



Assault Victimization: A Comparative Analysis of the United States, the Netherlands, and England & Wales

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Abstract

Routine activities/lifestyles theories recognize the importance of opportunity, as it is related to victimization. Most of the research utilizing a routine activities/lifestyles theoretical framework has concentrated on populations in a single country, and results are inconsistent. Some research indicates that the relationship between daily activities and victimization is of prime importance, while other studies note demographic characteristics as proxies for lifestyle to best explain victimization. The utility of a routine activities/lifestyles approach to explain victimization is less clear within a cross-national scope. Additionally, much cross-national research is limited by the availability of comparable data on victimization. In this study, I examine the relationship between routine activities/lifestyles and assault victimization for respondents in the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. In this study, I utilize the International Crime Victimization Survey and the European Survey on Crime and Safety. The results indicate characteristics of assault victimization vary across the three countries. Moreover, the relationship between daily activities/lifestyles and victimization differs across the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales.

Key Words: Routine activities; victimization; assault; lifestyles; Survey;

Introduction

According to the Uniform Crime Report (UCR), as compiled by the FBI, assault is the most frequently occurring violent crime in the U.S. (UCR 2006). The violent crime of assault has numerous serious short- and long-term consequences, including both physical and psychological effects. Additionally, assaults characterize the majority of personal violent crimes in other industrialized nations (Bouten, Goudriaan, & Nieuwbeerta, 2002). It is important to recognize not only the characteristics surrounding assault victimization within a cross-national perspective, but also to explore the theoretical relationship between routine activities and lifestyle variables and assault victimization experience (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978).

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While much existing research focuses on comparing victimization rates across countries (Gruszczynska, 2004; Killias, van Kesteren, & Rindlisbacher, 2001; LaFree & Drass, 2002; Lewis, Barclay, de Cavarlay, Costa, & Smit, 2004); many studies do not examine victimization within a theoretical framework. The understanding of what these victimization rates mean, and what circumstances surround the criminal act is limited. A focus on the opportunities surrounding victimization is relevant, as Wilcox, Land, & Hunt (2003) propose opportunities are an important factor in all criminal behavior. Routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and lifestyles theory (Hindelang et al., 1978) both emphasize the role of opportunity in victimization experience.

Existing research that incorporates a routine activities/lifestyles theoretical approach has primarily concentrated on victimization in the U.S. (Brody, Ge, Gonger, Gibbons, Murry, Gerrard, & Simons, 2001; Osgood & Chambers, 2000; Schreck & Fisher, 2004; Spano & Nagy, 2005). A cross-national comparison of crime is often complex, as different countries define crimes uniquely and have different official policies. Additionally, while large scale cross-national studies are useful for identifying trends in victimization, studies that incorporate only a few countries within the analysis offer an outlet to examine in greater detail, the characteristics of victimization. This exploration can lead to a greater understanding of victimization experience through the lens of a theoretical framework focused on opportunity.

The current study examines three developed countries, the U.S., the Netherlands and England and Wales. The focus is on these particular countries, as past empirical comparisons have been made regarding these countries (e.g. Tseloni, Wittebrood, Farrell, & Pease, 2004). I utilized the International Crime Victimization Survey and the European Survey on Crime and Safety, both of which are self-report forms of victimization experience. This data allows for a more accurate comparison of victimization, as the survey questions and methodology remain consistent across each of the three countries. I examine the characteristics surrounding assault victimization in each country, including location, whether the offender was known, the use of force, whether a weapon was used, and if injury was the result of the attack. Further, I incorporate logistic regression models to examine a routine activities/lifestyle theoretical approach in understanding victimization.

Routine Activities/Lifestyles Theoretical Perspective

Routine activities theory was developed by Cohen & Felson (1979) during the post World War II era, and was based on a sample of the population within the U.S. The premise of the theory is on the shift in the daily routines of individuals from activities centered in the home environment to activities conducted outside of the home. The change in the location of daily activities highlights the increased opportunities presented for victimization experience. Activities that take place in public spaces are perceived as situations with greater opportunity for victimization to occur (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Felson, 1987; Messner & Blau, 1987).

