Felson 1979; Hindelang et al. 1978). A correlation exists between certain personal characteristics and the risk of victimization. A number of demographic factors, such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, age, and marital status, affect an individual's likelihood of suffering criminal victimization. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that males, blacks, people younger than 25 years old, and unmarried people are victimized by various violent and property crimes and at higher rates than females, whites, people 25 and older, and married people (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000). Additionally, poor people are likely to experience various forms of violent victimization more so than their more affluent counterparts, who themselves experience higher rates of some property crimes, such as theft (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000). Routine activities

and lifestyle theories would posit that because poor, young, single, black men spend more time out at night in dangerous places than rich, older, married, white women, they are much more likely to be victimized by assault.

If routine activities theory is correct, then routine activities mediate the relationship between the demographic correlates known to be associated with victimization and actual instances of criminal victimization. Only two such tests have been conducted (Corrado et al. 1980; Miethe et al. 1987). Corrado et al. used the 1979 Greater Vancouver Victimization Survey to examine the relationships between demographics, routine activities, and violent victimization. They found associations between three demographic characteristics (age, gender, and marital status) and violent victimization. They also found that routine activities—the frequency of an individual’s nighttime activity—had a direct effect on violent victimization. However, they failed to find any evidence that routine activities mediated the relationship between demographics and victimization.

Using the 1975 National Crime Survey, Miethe et al. (1987) tested whether the relationships between demographic characteristics—including income, race, gender, age, and marital status—and both violent victimization and property victimization were either mediated or moderated by routine activities (going out at night and attending work or school). However, the study yielded mixed results. The researchers found that routine activities mediated the effect of gender on property victimization, but they found no evidence that routine activities mediated the effect of any of the demographic characteristics on violent victimization. They also found strong interaction effects between demographic characteristics and routine activities for victims of property crime; however, they found no such interaction effects when examining violent victimization. Ultimately, the researchers found evidence that routine activities had strong

direct, mediating, and interactive effects on property victimization but not on violent victimization. Miethe et al. claimed that this was because violent crimes are generally expressive acts that stem from interpersonal conflict, and therefore defy the assumption of a rational criminal that underlies routine activities theory. They asserted that the spontaneous nature of violent crimes makes them impossible to predict using routine activities.

Other researchers have found results that suggest that Miethe et al. (1987) might have been mistaken to discount the role that routine activities play in explaining violent victimization; however, this research did not examine routine activities as mediators of the relationship between demographics and victimization (Kennedy and Forde 1990). Using the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey, Kennedy and Forde found that routine activities and demographics were significantly related to various kinds of victimization, including violent victimization. Being young, male, and engaging in routine activities that involved exposure to high-risk situations (such as going to a bar) were particularly strong predictors of personal victimization. This casts doubt on Miethe et al.'s assertion that routine activities cannot explain violent victimization. Unfortunately, though Kennedy and Forde test for the direct effects of demographic characteristics and routine activities on victimization, they fail to test whether routine activities mediate the relationship between demographics and victimization. An adequate test of routine activities and lifestyle theories should not only show that routine activities affect victimization, but that they also explain at least some of the demographic variation in victimization.

Working from this assumption that demographic differences in victimization are caused by differences in lifestyles across these groups, researchers often use demographic variables as proxy measures for routine activities (e.g., Cohen and Cantor 1980; Cohen et al. 1981; Hindelang 1976; Hindelang et al. 1978; Messner and Tardiff 1985). In a study of homicide in Manhattan,

Messner and Tardiff (1985) examined the demographic characteristics of the victim and the time and place of the murder, and from this information, inferred the victim's routine activities. This is problematic, since it involves no actual independent measure of routine activities. Even when developing their lifestyle theory, Hindelang et al. (1978) hypothesized that demographic characteristics lead to different lifestyles and routine activities, which would explain the groups' differential risks of victimization. In none of these studies do the researchers independently measure routine activities; instead, they infer routine activities from demographic characteristics. Using only demographic measures opens studies to alternate theoretical interpretations. Findings could, in fact, be demonstrating demographic differences in self control (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990), peer associations (Burgess and Akers 1966; Sutherland 1947), social disorganization (Bursik and Grasmick 1993; Sampson and Groves 1989; Shaw and McKay 1969), experienced strain (Agnew 1992; Merton 1938; Messner and Rosenfeld 2001), or cultural norms (Anderson 1999; Cohen 1955; Wolfgang and Ferracuti 1967). This highlights the need to use actual measures of routine activities rather than proxy measures when testing these theories.

Current Study

A major focus of routine activities and lifestyle theories is to explain the demographic differences that exist in rates of victimization. Both theories rest on the assumption that these differences in victimization across demographic groups are caused by demographic differences in lifestyles. A few studies have attempted to test this assumption, but the results have been mixed (Corrado et al. 1980; Miethe et al. 1987). This assumption is so central to these theories that many researchers have used demographic variables as proxies for routine activities (e.g., Cohen and Cantor 1980; Cohen et al. 1981; Hindelang 1976; Hindelang et al. 1978; Messner and Tardiff 1985). This core assumption should not be taken for granted, but rather, it must be

tested. Using independently measured demographic characteristics and routine activities, I examine how routine activities mediate the relationship between demographics and personal victimization. I improve upon the weaknesses of previous studies in three ways: My data are longitudinal, my data are nationally representative, and I use additional measures of routine activities.

Corrado et al. (1980) and Miethe et al. (1987) used cross-sectional data, meaning that their findings could be invalid due to reverse causation. This is particularly important when examining victimization data due to the victimization effect (Mayhew, 1984). The victimization effect refers to the tendency of victims to change their activities and take more precautions in response to being victimized. Previous tests (Corrado et al. 1980; Miethe et al. 1987) are susceptible to the victimization effect because they all used cross-sectional data. In a cross-sectional study, the assumed causal order may, in fact, be reversed. It is possible that what was actually taking place was that a person was victimized first, which then led to a change in routine activities, rather than routine activities leading to victimization. For instance, an individual in a cross-sectional study who reported never going out at night and yet also reported being assaulted could have been victimized first, and changed his routine activities in order to avoid a future assault. If the cross-sectional data analyzed in previous research did contain instances such as this, then these studies would understate the role of routine activities in victimization because their results would be biased toward the null. Using longitudinal data allows this study to establish time order, thereby avoiding much of the ambiguity regarding the causal process. This should result in more accurate estimates of the effects of routine activities on the risk of victimization than have been presented in previous studies.

Additionally, my data—drawn from the 1999 NCVS—are nationally representative, while the data used in previous studies are not generalizeable. Corrado et al. used the 1979 Greater Vancouver Victimization Survey, so their results can only be generalized to Vancouver. Meithe et al. used 1975 NCS data for thirteen major U.S. cities; however, these data are not representative.

Finally, I add two additional measures of routine activities not included in previous studies. I examine whether an individual rides public transportation, and I also consider how often an individual goes shopping. Including these routine activities with the more traditional measures of night activity and school attendance or employment allows this study to examine the effects of a wider range of daily activities.

