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Michael R. Gottfredson

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ON THE ETIOLOGY OF CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION*

MICHAEL R. GOTTFREDSON**

Two assertions that have never been particularly controversial among criminologists are, first, that the amount and kinds of victimization experienced by a group of people or by a class of objects depend on the exposure of the class to crime and second, that some people or kinds of objects are more exposed to crime than are others. The assertions are considered, at least implicitly, whenever a rate is altered so as to reflect a "population at risk." For years some criminologists have argued vigorously for the tabulation of crime data in ways that would be indicative of risk. For example, rather than norming each category of crime to the number of persons in the population, it has been argued that the base for the household burglary rate should be the number of households, the base for the rape rate should be the number of females, and the base for the automobile theft rate should be the number of automobiles.

Of course criminologists are not the only ones who see the relevance of the idea of exposure to risk. People who lock their cars downtown but not in the suburbs consider the risk. So too does the father who drives his daughter to the evening movies but allows her to walk to the matinee. And, of course, the police have always attended to it, for example, by increasing their activity at night. All assume that there exist high risk people, objects, places, and times.

This conventional wisdom has long been taken for granted by criminologists. However, apart from the few measurement oriented criminologists who worked with this "rate problem," most saw the issue either as trivial or as simply one of many problems with crime statistics marring their utility for scientific purposes. Either way it was thought that etiological criminology need not be overly attentive.

The advent of victimization surveys, however, allowed researchers to vary their rates according to relatively specific populations in ways

* The contributions of Michael J. Hindelang and James Garofalo to the ideas expressed in this article are gratefully acknowledged, as are the comments of Michael Hindelang and Travis Hirschi on a draft of this article.

** School of Criminal Justice, State University of New York at Albany.

that official data had only grudgingly permitted.¹ Although far from being rid of measurement problems, these data demonstrated marked differences in victimization probabilities as subgroups were varied. Also, these differences were shown not to be entirely specific with respect to the type of victimization studied. It therefore became increasingly difficult to dismiss these findings, especially when considered in conjunction with some strikingly similar findings that had long been available from official data, as purely artifacts of measurement.²

For purposes of scientific criminology, however, the triviality problem remained. To state that differences in the probability of victimization depend on differences in the amount of exposure to crime which various populations have may be true, but is it an adequate way to explain crime? How does it advance our ability to predict and explain victimization?

In order to answer these questions it is useful to distinguish between the concepts of *absolute* and *probabilistic* exposure. Absolute exposure consists of those characteristics of persons, objects, time, or space that are logical requisites for the occurrence of a specific form of criminal victimization. Without absolute exposure a crime cannot occur. Thus, the auto theft rate in the eighteenth century was zero, and the child abuse rate for childless couples is negligible. To specify these rates, which are conditioned by absolute exposure, is to state the obvious. Predictions based on the concept of absolute exposure are often considered to be trivial because they are logical predicates of victimization. But of course if predictions based on the concept of absolute exposure are indeed trivial—in the sense of “common,” “obviously correct,” or “true”—they would be important foundations for a theory of criminal victimization. For in the early stages of theory development it is critically important that everything be trivial, in these senses of that term. Statements about absolute exposure have as yet to reach the heights of trivia; most continue to be specified *a posteriori* rather than created *a priori*. Recently, however, some important advances have been made in

¹ Some researchers had, of course, varied at-risk populations using official data prior to the widespread use of victimization surveys. See, e.g., A. REISS, *STUDIES IN CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS* 143 (President's Comm'n on Law Enforcement Administration of Justice, Field Surveys III, vol. 1, 1967); T. REPPETTO, *RESIDENTIAL CRIME* (1974); Boggs, *Urban Crime Patterns*, 30 *AM. SOC. REV.* 899-908 (1965). The large sample sizes available from some victimization surveys, coupled with the collection of more data about victims, has allowed considerably greater specificity in these rates.

² This is not to say that there are no differences between victimization data and official data in the rate differences each portrays, but rather that some large rate differences are robust with respect to the method of measurement. For the most thorough and careful review of the methodological issues in victimization surveys yet published, see M. HINDELANG, *CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION IN EIGHT AMERICAN CITIES: A DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF COMMON THEFT AND ASSAULT* (1976).

the theoretical specification of absolute exposure.³

Probabilistic exposure requires absolute exposure. It refers to differences among people, objects, places, and times in their opportunity for victimization, given that victimization is logically possible.⁴ Probabilistic exposure is an important concept in the explanation of criminal victimization only insofar as there are differences in the rates of victimization as the denominators and the corresponding numerators vary. Probabilistic exposure is a useful explanation, in the scientific sense, only insofar as we have mechanisms that allow us to predict how changes in our ratios affect victimization rates.