Cohen & Felson (1979) highlight three main elements within routine activities theory that are necessary to create an opportunity for victimization to occur. These elements include motivated offenders, suitable targets, and a lack of capable guardians. Recreational activities that take place outside of the home increase the chance of contact between individuals and likely offenders. Moreover, certain leisure activities are likely to present individuals as suitable targets and often incur a lack of guardianship. Cohen & Felson

(1979) propose there is opportunity for victimization when each of the three elements of routine activities theory is present within the same time and space.

Parallel to ideas within routine activities theory, lifestyles theory emphasizes the opportunity surrounding victimization experience (Hindelang et al., 1978). This theoretical perspective focuses on the demographic characteristics of individuals as they are related to role expectations. Role expectations are linked to the behaviors of individuals in relation to the status in which they occupy. For example, the marital situation of an individual is likely to influence the type of activity in which that individual is involved. Those persons who are single are more likely than married persons to spend their free time involved in recreational activities outside of the home, especially during the evening and nighttime hours. Limitations of behavior are constructed as a result of institutions, such as marriage, within society (Hindelang et al., 1978).

Empirical Support for Routine Activities/Lifestyles Theory

Much of the empirical research that examines opportunity for victimization within a routine activities/lifestyles framework is concentrated on populations within a single country. These studies have focused on populations in the U.S., Canada, and England and Wales. Some of this research indicates measures of actual daily routines are the most important factor for understanding victimization experience (Kennedy & Forde, 1990; Miethe & Meier, 1990; Miethe, Stafford, & Long, 1987; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2000; Plass & Carmody, 2005; Sacco, Johnson, & Arnold, 1993). Conversely, other researchers propose the demographic characteristics of individuals serve as proxies for lifestyles, and are sufficient measures of the elements in routine activities/lifestyles theory (Cohen, Klugel, & Land, 1981; Daday, Broidy, Crandall, & Sklar, 2005; Miethe et al., 1987; Sampson, 1987).

Mustaine & Tewksbury (2000) contend direct measures of activities need to be incorporated into victimization research, as demographic proxies for lifestyles are not adequate representations of the elements within routine activities/lifestyles theory. Sacco et al. (1993) utilize measures of routines including leisure and non-leisure activities in their research. These authors report residents in Canada who are involved in more activities in the public sphere have an increased risk of violent victimization. Similarly, in a study on Canadian residents, Kennedy & Forde (1990) note individuals involved in frequent nighttime activities, such as going to a bar or working at night, are at greater risk for assault victimization. This relationship remains significant when the demographic characteristics of marital status, age, and sex are considered.

Support for the relationship between activities and victimization as reported for Canadian respondents has also been found in other countries. Empirical research conducted in populations of single countries indicates the activities of individuals are of primary importance over demographic considerations. For instance, individuals in the U.S. who are frequent participants in bars and at parties have higher rates of assault victimization (Plass & Carmody, 2005). Miethe et al. (1987) report the relationship between nighttime activities and violent victimization is maintained even when demographic characteristics are included in the analysis. The pattern is consistent in an analysis of the British Crime Survey conducted by Miethe & Meier (1990). The authors note a direct effect of nighttime activities on assault victimization with the consideration of the demographic characteristics of living arrangement, age, and sex.

Contrarily, some researchers find demographic characteristics are indeed a proxy measure for lifestyle patterns (Cohen et al., 1981; Daday et al., 2005). Daday et al. (2005) note the sex, age, and race of individuals within the U.S. are predictive of violent victimization. These authors do not include measures of actual routines within their study. Similarly, Cohen et al. (1981) concentrate on a routine activities theoretical approach and indicate residence in an urban area, marital status, employment status, and age are important predictors of lifestyle which are related to predatory victimization risk. Moreover, studies that include daily routines and demographic characteristics have found demographic measures to be more important than those of actual activities (Miethe et al., 1987; Sampson, 1987).

While the degree of importance associated with routine activities and demographic considerations as they are related to victimization may warrant further exploration within a single country, these theoretical elements also need to be understood within a cross-national context. The daily activities and demographic lifestyle characteristics of individuals have been explored to some degree in comparative research. The application of a routine activities/lifestyles theoretical perspective to victimization across several countries furthers the scope of the theory. More specifically, comparative research emphasizes the differences and similarities in the relationships between activities/lifestyles and victimization across countries.