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESES

Two schools of thought exist regarding the applicability of routine activities theory and lifestyle theory. Many scholars believe that these theories can be applied to all types of crimes, both violent and property offenses (Cohen and Felson 1979; Cohen et al. 1981; Corrado et al. 1980; Hindelang et al. 1978; Kennedy and Forde 1990; Messner and Tardiff 1985). However, some routine activity theorists argue that the theory is better suited to explain property crimes as opposed to violent crimes (Bennett 1991; Miethe et al. 1987). Miethe et al. (1987) reach this conclusion by emphasizing the differing motivations for violent and property crimes. Violent crimes, such as assault, are generally expressive acts, whereas property crimes are usually instrumental acts (Cohen et al. 1981; Hindelang 1976; Hindelang et al. 1978). Routine activities theory assumes that offenders behave rationally. Rational criminals select targets they believe offer the greatest rewards with the least accompanying risks (Clarke and Cornish 1985; Cohen et al. 1981; Cornish and Clarke 1986; Garofalo 1987; Hough 1987; Miller 1998). Miethe et al. (1987) argue that because violent crimes are spontaneous acts that often emerge from interpersonal conflict, their impulsive nature defies the assumption of offender rationality. They insist that property crimes, on the other hand, involve rational criminals acting for economic gain, and therefore fall firmly within the scope of the theory.

This study focuses on personal victimization. Due to the lack of consensus as to whether routine activities theory and lifestyle theory operate in all instances of criminal victimization or only in cases of property victimization, I examine both possibilities. I examine *personal*

victimization, which includes both violent victimization¹ and personal theft². I then contrast and test models that include only personal *theft*. By examining all personal crimes and then limiting the focus to only property crimes, I contribute to the debate regarding the applicability of routine activities theory to different types of crimes.

Because patterns of victimization differ across demographic groups for *personal victimization* and *theft*, I present two conceptual models. Figure 1 displays the conceptual model of the relationship between demographics, routine activities, and *personal victimization*, and Figure 2 displays the conceptual model of the relationship between demographics, routine activities, and *theft* (see Appendix). The hypotheses regarding *personal victimization* and *theft* deal with exposure to crime. Individuals who are young, male, or single experience higher levels of victimization for various personal crimes than do people who are older, married, or female (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000). Poor individuals experience higher levels of violent victimization than do wealthy individuals; conversely, wealthy individuals experience higher levels of theft than do poor people (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000). Individuals increase their exposure to these crimes when they leave the safety of their homes and enter riskier environments. According to routine activities and lifestyle theories, demographic characteristics are associated with certain lifestyles, and these lifestyles, in turn, determine the degree of exposure to personal victimization. Some lifestyles result in high levels of exposure because they involve large amounts of time spent outside of the home for school, work, or leisure. The

¹ In this study, violent crimes are completed, attempted, or threatened assault or sexual assault and completed or attempted robbery.

² In this study, personal thefts are completed pocket picking or personal larceny and completed or attempted purse snatching or motor vehicle theft.

following hypotheses focus on how routine activities mediate the relationship between four demographics—age, gender, income, and marital status—and victimization.³

Age

Young individuals are less fearful of crime (Hindelang et al. 1978; Skogan and Maxfield 1981) and are more impulsive and risk-taking. They have less responsibility than older individuals and possess more leisure time. They are therefore likely to spend more time outside of the home and in dangerous places. Younger individuals have higher rates of *personal victimization* than older individuals (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle. Additionally, younger individuals experience higher rates of *theft* than do older individuals (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle.

Gender

Males are less likely to fear crime (Ferraro 1995, 1996; Hindelang et al. 1978; Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Warr 1984, 1994) and are more likely to take risks. They are more aggressive: men are more likely to be involved in potentially violent confrontations than women and are less likely to retreat from these situations. They are more likely to spend time in dangerous places with dangerous people. Males have higher rates of *personal victimization* than women (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle. However, most studies do

³ Though a relationship exists between race and personal victimization, with Blacks experiencing higher rates of victimization for many personal crimes (e.g., Catalano, 2006; Rennison, 2000), some research suggests that these patterns are due to racial differences in income rather than race in and of itself (McNulty 1999a, 1999b; Sampson and Wilson 1995). In my data, preliminary analyses demonstrated that Blacks are no more likely to be victimized than other races when controlling for income, supporting the claim that racial differences in victimization stem from the concentrated economic disadvantage associated with many Black communities.

not find gender differences in rates of *theft* (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), so I do not make any predictions regarding gender, routine activities, and *theft*.

Income

Wealthy individuals are more likely than poor individuals to have jobs, causing them to have greater mobility. Additionally, greater income enables people to go out more often for entertainment or shopping. Many studies indicate that poorer individuals have greater risks of violent victimization, while wealthier individuals have greater risks of property victimization (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000).⁴ Because *personal victimization* includes both violent and property crimes, the income-related differences in victimization could cancel one another, negating the effect of income on *personal victimization*. Therefore, I make no predictions regarding income, routine activities, and *personal victimization*. However, wealthy individuals have higher rates of *theft* than do poor individuals (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle.

Marital Status

Single individuals—those who have never been married—lack familial obligations that can restrict the amount of leisure time spent outside of the home. They go out more often than married individuals to engage in socializing and dating, which often causes them to enter dangerous environments, such as the night, bars, and clubs. Single people are more likely than married people to suffer *personal victimization* (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle. Additionally, single individuals are more likely than are married individuals

⁴ However, other research suggests that this relationship may be more complicated. Cohen et al. (1981) found that, when controlling for proximity to crime, guardianship, and exposure, affluent individuals experience the greatest risk of both violent and property victimization.

to suffer *theft* (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and I hypothesize that this relationship will be mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

Sample

The data for this study are drawn from the 1999 National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). In 2000, several questions regarding routine activities were dropped from the survey; therefore, the 1999 NCVS provides the most recent data pertinent to this study. There are a number of reasons why the NCVS is ideal for this study. First, it contains data on a very large, nationally representative sample: approximately 50,000 households are interviewed every six months. Its average response rate is over 90%, which is higher than most victimization surveys. Because it involves self reports of victimizations, the NCVS is far more comprehensive than official reports such as the Uniform Crime Report, which only gathers data on crimes reported to the police. Finally, the NCVS includes detailed information regarding the characteristics of the respondent, the routine activities of the respondent, the victimization, and the context of the victimization.

The NCVS uses a stratified, multi-stage cluster sample design to select a sample of housing units from the United States and the District of Columbia drawn from the most recent decennial Census (United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999: pp. xxv-xxvii). In order to be included in the sample, an individual must live in a housing unit. The majority of these units are households; however, some units from group quarters (e.g., dormitories, religious dwellings, boarding houses, and so forth) are also included. Military personnel living in barracks, individuals in institutions such as prisons and nursing homes, crews on vessels, and the homeless are not included in the sample. The first stage of the sample consists of Primary Sampling Units (PSUs), which are large metropolitan areas, counties, or

groups of counties in the United States. Large PSUs are automatically included in the sample, each with its own stratum; the remaining PSUs are grouped into strata based on geographic and demographic characteristics.