Routine Activities/Lifestyles Theory in a Cross-National Perspective

Cross-national studies on victimization vary in the range of countries included and the theoretical elements that are explored. For example, several researchers have concentrated on a small number of countries, emphasizing how the elements of routine activities theory apply to each country (LaFree & Birkbeck, 1991; Tseloni et al., 2004; Vazsonyi, Pickering, Belliston, Hessing, & Junger, 2002). Other studies focus on whether a routine activities theoretical framework can be applied on a large cross-national scope (van Wilsem, 2004; van Wilsem, de Graff, & Wittebrood, 2003). Similar to studies that utilize a routine activities approach in one country, cross-national research has produced differential findings of the importance of daily routines and lifestyle indicators as they are related to victimization.

Van Wilsem et al. (2003) include eighteen industrialized nations in their study and note the daily activity of work or going to school is significantly related to violent victimization. These researchers also find the lifestyle indicators of the size of town in which the respondent resides and the age of the respondent are significantly related to assault and robbery victimization. Within this large scale study, whether respondents go out in the evening for leisure activities was not found to be a significant factor in predicting victimization risk. While this study presents useful findings on the application of routine activities theory to victimization, it does not address how the relationship between theoretical elements and victimization may vary across countries.

Cross-national research conducted on a much smaller scale has produced similar findings of a non-significant relationship between evening leisure activities and victimization. Tseloni et al. (2004) focus on England and Wales, the U.S., and the Netherlands, and find the evening activities of going out and shopping are not significantly related to burglary victimization. These authors do, however, find the lifestyle indicators of marital status, unemployment, and age; maintain a significant relationship to victimization within specific countries. For instance, the relationship between marital

status and property victimization is significant only for respondents in the U.S., while individuals who are unemployed have a higher risk of victimization only in the Netherlands. The age of the respondent is inversely related to victimization in each of the three countries in the analysis (Tseloni et al., 2004).

These findings highlight the utility of incorporating routine activities theory on a small scale cross-national level, as the relationships between lifestyle indicators and victimization varies across countries. While cross-national research is needed to further the theoretical understanding of victimization, the availability of comparable data has limited the scope of comparative research. In efforts to address the problems associated with comparable data, Tseloni et al. (2004) employ three victimization surveys across the countries in their study, the British Crime Survey, the Police Monitor Victim Survey in the Netherlands, and the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). These victimization surveys are indeed similar, but remain problematic, as are each composed of different research designs and methods of implementation.

LaFree & Birkbeck (1991) utilize similar surveys to compare situational patterns of personal contact crimes, the U.S. NCVS and a survey modeled on the NCVS distributed in Venezuela. Within a routine activities theoretical framework, the authors find the location of the assault to be an important indicator of victimization in the U.S. Contrarily, public places for residents in Venezuela do not represent increased opportunity for victimization. The data employed in this research is advantageous for comparative research, as the survey used in Venezuela was structured according to the NCVS format. However, a gap in the literature remains, as the authors concentrate on the situational element of routine activities theory rather than of measures of specific routines or lifestyles.

Within a cross-national routine activities theoretical scope, Vazsonyi et al. (2002) examine the relationship between daily routines and adolescent offending behavior. While this research is focused on offending rather than victimization, the authors utilize the International Study of Adolescent Development to examine adolescent offenders in Hungary, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the U.S. This data offers a comparable source of information on youth across four countries. The relationship between daily routines and deviant behavior is significant, but does not vary across the countries in the analysis. These results are in opposition to many cross-national victimization studies, which likely indicate differential relationships between routine activities elements and victimization experience across countries. Even though Vazsonyi et al. (2002) incorporate a theoretical approach, this research is concentrated on adolescents, and activities specific to this subset of the population, which constrains the generalizability of the results.

The limited exploration and inconsistent findings of the relationship between specific elements of routine activities theory or lifestyle characteristics and victimization experience on a cross-national level highlights the need for further research. To fully understand the applicability of routine activities/lifestyles theory to countries outside of the U.S., small scale cross-national research needs to be conducted. Additionally, to ensure comparable data, the information analyzed should incorporate information on victimization and characteristics of the respondents gathered from the same data source across all countries.

Research Strategy

In the current study, I examine the characteristics of assault victimization in the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. I concentrate on a minimal number of countries to identify differences in the relationships between routine activities and victimization for each country. The selection of these three countries is in efforts to parallel the small scale cross-national research conducted by Tseloni et al. (2004). These authors have applied a routine activities theoretical approach to property victimization, but were limited in their research, as empirical results were based on different data sets specific to each country. To overcome the problems associated with the comparison of cross-national data, I utilize the International Crime Victimization Survey in conjunction with the European Survey on Crime and Safety. This data set offers a comparable set of measures and methodology across the countries in the analysis.

According to routine activities theory, individuals who are involved in evening leisure activities and daily activities of work and school are at more risk of victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979). I expect these daily routines to maintain a significant relationship to assault victimization in all countries even when demographic proxies for lifestyles are considered. I incorporate demographic characteristics as measures of lifestyles, and expect variation to exist in the relationships between lifestyles and victimization across the countries in the analysis. Certain lifestyle indicators, such as marital status and residing in an urban area, may be linked to victimization within specific countries. However, the lifestyle proxy of age is expected to influence victimization risk in each of the three countries (Tseloni et al., 2004).

Methods

Whether cross-national research on victimization is focused on a large scale or only between a few countries, comparable data has been difficult to obtain. Previous research has utilized official data as well as self-report victimization data. Several problems exist in using official data for comparative research. Citizens residing in different countries have varying levels of trust of the police, which can affect reporting practices. Additionally, the legal definition of what constitutes as crime varies across countries (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008). To combat the problems associated with official data sources, Tseloni et al. (2004) employ self-report victimization surveys from three countries within their research. This approach is also problematic, as country specific surveys are likely to have different research designs and fieldwork operations (Block, 1993). In the current study, I utilize the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS) and the European Survey on Crime and Safety (EU ICS). These self-report victimization surveys address several obstacles present in cross-national comparative research (van Kesteren, 2007).

Sample

The ICVS is a standardized self-report survey that has been conducted in five sweeps, starting in 1989 (van Kesteren, 2007). This survey includes information on eleven types of victimization, and includes variables necessary to test a routine activities theoretical approach. The ICVS contains questions about several types of activities in which respondents are involved and demographic characteristics indicative of lifestyles. The EU ICS format parallels the ICVS, and was utilized within the most recent wave (2005) of the ICVS. The ICVS includes information for over sixty developed and developing countries, while the EU ICS concentrates on eighteen countries within the European

Union. Within developed countries in the ICVS and the EU ICS, national samples were drawn to be representative of the population. Computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) were used in the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. The sample size for each of the countries ranges from approximately 1,000 to 2,000 respondents per wave.

While the ICVS/EU ICS provides a rich source of cross-national information on victimization, problematic elements of the data do need to be recognized (van Wilsem, 2004). As with all self-report surveys, individuals who have been victimized are the most likely respondents to actually complete the survey, which can lead to an overestimation of victimization. Importantly, Gruszczynska (2002) finds that the telescoping or forgetting effect is not a significant concern within the ICVS. Despite the weaknesses associated with the ICVS/EU ICS, this data is the largest source of information on self-reported victimization on a cross-national scale. Comparable measures exist within the ICVS/EU ICS, as the survey questions are worded exactly the same for each country. It is important to recognize respondents residing in different countries, or within different regions of the same country, have applied their own unique cultural interpretation to the survey.

Within the current study, I focus on the United States, the Netherlands, and England and Wales. For each of these three countries, I pool the data from the most recent sweeps of the ICVS/EU ICS (2000, 2005). This ensures that the most current victimization experiences are included thereby increasing the number of respondents for each country. In this analysis, there are a total of 3,002 respondents in the U.S., 4,001 in the Netherlands, and 3,825 in England and Wales.

Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable in this study is assault victimization. While assault is only one example of violent victimization, this type of crime is most clearly representative of expressive violence within the ICVS. Assault is defined in the ICVS as “being threatened or personally attacked by someone in a way that really frightened you either at home or elsewhere, such as in a pub, in the street, at school, on public transport, on the beach, or at your workplace” (ICVS Questionnaire, 2000:13). The question on assault inquires about any incidents which may have occurred over the past year. The assault variable is coded 1 if the respondent verifies this type of behavior and 0 if no attack or threat has taken place.

Independent Variables:

To further the understanding of assault victimization across the three countries in this study, several characteristics of the assault experience are considered. These include the location of the assault, whether the offender was known, if force or a weapon was used, and if an injury resulted from the attack. The location of the assault variable consists of six categories of potential locations where the assault occurred: at home, near the home, at work, elsewhere in the city, elsewhere, and unknown. The elsewhere category includes victimization that has occurred elsewhere in the country and abroad. For individuals who reported assault victimization, the ICVS includes follow-up questions on whether the respondent knows the offender either by sight or by name or not at all. Moreover, the respondent is asked to specify whether force was used in the assault or if they were just threatened. Individuals who had been victimized by assault also reported whether a weapon was used in the attack and if an injury occurred as a result of the assault.