A sample of housing units is selected in two stages from the sampled PSUs. First, a sample of Enumeration Districts (EDs) is selected from the sampled PSUs. EDs are established using the most recent decennial Census. EDs have populations of 750 to 1,500 people and range in size from a city block to several hundred square miles. In the second stage, each selected ED is divided into clusters of about four housing units each. These clusters are based on addresses included in the most recent decennial Census; however, steps are taken to ensure that housing units built after the Census are also included. Building permits for the construction of new residential buildings are obtained from building permit offices. Additionally, areas are canvassed to identify all housing units. A sample of clusters is selected from these housing unit clusters. In each selected housing unit, all current residents aged 12 years and older are interviewed for the survey. These interviews are conducted at 6 month intervals for 3 years. Here, I utilize a subset of the 1999 NCVS respondents. First, I exclude individuals who are under 18 years of age, because the types of routine activities that should predict personal victimization among adults are not as theoretically applicable to adolescent victimization. I also limit the sample to individuals who were in the survey for the entire year. I limit my focus to those interviewed twice during 1999 because two interviews are required to establish time order. Limiting my analyses to those individuals who completed two interviews during the year should not harm the generalizeability of the sample unless the individuals who completed only one interview are systematically different from the individuals who completed two interviews. Since the NCVS uses a rotating panel design, different housing units enter and leave the survey at

different points. However, households (and individuals) also leave the survey if they move to a new residence (or enter the survey if they move into a selected housing unit). Some research has suggested that NCVS respondents who are repeatedly victimized are more likely to move (Ybarra and Lohr 2002). If a significant number of the housing units that were only interviewed once during 1999 failed to complete the second interview because they moved due to repeated victimization, then my sample could be biased. This is unlikely, considering the many other reasons that a housing unit could have completed only one interview (e.g., rotating into the survey, rotating out of the survey, moving to a new residence for reasons unrelated to victimization, and moving into a housing unit already selected for the sample).

Victimization

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study (see Appendix). The dependent variables are count variables measuring the number of victimizations experienced by the respondent, ranging from 0 to 3 or more. *Personal Victimization* measures the number of personal victimizations experienced, while *Theft* measures the number of thefts experienced by the respondent. Both these variables are limited to victimizations that occurred outside of the home.⁵

Demographics

The demographic measures include age, gender, income, and marital status. *Age* is a continuous variable measuring the age of the respondent in years. *Gender* is a dichotomous variable comparing males (*Gender* = 1) to females (*Gender* = 0). *Income* is a continuous

⁵ It is necessary to exclude victimizations that occur within the home because the routine activity variables in this study that are indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle—and thus hypothesized to affect victimization—are those that involve respondents becoming viable targets by leaving the protection of their homes. Incidents of victimization can occur within the home, often perpetrated by other household members; however, limiting the scope of victimizations to those committed by strangers would not sufficiently deal with this issue, since individuals can be victimized outside of the home by someone they know or inside the home by a stranger. There is no theoretical basis to assume that this study's measures of routine activities would predict these types of victimizations.

variable. This variable was created using the NCVS household income variable, which is divided into 14 unequal intervals. I coded each respondent at the midpoint of his or her income interval and divided this dollar amount by 10,000.⁶ *Marital Status* is a set of categorical dummy-coded variables comparing individuals who have never been married (*Never Married* = 1) and individuals who are separated, widowed, or divorced (*Not Married* = 1) to married individuals (the reference category).⁷

Routine Activities

There are four measures of routine activities: riding public transportation, attending work or school, going shopping, and going out at night.⁸ *Public Transit* is a dichotomous variable measuring whether or not respondents have ridden public transportation in the last six months. Respondents who have ridden public transit at least once are coded “1,” and other respondents are coded “0.” *Work/School* measures whether respondents have either had a job within the last week (i.e., paid work outside of the home) or attended school (i.e., regular school, college/university, trade school, or vocational school). Individuals who attended either work or school are coded as “1,” whereas those who did neither are coded “0.” *Shopping* is a

⁶ Because centering this variable at the midpoints of the intervals created measures of income in dollar amounts (ranging from \$2,499.50 to \$75,000), it was necessary to divide these values by 10,000 in order to ensure that *income*'s beta coefficient in the multivariate analyses would be easily interpretable rather than infinitesimal.

⁷ The category *Not Married* is included merely as a control. My hypotheses pertaining to *marital status* and victimization do not address this group of individuals, but rather focus on the distinction between married individuals and those who have never been married.

⁸ *Public Transit*, *Shopping*, and *Night Activity* are measured as dichotomous variables. The NCVS variables from which these routine activity variables are derived are measured at the ordinal level, indicating how frequently an individual engaged in the particular activity: “Almost every day,” “At least once a week,” “At least once a month,” “Less frequently,” and “Never.” In order to examine how the risk of victimization changed across each of these categories, I initially attempted an alternative coding strategy in which the routine activities were categorical dummy-coded variables. Due to the fact that relatively few respondents reported riding public transportation, this subtler approach was not viable for *Public Transit* due to small cell size, forcing me to dichotomize this variable between respondents who used public transit and those who did not. Regarding *Shopping* and *Night Activity*, preliminary analyses demonstrated that, in each case, the only category significantly related to victimization was “Almost every day.” Since nothing would be lost by a more parsimonious approach, I coded these variables as dichotomous variables comparing individuals who participated in the activity on a daily basis to those who did so less frequently.

dichotomous variable measuring whether respondents have gone shopping almost every day over the past six months. Respondents who have shopped almost every day are coded “1,” and respondents who did so less frequently are coded “0.” *Night Activity* measures whether respondents have spent the evening out away from home almost every night over the past six months. Respondents who went out almost every night are coded as “1,” while those who did not are coded “0.”

Control Variables

The two control variables in this study are race and urbanicity. *Race* is a dichotomous variable comparing Blacks (*Race* = 1) to non-Blacks (*Race* = 0). *Urbanicity* is a set of categorical dummy-coded variables dealing with the location of the housing unit: urban, suburban, or rural. This measure gives a general sense of the context of the community in which the household is located, which must be taken into account due to the “motivated offenders” component of routine activities theory. Studies of routine activities have shown that physical proximity to high crime areas affects the risks entailed in an individual’s daily activities (Cohen et al. 1981; Sampson and Wooldredge 1987). As previously discussed, some lifestyles heighten an individual’s risk of victimization because they involve large amounts of time spent outside of the home, increasing the individual’s exposure to crime. Studies of routine activities have shown that some areas have high levels of motivated offenders; therefore, residents of these neighborhoods have greater exposure to crime (Cohen et al. 1981; Roncek and Maier 1991; Sherman, Gartin, and Buerger 1989). An individual living in the inner city is more likely to be robbed than an individual living on a farm because there are more criminals in the city. In order to control for the number of motivated offenders in an area, I include a set of dummy-coded

variables that compares individuals living in suburban areas (*Suburban* = 1) and rural areas (*Rural* = 1) to individuals living in urban areas (the reference category).

Analysis Plan

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the variables in this study (see Appendix). I begin by examining the bivariate correlations between these variables. These results are displayed in Table 2 (see Appendix). I focus on the correlations between the three sets of variables: demographics and victimization, demographics and routine activities, and routine activities and victimization. Determining that these correlations are significant provides justification for the subsequent analyses examining the mediating effects of routine activities on the relationship between demographics and victimization (Baron and Kenny 1986).

I conduct two series of nested negative binomial regressions in order to examine mediating effects.⁹ The dependent variable in each is a continuous variable measuring the number of victimizations an individual has experienced, ranging from 0 to 3 or more. The first set of regressions examines *personal victimization*, while the second set of regressions narrows the focus to include only instances of *theft*.