In addition to descriptive characteristics of the victimization, I include variables indicative of individuals' routine activities/lifestyles in logistic regression models. To capture the actual routines of the respondents, I include variables that measure how often respondents go out for leisure activities and the occupation of the respondent. How often a respondent goes out is defined in the ICVS as going out in the evening for recreational purposes. This includes activities such as going to a pub, restaurant, cinema, or to see friends. Going out for leisure is coded on a scale which includes: (1) never, (2) less, (3) once a month, (4) once a week, and (5) almost every day. The occupation of the respondent indicates whether the respondent is primarily at home, or is routinely outside of the home for work or school purposes. The occupation variable is dummy coded (1=work or school, 0=all else). The reference category includes keeping home, looking for work, retired, and disabled, all of which are either home centered activities or types of situations which tend to be unstructured.

Lifestyle theory suggests characteristics of the individual dictate the role expectations of individuals, which I capture, in part, through the variables of whether the respondent lives alone or lives in an urban area. A dichotomous variable represents the respondents' living situation, where the live alone category (coded 1) includes those respondents who are single, divorced/separated, or widowed. The reference category includes those who are married or co-habiting. Towns or cities with a population of more than one hundred thousand are categorized as urban (coded 1), and cities with less than one hundred thousand residents is the reference category.

Additionally, I include the demographic characteristics of age and sex, as these characteristics are indicative of different types of lifestyles in which the respondent is involved. The age variable consists of twelve categories, ranging from 16-19 (coded as 1) to 70 plus (coded as 12). The sex of the respondent is dummy coded with females as the reference category. Finally, because I include two survey years in this research, and the focus is not longitudinal or based on changes over time, a year variable is included as a control (1=2000, 0=2005).

Results

In general, the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales each have relatively low rates of assault victimization. Of the three countries, respondents in the U.S. have the lowest levels of self-reporting; 4.8% of the respondents reported assault victimization within the past year (see Table 1). Respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales reported very similar rates of victimization experience (7.2% and 7.7% respectively). To further understand the situations surrounding assault victimization, it is important to examine the characteristics of the assault. The location of the assault, whether the offender is known, whether force or a weapon was used in the attack, and if injury occurred as a result are examined for the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales.

Table 1 displays the results of the location of the assault victimization as reported by the victim. The majority of attacks within the U.S. happened at work (30.1%). Conversely, only about 18%-19% of respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales reported the victimization had occurred at work. Respondents in the U.S. reported similar rates of assault that took place in the home (24.5%), near the home (20.3%), and elsewhere in the city (20.3%). Respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales reported the majority of assaults took place near the home or elsewhere in the city. Approximately 29% of respondents in the Netherlands and 23% of respondents in

England and Wales reported the assault happened near the home. Almost 27% of respondents in the Netherlands and 37.2% of respondents in England and Wales noted their victimization occurred elsewhere in the city.

Table 1. Frequency and Location of Assault Victimization

	United States	The Netherlands	England & Wales
Total N	3002	4001	3825
Assault N Yes (%)	143 (4.8)	290 (7.2)	296 (7.7)
<i>Location of Assault N (%)</i>			
At Home	35 (24.5)	29 (10.0)	46 (15.5)
Near the Home	29 (20.3)	85 (29.3)	68 (23.0)
At Work	43 (30.1)	56 (19.3)	53 (17.9)
Elsewhere in the City	29 (20.3)	78 (26.9)	110 (37.2)
Elsewhere	6 (4.2)	40 (13.8)	19 (6.4)
Unknown/No Response	1 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.0)

Over half of the respondents in the U.S. reported knowing the offender (54.8%), while only 34.3% of respondents in the Netherlands and 41.4% of respondents in England and Wales were able to identify the perpetrator of the assault (see Table 2). The use of force during an assault was reported in less than half of the cases of victimization for all of the countries in the analysis. Force was most likely used against respondents in England and Wales (42.4%), while only 33.6% of respondents in the U.S. and 26.6% of respondents in the Netherlands reported the use of force.