The data in these regression analyses are weighted in order to account for the stratified, multi-cluster sample design of the NCVS.¹⁰ The NCVS dataset includes several weights that

⁹ Because victimization is a relatively rare event, the dependent variable is highly skewed, consisting mostly of zeroes; therefore, ordinary least-squares regression is not suitable since the data violate key assumptions that the error term is both normal and homoskedastic. Alternatively, logistic regression would simply divide the respondents into either victims or non-victims, glossing over the fact that some victims experienced more victimizations than others. Instead, I treat victimization as count data, leading me to Poisson regression and negative binomial regression, two methods commonly used with count data. Poisson regression assumes that the variance equals the mean, while negative binomial regression can account for overdispersion in the dependent variable. Preliminary analyses showed that each of the models has significant evidence of overdispersion ($p < .001$), justifying the use of negative binomial models over Poisson models.

¹⁰ Some researchers argue that, while weighting NCVS data is necessary to calculate accurate incidence and prevalence statistics, it is not necessary when testing a theoretically-driven methodological model, as evidenced by the fact that research comparing weighted and unweighted analyses of NCVS data find no substantive differences in the regression coefficients (Lohr and Liu 1994; Rennison and Rand 2005). Due to the mixed consensus regarding weighting the NCVS data, I choose a conservative approach and present weighted regression analyses.

adjust “for unequal probabilities of selection and observation, and for known age, sex, and race ratios based on the 1990 Adjusted Decennial Census Population Totals” (United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999: p. xxxiv). I use the person weight, a variable that is derived from six component weights: the base weight, the weighting factor control, the household non-interview adjustment, the within-household non-interview adjustment, the first stage ratio estimates factor, and the second stage estimate factor (United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 1999: pp. xxxiv-xxxv).¹¹

The results regarding *personal victimization* are displayed in Table 3 (see Appendix). Table 4 shows the results regarding *theft* (see Appendix). In each table, the first model includes only demographics and controls as independent variables. The subsequent four models add each of the routine activity variables individually in order to determine how each routine activity mediates the relationship between a given demographic variable and victimization. If a demographic variable that significantly affected victimization in the first model loses significance when I include a routine activity, then the relationship between that demographic characteristic and victimization is fully mediated by the routine activity. I also examine for partial mediation by determining the proportional reductions in the beta coefficients of the demographic variables when routine activities are included in the models. In the final model, I include all the routine activity variables to determine their collective mediating effect on the relationship between demographics and victimization.

¹¹ An alternate weighting strategy is the use of survey regression models. In contrast to the model-based approach of using the person weight, this survey-based approach incorporates the strata and PSU variables. However, research examining the NCVS indicates that the choice between either person weights or PSU and strata variables does not affect the results (Baumer, Felson, and Messner 2003; Clay-Warner and McMahon 2008).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Descriptives

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the variables in this study (see Appendix). The sample is composed mostly of non-victims. The vast majority of respondents did not experience a *personal victimization* (97.53%). Regarding the victims of personal crimes, 2.27% of the sample was victimized once, 0.17% was victimized twice, and 0.04% suffered three or more victimizations. Similarly, most individuals were not victimized by personal *theft* (98.16%). Only 1.73% of the respondents experienced one *theft*, 0.10% suffered two such victimizations, and 0.01% experienced three or more victimizations. The mean *age* of the sample was about 47 years, with a standard deviation of almost 17 years. About 54% of the respondents were female. The mean household *income* was about \$40,482, with a standard deviation of about \$23,302. Most of the respondents, about 63%, were married, almost 18% had never been married, and about 19% were divorced, widowed, or separated. Only around 9% of the respondents were Black. The majority of the respondents lived in suburban areas (about 57%), about 29% lived in urban areas, and about 15% lived in rural areas. Only about 19% of respondents rode public transportation. About 67% of the sample attended either work or school. Close to 23% of respondents reported shopping almost every day. Finally, only around 19% of the sample went out almost every night.

Correlations

Correlations between the variables are detailed in Table 2. Several of the demographic variables are significantly correlated with *personal victimization*. As expected, *age* and *marital*

status are both significantly correlated with *personal victimization*. *Age* is negatively correlated with *personal victimization* ($p < .001$). *Never married* is positively correlated with victimization at the .001 level. Contrary to expectations, the correlation between *gender* and victimization is not significant. However, the positive correlation between (male) *gender* and victimization approaches significance ($p < .056$), and this relationship is significant when controlling for the effects of the other demographic variables in the multivariate model (see Table 3). This justifies my continued examination of the relationship between *gender*, routine activities, and *personal victimization*, despite the lack of a significant bivariate relationship. As expected, *income* is not related to *personal victimization*.

Several of the demographic variables are also significantly correlated with *theft*. *Age* is negatively correlated with personal *theft* at the .001 level. As expected, *gender* is not significantly correlated with *theft*. *Income* is positively correlated with personal *theft* ($p < .01$). Additionally, *never married* is positively correlated with *theft* at the .001 level.

Generally, the demographic variables are also significantly correlated with the routine activity variables. *Age* is negatively correlated with each of the routine activities at the .001 level. *Gender* is positively correlated with both *work/school* and *night activity* at the .001 level; however, the correlation between *gender* and *public transit* is not significant and the correlation between *gender* and *shopping* only approaches significance ($p < .057$). *Income* is positively correlated with each of the routine activity variables at the .001 level. *Never married* is positively correlated with each of the routine activities at the .001 level.

Finally, the routine activity variables are all positively correlated with *personal victimization* at the .001 level. Similarly, all of the routine activity variables are also significantly correlated with *theft*. *Public transit* is positively correlated with personal *theft* at

the .01 level, while *work/school*, *shopping*, and *night activity* are each positively correlated with *theft* at the .001 level.

Now that I have established the existence of relationships between demographics and victimization, demographics and routine activities, and routine activities and victimization, I proceed to examine more closely the nature of these relationships in multivariate models.

Negative Binomial Regression

I conducted two series of multivariate negative binomial regressions in which demographics and routine activities predict the number of victimizations. The models examining *personal victimization* are displayed in Table 3. The models examining *theft* are displayed in Table 4. In each set of analyses, Model 1 contains only demographics and the control variables. Model 2 adds *public transit* to the variables in the first model. Model 3 includes *work/school* with the demographics and controls. *Shopping* is added to the demographics and controls in Model 4. Model 5 includes *night activity* with the original variables. Finally, Model 6 includes the demographics, controls, and all the routine activity variables.

Table 3 demonstrates that the bivariate correlations involving *personal victimization* are also found in these multivariate analyses. Model 1 displays the relationships between the demographic variables and *personal victimization* and confirms the results of the bivariate correlations. *Age* is negatively related to the number of personal victimizations an individual experienced: for every year increase in age, an individual's victimizations decrease by 2.9% ($p < .001$). *Gender* is significantly related to *personal victimization* in the multivariate model. Men experience 13.9% more personal victimization than do women ($p < .05$). *Marital status* is significantly related to victimization: individuals who have never been married experience 26.8%

more personal victimizations than do married individuals ($p < .01$). Finally, as in the bivariate correlations, *income* is not significantly related to *personal victimization*.