The use of weapons in the assault was most common in the U.S.; 27.2% of the respondents reported a weapon was used in the course of the assault. Fewer respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales reported the use of a weapon in the victimization (13.0% and 16.9% respectively). Because over 40% of respondents in England and Wales reported force was used in the assault, it is not unexpected respondents in this country were likely to report an injury as a result of the attack (22.3%). A resulting injury was less likely to occur to respondents in the U.S. (18.7%) and the Netherlands (9.5).

Table 2. Characteristics of Assault Victimization

	United States N=143		The Netherlands N=290		England & Wales N=296	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Known Offender	74	(54.8)	95	(34.3)	118	(41.4)
Force Used	45	(33.6)	25	(26.6)	53	(42.4)
Weapon Used	34	(27.2)	33	(13.0)	47	(16.9)
Injury	25	(18.7)	27	(9.5)	41	(22.3)

I utilize logistic regression models to examine the relationship between elements of routine activities/lifestyles theory and assault victimization. First, I concentrate on the daily activities of individuals, and include how often the respondents go out in the

evening for leisure activities and whether the respondent works or goes to school. I also incorporate several measures of individuals' lifestyles within the full regression models for each country. Model 1 for each of the countries in Table 3 presents the results of the routines of individuals regressed on assault victimization, and Model 2 for each country in Table 3 presents the full model for the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales.

Model 1 of Table 3 for each country includes only the measures of the daily routines of individuals. The relationship between going out in the evening for leisure activities and assault victimization risk reaches significance in the model for the Netherlands. For respondents in the Netherlands, a one unit increase in how often the respondent goes out increases the odds of assault victimization by 27%. Whether the respondent works or goes to school reaches significance for the models in all three of the countries in the analysis. Respondents who work or go to school have an increase in odds of assault victimization in the U.S. (OR=1.77), the Netherlands (OR=1.89), and England and Wales (OR=1.88).

Table 3. Logistic Analysis of Routines/Lifestyles Variables on Assault Victimization

	United States		The Netherlands		England & Wales	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR
Go Out	1.15	0.93	1.27 **	1.10	1.08	0.97
Work/School	1.77 **	1.11	1.89 ***	1.75 **	1.88 ***	1.19
Live Alone		2.14 **		1.94 ***		1.47 **
Urban		1.16		1.72 ***		1.46 *
Age		0.87 **		0.97		0.87 ***
Male		1.47		1.08		0.78
Y2000		1.11		0.54 ***		0.77
Constant	0.02 ***	0.07 **	0.02 ***	0.03 ***	0.04 ***	0.18 ***
N	2870	1379	3874	3155	3719	2854
Nagelkerke R-Sq	.014	.060	.026	.078	.016	.058
Chi-Square	12.67 **	27.53 ***	40.99 ***	101.57 ***	25.76 ***	72.76 ***

(*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001)

While the actual routines of the respondents are important predictors of assault victimization when only the routines are considered, low levels of variation in victimization are explained by these models. Model 1 explains between 1% and 3% of the variation in assault victimization within the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. Therefore, it is important to consider demographic and lifestyle characteristics that contribute to victimization risk.

Model 2 of Table 3 for each country includes the lifestyle indicators of the respondents, in addition to their actual routines. The results of Model 2 for the U.S. and England and Wales are similar. With the consideration of lifestyles and demographic characteristics, the routine activity of work/school loses significance for respondents in both of these countries. The measure of whether the respondent lives alone and the age of the respondent are important predictive factors for assault victimization. If the respondent lives alone, there is an increase in odds of victimization for individuals in the U.S. (OR=2.14) and England and Wales (OR=1.47). Additionally, older respondents are

at lower risk of assault victimization in the U.S. (OR=0.87) and England and Wales (OR=0.87). Respondents who reside in urban areas in England and Wales have a 46% increase in odds of assault victimization.

The results for the Netherlands are presented in Model 2 of Table 3. Within this model, the daily activity measure of going out for leisure activities loses significance, but the work/school variable maintains a significant relationship to assault victimization. As with the U.S. and England and Wales, there is an increase in odds of assault victimization if the respondent lives alone (OR=1.94). Moreover, respondents in the Netherlands who reside in urban areas have a 72% increase in odds of victimization. This finding is similar to the increased risk of victimization for urban residents in England and Wales. Finally, the control variable for the year of the survey reaches significance in this model for the Netherlands, suggesting there is a difference in assault victimization between the 2000 wave and the 2005 wave of the survey.

The models for each country that include both the daily routines and lifestyle indicators account for a relatively small amount of the explained variance in assault victimization. Model 2 of Table 3 for the Netherlands explains almost 8% of the variance in assault. Model 2 for the U.S. and England and Wales explains even less of the variance in assault, approximately 6% for both countries. This suggests other variables need to be included to further the understanding of assault victimization.

Discussion and Conclusion

Within this research, I have utilized a routine activities/lifestyle theoretical framework and concentrated on three countries, the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. This narrow focus on a few countries allows for a more detailed analysis of circumstances surrounding violent and property victimization. By examining the location and characteristics of victimization, the opportunities surrounding assault can be better understood. Respondents in each of the three countries in the analysis report the assault victimization they have experienced occurred in similar locations. The majority of the respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales, and many respondents in the U.S. who have been assaulted report that the victimization happened near the home or elsewhere in the city. Many respondents in the U.S., in the Netherlands and England and Wales experienced assault victimization at work. A difference is evident in the location of assault in the home. A large number of respondents in the U.S. reported victimization occurred in the home, while a relatively low number of individuals in the Netherlands and England and Wales indicated the home as the location for assault.

The number of respondents who reported knowing the offender varies across countries. Over half of the respondents in the U.S. reported they knew the offender, at least by sight. The prevalence of assault in the U.S. which occurred in the home is potentially related to the large number of respondents who were able to identify their offender by name or sight. Almost half of the respondents in England and Wales reported force was used in the assault. Therefore, it is not unfounded that many of the individuals in this country also reported injury resulted from the attack. Regarding the use of weapons, respondents in the U.S. were more likely than individuals in the Netherlands or England and Wales to report a weapon was used in the assault. This is not an unexpected finding, as the gun culture is more prominent in the U.S. than in the other countries (Sumner, Layde, & Guse, 2008).

A routine activities/lifestyles framework was utilized in this research to conduct further analyses of assault victimization. While this theoretical approach was developed and initially tested on samples within the U.S., the results of the current study indicate elements of routine activities/lifestyles theory are more useful to understand victimization in other countries. For example, direct measures of the respondents' activities better predict assault victimization in the Netherlands than in the U.S. A greater number of demographic proxies for lifestyles are important in the relationship between opportunity and victimization for respondents in England and Wales. While low levels of variance in assault victimization are explained across all three countries in the analysis, the highest variance is explained in the Netherlands.

The relationships between individuals' activities and lifestyles and victimization vary across the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. Parallel to existing cross-national research, I do not find a significant relationship between how often respondents go out in the evening for leisure activities and assault victimization for the U.S. or England and Wales (Tseloni et al., 2004; van Wilsem et al., 2003). However, respondents in the Netherlands with greater involvement in leisure activities have an increased victimization, when only the direct measures of activities are considered. This relationship is not maintained when demographic lifestyle proxies are included in the model. This finding is similar to past empirical studies, which suggest demographic considerations are more important in determining victimization risk (Miethe et al., 1987; Sampson, 1987).

The results indicate respondents in each country who work or attend school have an increased risk of assault victimization. This relationship holds only when measures of actual routines are included. The relationship between work/school and victimization is not sustained for respondents in the U.S. and England and Wales when demographic characteristics are incorporated. However, even with the consideration of lifestyle proxies, respondents in the Netherlands who work or go to school have an increased risk of assault victimization. The relationship between work/school and violent victimization has been supported in past empirical research (Sacco et al., 1993; van Wilsem et al., 2003).

The descriptive findings of the current study can be utilized to further understand the relationship between work/school and victimization for respondents in the Netherlands. The majority of respondents in this country reported the assault to have happened near their home or elsewhere in the city. Additionally, a substantial percentage of individuals reported the victimization occurred at work. While the location of the assault victimization is potentially explaining part of the victimization risk for respondents who work or go to school in the Netherlands, individuals in the U.S. and England and Wales have also reported high levels of assault occurring near the home, at work, and elsewhere in the city. This suggests other factors need to be considered, as the location of the victimization does not clearly determine why only respondents in the Netherlands experience an increased risk of assault if they work or go to school.