The results from Model 6 in Table 3 display the relationships between the routine activity variables and *personal victimization*. When controlling for the demographic variables and the other routine activities, each of the routine activity variables is significantly related to victimization. Individuals who ride public transportation experience 16.5% more personal victimizations than do people who do not use public transportation ($p < .05$). People who go to work or school experience almost 33% more victimizations than do individuals who do neither ($p < .01$). Respondents who shop almost every day experience 20.3% more personal victimizations than do those who shop with less frequency ($p < .01$). Finally, individuals who go out almost every evening experience 50.4% more personal victimizations than do individuals who go out less frequently at night ($p < .001$).

Generally, the findings from the bivariate correlations involving *theft* are reflected in the multivariate analyses shown in Table 4. Model 1 shows the relationships between demographics and *theft* and confirms most of the bivariate correlations. *Age* is negatively related to personal *theft*. For every year increase in *age*, an individual's victimizations decrease by 2.6% ($p < .001$). As before, *gender* is not significantly related to *theft*. In contrast to the bivariate correlations, individuals who have never been married are no different from married individuals with respect to victimization. Finally, *income* is positively related to personal *theft*: for every \$10,000 increase in household income, an individual experiences 5.2% more victimizations ($p < .01$).

The results from Model 6 in Table 4 confirm most of the bivariate correlations between the routine activity variables and *theft*. While *public transit* had a significant bivariate correlation with personal *theft*, this relationship disappears in the multivariate analysis. The

remaining routine activity variables are all positively related to *theft*. Individuals who attend work or school suffer 43.7% more victimizations than do individuals who attend neither work nor school ($p < .001$). People who shop almost every day experience 22.2% more victimizations than do people who do not shop as often ($p < .05$). Finally, respondents who go out almost every night experience 37% more thefts than do those who go out less frequently at night ($p < .001$).

Now that I have briefly discussed the effects of both demographics and routine activities on *personal victimization* and *theft*, I will examine the regression results with regard to my hypotheses on the relationships between *age*, *gender*, *income*, *marital status*, routine activities, and victimization.

Age

The results from Tables 3 and 4 suggest that routine activities do not mediate the relationship between either *age* and *personal victimization* or *age* and *theft*. Though each of the routine activities is significantly related to *personal victimization* in Table 3, their inclusion in Models 2-6 does not affect the influence of *age* on *personal victimization*. *Age* remains significant at the .001 level across all the models, and its beta values fluctuate only minimally. A similar pattern is seen with regard to *theft* in Table 4: despite the inclusion of routine activities, *age* remains highly significant ($p < .001$), and its beta values are essentially unaffected. This suggests that, though *age* and routine activities both affect *personal victimization* and *theft*, their effects on victimization are separate from one another. None of the effect of *age* on *personal victimization* or *theft* works through routine activities, leading me to reject both hypotheses predicting that the relationships between *age* and victimization are mediated through routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle.

Gender

The results from Table 3 suggest that the effect of *gender* on *personal victimization* is completely mediated through routine activities. When *work/school* is added in Model 3, the relationship between *gender* and *personal victimization*, formerly significant at the .05 level, becomes insignificant. This is accompanied by a 31.2% reduction in *gender's* beta coefficient, demonstrating the substantial decrease in the strength of the relationship between *gender* and victimization. *Night activity* also mediates the effect of *gender* on victimization. When *night activity* is added in Model 5, the relationship between *gender* and *personal victimization* loses significance. In addition to this, including *night activity* causes a 23.9% decrease in *gender's* beta value. In the final model, which includes both of these mediators (*work/school* and *night activity*), the relationship between *gender* and *personal victimization* loses significance and *gender's* beta value decreases by 46.3%. These findings suggest that the relationship between *gender* and *personal victimization* is entirely mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle, supporting my hypothesis. Men experience more personal victimizations than women because they are more likely than women to attend work or school and go out at night, activities which increase their exposure to crime.

Income

The results from Table 4 suggest that the effect of *income* on *theft* is completely mediated by routine activities. When *work/school* is added in Model 3, the relationship between *income* and *theft*, significant at the .01 level in Model 1, loses significance. This loss of significance is accompanied by a 29.4% decrease in the beta coefficient for *income*, demonstrating a substantial decrease in the strength of this relationship. In Model 6, when all the routine activities are included, the relationship between *income* and *theft* loses significance, and the beta value

decreases by 34.6%. These findings suggest that the relationship between *income* and *theft* is entirely mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle, supporting my hypothesis. Wealthier individuals experience more thefts than do poorer individuals because they are more likely to attend work or school, increasing their exposure to criminal victimization.

Marital Status

The results from Table 3 suggest that the relationship between *never married* and *personal victimization* is partially mediated by routine activities. When *night activity* is added in Model 5, the relationship between *never married* and victimization goes from being significant at the .01 level to being significant at the .05 level. This decrease in statistical significance is accompanied by a 29.8% decrease in the variable's beta coefficient. When all the routine activities are taken into account in Model 6, *never married* experiences a similar drop in significance (from $p < .01$ to $p < .05$) and a 27.9% decrease in its beta value. This all suggests that single individuals are more likely than married individuals to suffer *personal victimization*, in part, because they go out at night more frequently. However, this pattern does not seem to hold for *theft*. The results from Table 4 suggest that, when controlling for the influences of the other demographic variables, being *never married* does not affect an individual's risk of *theft*. Routine activities cannot mediate the relationship because no relationship exists, leading me to reject my hypothesis predicting that the relationship between being single and experiencing *theft* is mediated by routine activities indicative of a high-exposure lifestyle.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The results provided mixed support for the routine activity hypotheses. The effects of gender on personal victimization and income on theft were completely mediated by routine activities, while the effect of being single on personal victimization was partially mediated by routine activities. However, the effect of age on personal victimization and theft was not mediated by routine activities, and being single did not increase an individual's risk of theft.

Gender

Men experience higher rates of personal victimization than women, and the results suggest that these differences are caused by gender differences in routine activities. Men are victimized more than women, in part, because they are more likely than women to attend work or school and, in part, because they are more likely than women to go out at night.

Despite changes over the past several decades, workforce participation in our society continues to reflect the traditional gendered division of labor: men engage in paid labor while women often perform domestic labor (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998; Deutsch 1999; Moen and Sweet 2003; Raley, Mattingly, and Bianchi 2006). Even in relatively egalitarian marriages, the introduction of children into the household tends to bring about a shift to more traditional roles of breadwinner and caregiver. When a child is born in a marriage in which both partners have jobs, the wife is much more likely than her husband to leave her job to care for the child, while the husband generally focuses more on his job when a child is born (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Cohen and Bianchi 1999; Lundberg and Rose 2000; Raley et al. 2006). Going to work necessarily involves leaving the safety of one's home, dramatically increasing one's

exposure to criminal victimization. Because men are more likely than women to work outside of the home, it is not surprising that men experience more personal victimizations.

Men are also more likely than women to go out at night, and these gender differences are probably influenced by gender differences in fear of crime. Women have much higher levels of fear of crime and perceived risk of crime and are more likely than men to constrain their behavior in response to these concerns (Ferraro 1995, 1996; Hindelang et al. 1978; Keane 1998; Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Warr 1984, 1994). Given that fear of crime causes women to restrict their daily activities, then it is not surprising that a portion of the gender differences in victimization is due to the fact that women spend fewer evenings outside of their homes than men. Being out at night greatly increases one's risk of victimization, and women are more likely to constrain their activities in response to their perceived risk of victimization and their fear of crime. Because they are more likely than men to spend their evenings at home, women greatly reduce their relative risk of being victimized, resulting in the gender differences in personal victimization.