Within a routine activities/lifestyles theoretical perspective, several researchers have noted it is not only important to consider the measures of actual routines, but to incorporate demographic characteristics as proxies for lifestyles (Cohen et al., 1981; Daday et al., 2005; Miethe et al., 1987; Sampson, 1987). Within the current study, the relationship between daily routines and victimization are not retained when demographic measures are incorporated. Previous cross-national research within a routine activities theoretical framework has noted demographic characteristics have greater importance in

determining victimization than do activity measures (Tseloni et al., 2004; van Wilsem et al., 2003).

The relationships between lifestyle proxies and victimization vary across the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales. Individuals who live alone experience a lack of guardianship and are more likely to spend time in recreational activities outside of the home (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang et al., 1978). This relationship is evident for respondents in each of the three countries in the analysis. Consistent with lifestyles theory, as presented by Hindelang et al. (1978), the current study indicates younger individuals are at greater risk for assault. As individuals age, they are likely to spend more time in the home, which lowers their risk of victimization. The link between the age of respondent and assault victimization is found only for individuals residing in the U.S. and England and Wales.

The theoretical explanation which links the demographic characteristics of living alone and younger age to activities outside of the home is supported by the descriptive analyses in this study. The majority of respondents in each country reported assault victimization had occurred outside of the home. The lifestyle proxies indicate an increased risk of victimization as individuals are exposed to greater opportunity for victimization. This explanation is satisfactory for the relationship between living alone and assault, as this relationship exists across each of the countries in the analysis. However, the relationship between age and victimization exists only for two of the countries. This suggests age is an important indicator of lifestyle for individuals in the U.S. and England and Wales, but other factors are more important in determining victimization risk for respondents in the Netherlands.

The lifestyle indicator of whether the respondents live in an urban area is important for respondents in the Netherlands and in England and Wales. Routine activities/lifestyles theory proposes individuals who reside in urban areas are exposed as suitable targets and have a greater opportunity to converge with motivated offenders, as urban areas are characterized by large numbers of people (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Within the current study, the reported location of assault supports this contention, as the majority of respondents were victimized outside of the home. Moreover, residence in an urban area suggests respondents are exposed to motivated offenders, many of whom are unknown to the respondent. Findings from the descriptive analyses indicate less than half of the respondents in the Netherlands and England and Wales are able to identify the attacker.

Contrarily, the relationship between urban residence and victimization does not reach significance in the U.S. model. While many respondents in the U.S. report victimization outside of the home, almost a quarter of respondents reported the assault occurred in the home. Additionally, over half of the respondents in the U.S. reported knowing the offender, which could influence the importance of targets and offenders converging in the urban setting.

The current study does not provide overwhelming support for the contention that the measure of actual routines in which individuals are involved are most important in determining victimization risk. Whereas the prominent role of routine activities has been consistently found in research concentrated on a singular country (Kennedy & Forde, 1990; Miethe & Meier, 1990; Miethe et al., 1987; Mustaine & Tewksbury, 2000; Plass & Carmody, 2005; Sacco et al., 1993), cross-national studies have not produced similar results. Instead, cross-national victimization research is likely to highlight the importance

of routines and demographic characteristics (van Wilsem et al., 2003) or emphasize the dominant role of demographic characteristics (Tseloni et al., 2004; van Wilsem et al., 2003). Results of the current research support the theoretical ideas proposed by Hindelang et al. (1978), in that the role expectations derived from respondents' living situations and demographic characteristics are indicative of assault victimization within a cross-national scope.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study fills important gaps in the literature on cross-national victimization utilizing a routine activities theoretical approach. This study utilizes information from a comparable data source across the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales, and offers a descriptive analysis of victimization within each country. However, several limitations within the current research need to be recognized. First, the dependent variable of assault victimization is measured as a dichotomous variable. While this measure captures whether the respondent was victimized, it does not address potential differences among respondents who have experienced multiple episodes of victimization.

While the activities of the respondents and the demographic proxies for lifestyles have varying relationships to assault victimization across the U.S., the Netherlands, and England and Wales in this research, only a low level of variance is explained in victimization for each country. This indicates the need to include additional lifestyle measures to better understand the opportunities surrounding victimization experience. Moreover, the varying significance of the relationships between routine activities/lifestyles variables and assault across the countries in the analysis implies characteristics specific to the country may be influencing the lifestyles of individuals (Tseloni et al., 2004). Future cross-national victimization research needs to consider the importance of the country structure and culture, as these elements may be affecting opportunity for victimization.

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