Income

Household income is positively related to rates of theft, and the results suggest that these differences are caused entirely by differences in routine activities. Specifically, persons residing in high income households are more likely to leave their homes on a daily basis to go to work or school, which increases their risk of personal theft. This is logical because leaving the safety of one's home to go to work or school increases one's exposure to theft.

Having a higher income also makes individuals significantly more attractive targets. Offenders—especially in instances of property crime—choose targets they perceive as likely to yield the greatest reward (Clarke and Cornish 1985; Cohen et al. 1981; Cornish and Clarke 1986;

Garofalo 1987; Hough 1987; Miller 1998). Wealthy individuals are more likely to possess items to be stolen, such as cars. This should make them at greater risk of theft than poor people when they leave the safety of their homes, because they are more appealing potential victims.

Considering that wealthier individuals are more likely than poorer individuals to have jobs, they become exposed and attractive targets lacking guardianship on a daily basis when they leave their homes and enter riskier environments going to and from work.

This also raises an important issue regarding routine activities and working. Going to work is a commonly used measure of routine activities (Cohen and Cantor 1980; Cohen et al. 1981; Miethe et al. 1987; Miethe, Stafford, and Sloane 1990). However, unlike another frequently used routine activity—night activity—going to work is a somewhat more complicated measure. Going out at night is clearly a routine activity in the most fundamental theoretical sense of the term. Going to work is less straightforward than night activity because it is harder to disentangle theoretically. Going to work certainly does involve an individual leaving his home, thereby increasing his exposure to crime. However, going to work is also the way in which most people acquire their incomes, so working increases disposable income. This increases their attractiveness as targets, as they have more and better things to steal. Wealth also increases mobility, since a wealthier person can afford to travel in a wider area, spending less time in her home, thus increasing her exposure to crime. Yet, wealth can also protect people from crime by enabling them to increase their guardianship and reduce their proximity to crime. Wealthy individuals can afford to live in gated communities with security guards and to have expensive security systems in their homes and cars.

In my study, I found that going to work or school increased the risk of personal victimization and theft; however, there is some debate over whether going to work should

increase an individual's risk of victimization. Though individuals increase their exposure to crime while traveling between work and home, some researchers have raised the issue that going to work can actually insulate an individual from victimization (Miethe et al. 1987). According to this view, while individuals are at work, their risk of victimization should actually be much lower, since the workplace is often an atmosphere of increased guardianship, which would make individuals much less suitable targets. On the other hand, other research has demonstrated how routine activities within the workplace can increase a person's risk of victimization (Lynch 1987; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1996). The context of the work environment is an important consideration, since the risk of victimization at work varies widely across different occupations (Block, Felson, and Blick 1984).

Marital Status

Single (never married) individuals experience higher rates of personal victimization than married individuals, and the results suggest that a portion of these differences is caused by differences in routine activities. Single people are victimized more than married people, in part, because they go out at night more frequently than do married people.

The lifestyle of a single person is quite different from that of a married person. Unlike married people, single people are searching for a mate, which means that they are more likely to be involved in the dating scene. This entails going out to bars, clubs, and other fairly high-risk locales, often at night, a risky time in and of itself. These types of locations are associated with victimization, as is spending time out at night (Corrado et al. 1980; Kennedy and Forde 1990; Miethe et al. 1987; Miethe et al. 1990; Roncek and Maier 1991). Dating also involves spending time around strangers, or at least non-family members, both of which are associated with victimization (Hindelang et al. 1978). Additionally, these situations often involve alcohol or

other intoxicants, and the use of—or even mere presence of—alcohol and drugs is highly associated with both offending and victimization (Fisher et al. 1998; Martino, Collins, and Ellickson 2004; Sampson and Lauritsen 1990; Schwartz and Pitts 1995). This relationship is even stronger for violent crimes, which tend to be of a more expressive and impulsive nature than property crimes (Cohen et al. 1981; Hindelang 1976; Hindelang et al. 1978; Miethe et al. 1987). The differences in personal victimization between single and married people are likely driven by violent crimes, because no differences exist between the two groups with regard to theft.

Though the results demonstrated that people who are separated, divorced, or widowed (not married) do experience higher levels of personal victimization and theft than do married individuals, I did not predict that this is due to their participation in the routine activities examined in this study, and the results confirmed this presumption. The greater risk associated with being in this group was completely distinct from the risk of victimization caused by the routine activities. Because these individuals have, at some point, made the transition to marriage, many aspects of their daily activities would more closely resemble the activities of married individuals due to the obligations (e.g., children) and changes in their social life that accompanied marriage. Therefore, their risks of personal victimization and theft probably are less entwined with routine activities indicative of a high exposure lifestyle and more likely to stem from reduced guardianship. These individuals are more likely to live alone than when they were married, so when they ceased being married, their risk of victimization increased. Whereas single people are more likely to have roommates, people who were once married are less likely to return to that lifestyle.

Limitations

As with any research, this study has several limitations. The primary limitation is the lack of nuanced measures of routine activities. This is the problem with using the NCVS to examine routine activities. Though the NCVS provides arguably the best data regarding victimization in the United States, the survey's measures of routine activities leave something to be desired. Simply measuring whether someone rides public transportation, goes to work or school, goes shopping, or goes out at night are not the most effective measures of daily activities. If a man goes out every night to attend prayer meetings at the church down the block from his house, then he probably experiences a significantly lower risk of being assaulted than the woman who goes out every night to drink at bars in the central city or the man who goes out every night to buy and use drugs in an abandoned building turned crack house. Leaving one's house certainly increases one's risk of victimization, but what the person does while out of the house potentially has a much stronger effect on her risk of victimization.

Some of the measures in this study gloss over important distinctions that should be taken into consideration. When does an individual engage in an activity? Where and around whom does this activity take place? A more detailed sense of the context in which people's daily activities take place would enable researchers to create much better measures of routine activities, thus allowing better tests of the theories of victimization. However, though a few studies have used fairly detailed measures of routine activities (Fisher et al. 1998; Kennedy and Forde 1990; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998), most of the literature relies on the frequency of night activity and the major daily activity (i.e., *work/school*). Judged by this standard, the current study exceeds expectations by including two additional measures of routine activities: riding public transportation and shopping. Also, it should be noted that several of the

demographic-victimization relationships were entirely mediated by the routine activities included in this study, so though these measures could be much better, they were also sufficient to explain the relationships between gender and personal victimization and income and theft.

In addition to the routine activity measures, two other measures were somewhat lacking: income and urbanicity. Income was measured in fourteen intervals. Though I used this information to create actual dollar amounts for the variable, the fact remains that the variable was created using a fairly crude measure. Of particular concern was the fact that the top interval for household income was \$75,000 or more. This draws no distinctions between individuals who are solidly middle class (or even possibly lower middle class, depending on the size of the family and the cost of living associated with their location in the country), upper middle class, upper class, and the uber-wealthy. An income variable that measured actual dollar amounts would have been far better than the existing measure.

Additionally, the urbanicity measure was not the best measure of the context of an individual's community. The categories of urban, suburban, and rural are useful to an extent, as evidenced that they were significantly associated with an individual's risk of both personal victimization and theft. However, details regarding a person's neighborhood could have yielded better measures of that individual's proximity to crime. Census tract information on the median income and crime rate of the area would have been of greater use. Possessing more detailed measures of income and the community context would have enabled more complex analyses that could have better examined key concepts of routine activities and lifestyle theories. The interactions between routine activities and these more detailed measures would have allowed an examination of how the risks associated with a person's daily activities differ depending on his attractiveness as a target and within what context these activities are being preformed (i.e., the

presence of motivated offenders). With the current measures, these sorts of analyses would not prove nearly as useful. Unfortunately, such measures were not available.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Routine activities theory and lifestyle theory are the primary sociological theories explaining criminal victimization. Victimization is spread neither evenly nor randomly across our society. Different groups of people experience different levels of victimization. Both routine activities theory and lifestyle theory rest on the assumption that some individuals experience higher risks of victimization than do others because of differences in their daily activities. Despite the importance of this mechanism in explaining how victimization is socially distributed, few researchers have placed it under critical examination. The studies that have attempted to test this claim have produced mixed results, leaving no consensus in the literature (Corrado et al. 1980; Miethe et al. 1987). Additionally, the validity of these studies is questionable due to various shortcomings related to the data and analyses involved.

In this study, I preformed a test of this central concept of routine activities and lifestyle theories, exploring the relationships between demographic characteristics, lifestyle patterns, and victimization. I examined if and how certain daily activities—riding public transportation, attending work or school, going shopping, and going out at night—mediate the associations between an individual's age, gender, income, marital status, and that individual's risk of personal victimization or theft. The results provided mixed support for the routine activity hypotheses. Though some relationships were mediated by routine activities, others were not. When I looked at personal victimization, I found that routine activities mediated the effects of gender and marital status on victimization. When I examined only thefts, I found that routine activities mediated the relationship between income and victimization. Because there were some effects

observed in both personal victimization and theft, and, yet, in neither were all the demographic effects mediated by routine activities, it remains unclear whether routine activities and lifestyle theories are better equipped to explain personal victimization, in general, or just property-based victimization.

This study is significant because it examines an important implication of the dominant theories of victimization. Routine activities and lifestyle theories assume that victimization rates differ across demographic groups because individuals in these groups possess different lifestyle patterns. In the past, many studies examining these theories have used demographics as indirect measures of lifestyles, assuming that the differences in victimization across these groups were caused by differences in their daily activities. However, this assumption is unsubstantiated, and differences other than routine activities could have been causing the differing rates of victimization. The ideas presented in routine activities and lifestyle theories must be tested in order to determine whether they present a valid explanation of the distribution of victimization in our society or whether they should be discarded in favor of one of the many other potential theoretical explanations within criminology of the demographic differences in victimization.

This study demonstrated that the implicit mechanism explaining demographic differences in victimization presented in routine activities and lifestyle theories does possess some validity. Some of the demographic patterns in victimization can be entirely explained by differences in routine activities. However, other demographic differences, such as the association between age and victimization, were caused by something other than the routine activities examined in this study. This study took an important step to addressing these issues, and other tests are sure to follow. Though I found some mediating effects for personal victimization and theft, it is possible that more nuanced measures of daily activities could, in fact, mediate the demographic-

victimization relationships unaffected by routine activities in this study. Future research should examine this question using more refined lifestyle measures that take into account the context of these daily activities. Where do people go when they leave their homes? What types of places are these, and who else is there? Additionally, future research could also examine whether these relationships differ for specific crimes, rather than broad categories such as personal victimization and theft, which could obscure important crime-specific distinctions.

This study also suggests that gender differences in victimization are caused, in part, by the fact that men go out at night more often than do women. As mentioned earlier, this gender difference in lifestyles could be caused by fear of crime. Women are much more fearful of crime than are men; because of this, they are much more likely to constrain their daily activities (Ferraro 1995, 1996; Hindelang et al. 1978; Keane 1998; Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Warr 1984, 1994). This is ironic, given the fact that their risk of personal victimization (other than rape) is actually much lower than that faced by men (Catalano 2006; Ferraro 1995, 1996; Hindelang et al. 1978; Rennison 2000; Skogan and Maxfield 1981; Warr 1984, 1994).

This apparent contradiction between women's low rates of victimization and their high levels of fear of crime could be explained by women's fear of rape. Some evidence suggests that women's fear of crime in general is actually a fear of sexual assault (Ferraro 1995, 1996). Ferraro argues that because any victimization of women may involve a sexual assault, women's fear of nonsexual crimes is heavily influenced by their fear of rape. This fear is particularly great among younger women. Women ages 18 to 35 years old are much more afraid of rape than older women, and this fear causes them to be much more likely to constrain their daily activities (Ferraro 1995). Keane (1998) found that, among women, it is young, single, urban women who experience the greatest fear of victimization. These women constrain their routine activities in

response to this fear: they were very unlikely to walk alone either in their neighborhoods after dark or in a parking garage (ibid). The fact that younger women are more fearful of rape reflects their relative risk of sexual victimization: female victims of rape tend to be between the ages of 16 and 24 (Amir 1971; Belknap 1987; Skogan 1976).

The gender gap in personal victimization could be explained by the fact that females are more likely to restrict their daily activities because of their fear of rape. Because women are more fearful of being victimized by crime—or rather, rape—they engage in far fewer risky routine activities than men. By attempting to insulate themselves from rape in particular, women ultimately reduce their relative risk of personal victimization in general. However, because the vast majority of rapes are committed by non-strangers (Catalano 2006; Rennison 2000), and females have a high risk of being sexually victimized in their own homes (Belknap 1987), reducing exposure to personal crime by not going out at night and spending more time in the relative safety of the home would do little to affect a woman's overall risk of rape.

Future research should examine this relationship between gender, fear, routine activities, and victimization, determining whether a direct link exists. Is it fear that causes women to engage in fewer risky activities compared to men, and do the resulting gender differences in lifestyles cause women to experience lower risks of victimization? What kind of fear causes women to restrict their activities: fear of all crime or fear of rape? Does fear of crime result in lower risks of victimization? For instance, if some women do restrict their routine activities in response to their fear of rape, do they actually reduce their risk of being raped relative to other women? Does experiencing victimization affect an individual's fear of crime? If so, does it increase or decrease a person's level of fear? Does this change translate into alterations in the individual's lifestyle? These are all important questions that deserve attention in the future.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Relationship between Demographics, Routine Activities, and Personal Victimization

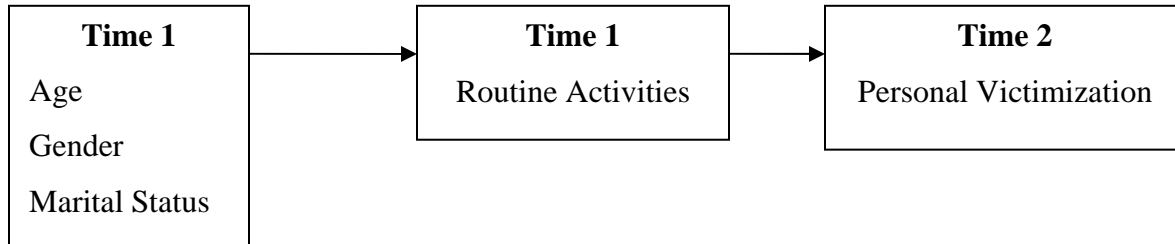


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of the Relationship between Demographics, Routine Activities, and Theft

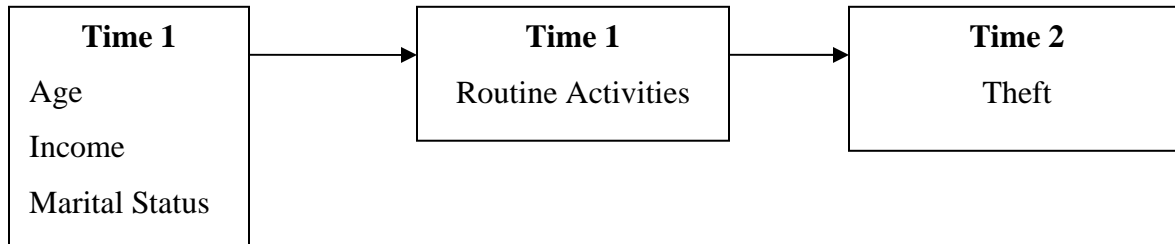


Table 1: Variable Descriptions (N = 48,457)

Variable	Description	Percent of Sample	
<i>Dependent Variables</i>			
Personal Victimization	0 = No victimizations	97.53%	
	1 = 1 victimization	2.27%	
	2 = 2 victimizations	0.17%	
	3 = 3 or more victimizations	0.04%	
Theft	0 = No victimizations	98.61%	
	1 = 1 victimization	1.73%	
	2 = 2 victimizations	0.10%	
	3 = 3 or more victimizations	0.01%	
<i>Independent Variables</i>			
Gender	0 = Female	54.25%	
	1 = Male	45.75%	
Marital Status			
Never Married		17.75%	
Not Married: Divorced, Separated, Widowed		19.39%	
Married (Reference Category)		62.86%	
Race	0 = Non-Black	90.65%	
	1 = Black	9.35%	
Urbanicity			
Suburban		56.54%	
Rural		14.66%	
Urban (Reference Category)		28.80%	
Public Transit	0 = No	80.77%	
	1 = Yes	19.23%	
Work/School	0 = No	32.70%	
	1 = Yes	67.30%	
Shopping	0 = Less than almost every day	76.52%	
	1 = Almost every day	23.48%	
Night Activity	0 = Less than almost every night	81.07%	
	1 = Almost every night	18.93%	
	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age (Years)	18 to 90	46.89	16.96
Income (x \$10,000)	.24995 to 7.50000	4.24823	2.33022

Table 2: Correlations of Victimization, Demographics, and Routine Activities (N = 48,457)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Personal Vic.	1.00													
2 Theft	0.83 ***	1.00												
3 Age	-0.07 ***	-0.05 ***	1.00											
4 Gender	0.01	0.00	-0.04 ***	1.00										
5 Income	0.00	0.01 **	-0.14 ***	0.09 ***	1.00									
6 Never Married	0.04 ***	0.03 ***	-0.40 ***	0.05 ***	-0.13 ***	1.00								
7 Not Married	0.00	0.00	0.29 ***	-0.14 ***	-0.28 ***	-0.23 ***	1.00							
8 Race	0.00	0.00	-0.03 ***	-0.04 ***	-0.16 ***	0.11 ***	0.08 ***	1.00						
9 Suburban	0.00	0.00	-0.01	0.01	0.21 ***	-0.08 ***	-0.05 ***	-0.14 ***	1.00					
10 Rural	-0.02 ***	-0.02 ***	0.06 ***	0.00	-0.17 ***	-0.04 ***	0.02 ***	0.00	-0.47 ***	1.00				
11 Public Transit	0.02 ***	0.01 **	-0.06 ***	0.00	0.03 ***	0.11 ***	0.00	0.06 ***	-0.05 ***	-0.11 ***	1.00			
12 Work/School	0.05 ***	0.04 ***	-0.49 ***	0.18 ***	0.29 ***	0.13 ***	-0.15 ***	-0.02 ***	0.04 ***	-0.05 ***	0.02 ***	1.00		
13 Shopping	0.03 ***	0.02 ***	-0.08 ***	-0.01	0.06 ***	0.03 ***	-0.03 ***	-0.02 ***	-0.01	-0.01 **	0.03 ***	0.04 ***	1.00	
14 Night Activity	0.05 ***	0.04 ***	-0.24 ***	0.07 ***	0.02 ***	0.19 ***	-0.03 ***	0.06 ***	-0.02 ***	-0.03 ***	0.02 ***	0.21 ***	0.16 ***	1.00

*** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$

Table 3: Negative Binomial Regression of Personal Victimization on Demographics and Routine Activities (N = 48,457)

Independent Variable	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<i>Demographics</i>						
Age	-0.029 ***	-0.029 ***	-0.026 ***	-0.029 ***	-0.026 ***	-0.024 ***
Gender (Male)	0.130 *	0.130 *	0.090	0.133 *	0.099	0.070
Income	0.017	0.016	0.004	0.015	0.015	0.002
Never Married	0.238 **	0.224 **	0.252 **	0.236 **	0.167 *	0.171 *
Not Married	0.556 ***	0.553 ***	0.537 ***	0.551 ***	0.518 ***	0.500 ***
Race (Black)	-0.171	-0.180	-0.170	-0.165	-0.197	-0.200
Suburban	-0.161 *	-0.147 *	-0.157 *	-0.155 *	-0.155 *	-0.133
Rural	-0.438 ***	-0.412 ***	-0.434 ***	-0.433 ***	-0.437 ***	-0.403 ***
<i>Routine Activities</i>						
Public Transit		0.146				0.152 *
Work/School			0.332 ***			0.284 ***
Shopping				0.251 ***		0.185 **
Night Activity					0.464 ***	0.408 ***

*** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$

Table 4: Negative Binomial Regression of Theft on Demographics and Routine Activities
(N = 48,457)

Independent Variable	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<i>Demographics</i>						
Age	-0.026 ***	-0.027 ***	-0.022 ***	-0.026 ***	-0.024 ***	-0.021 ***
Gender (Male)	-0.020	-0.050	-0.043	-0.034	-0.060	-0.063
Income	0.051 **	0.050 **	0.036	0.049 **	0.049 **	0.033
Never Married	0.156	0.142	0.170	0.153	0.097	0.104
Not Married	0.492 ***	0.490 ***	0.467 ***	0.489 ***	0.459 ***	0.437 ***
Race (Black)	-0.041	-0.050	-0.043	-0.034	-0.060	-0.063
Suburban	-0.245 **	-0.232 **	-0.241 **	-0.239 **	-0.241 **	-0.221 **
Rural	-0.578 ***	-0.554 ***	-0.578 ***	-0.574 ***	-0.576 ***	-0.548 ***
<i>Routine Activities</i>						
Public Transit		0.133				0.137
Work/School			0.397 ***			0.362 ***
Shopping				0.251 **		0.200 *
Night Activity					0.381 ***	0.315 ***

*** = p < .001; ** = p < .01; * = p < .05