The questions then become, first, whether probabilistic exposure is random given the absolute exposure of people, objects, times, and places,⁵ and second, if such exposure is not random whether it is possible to identify constructs with sufficient abstraction to permit the accurate prediction of probabilistic exposure. Considerable recent research and theory have been devoted to these questions. This work cannot be summarized easily, although a brief review may facilitate discussion concerning future research agendas.

PROBABILISTIC EXPOSURE AS NON-RANDOM

Neither the existing data nor common sense would lead us to conclude that probabilistic exposure for the crimes of common theft and assault is random. Wilkins makes the point clearly:

Let any (non-criminal) reader try to imagine himself in the position of being required to commit a crime—say one of the most common crimes like larceny or breaking and entering—within the next twelve hours. Few readers would select the victim completely at random, unskilled at victim-selection though they might be. There will be something approaching rationality in the selection of the victim.⁶

Thus, given a motivated offender (with respect to the successful accom-

³ See Cohen & Felson, *Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach*, 44 AM. SOC. REV. 588, 589 (1979).

⁴ The distinction between absolute and probabilistic exposure is somewhat tenuous. In most discussions of exposure (or opportunity), exposure is the intervening variable between the antecedents (e.g., lifestyle) of victimization and crime; the task is to predict exposure under the assumption that to do so is also to predict victimization. Where absolute exposure is absent it cannot specify the relationship between the antecedents and crime. It is therefore a necessary condition for any victimization. But clearly it is not a sufficient condition. Therefore, a major task for theory is to describe absolute exposure. One way of doing this is to specify the offender populations and their time-space behaviors. M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *VICTIMS OF PERSONAL CRIME: AN EMPIRICAL FOUNDATION FOR A THEORY OF PERSONAL VICTIMIZATION* ch. 11 (1978).

⁵ See R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *SURVEYING VICTIMS: A STUDY OF THE MEASUREMENT OF CRIMINAL VICTIMIZATION* 106 (1977).

⁶ L. WILKINS, *SOCIAL DEVIANCE* 75 (1965).

plishment of a crime),⁷ it seems most unlikely that all persons, objects, times, or places are equally probable targets for the offense. Not everything with absolute exposure is equally desirable, convenient, or vincible.⁸

The available data on victimization consistently show that the likelihood of victimization from common theft or assault varies dramatically by characteristics of persons. Also, many of the findings are consistent regardless of whether official measures or victimization survey measures are used as the criterion. For example, for personal crimes in the United States, victimization rates are higher for the poor, males, blacks, youth, the single, and the urban resident.⁹ Differences in victimization rates according to various attributes have also been found in surveys conducted in other countries.¹⁰ When attributes such as these are considered simultaneously, they often produce large differences in the likelihood of victimization.¹¹ In the victimization surveys, many of these differences seem to be robust in the sense that they maintain under alternative counting and weighting mechanisms such as the Sellin-Wolfgang seriousness weights¹² or the inclusion of "series" victimizations under various assumptions.¹³

A related line of recent research bearing on the notion of probabilistic exposure concerns the issue of multiple victimization—those persons who report experiencing repeated victimization. Although the conceptual and empirical issues present in this line of research are beyond the intended scope of this discussion,¹⁴ the overall empirical results of the research have been at least consistent with the demand of the

⁷ See text accompanying notes 41-43 *infra*.

⁸ These terms are taken from M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 11. Similar concepts are invoked by Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3, at 589 (e.g., "suitable targets" and "capable guardians").

⁹ See generally J. GIBBS, CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS IN URBAN, SUBURBAN, AND RURAL AREAS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VICTIMIZATION RATES 13-55 (Nat'l Crim. Justice Information & Statistics Svc. 1979); M. HINDELANG, *supra* note 2; M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4; A. REISS, *supra* note 1, at 131-43; Boland, *Patterns of Urban Crime*, in SAMPLE SURVEYS OF THE VICTIMS OF CRIME (W. Skogan ed. 1976).

¹⁰ See, e.g., R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *supra* note 5 (London); C. Steinmetz, An Empirically Tested Analysis of Victimization Risks (unpublished paper presented at the Third Int'l Symposium on Victimology, Munster, Germany, 1979) (Netherlands).

¹¹ M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 5; Cohen & Cantor, *The Determinants of Larceny*, 17 J. RESEARCH CRIME & DELINQUENCY 140 (1980).

¹² M. HINDELANG, *supra* note 2, ch. 6.

¹³ *Id.* app. F.

¹⁴ See generally M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 6; R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *supra* note 5, at 88-100; Nelson, *Multiple Victimization in American Cities: A Statistical Analysis of Rare Events*, 85 AM. J. SOC. 870 (1980) [hereinafter cited as *Multiple Victimization*]; J. Nelson, Toward a Theory of Multiple Victimization: The Compound Poisson Model (unpublished paper presented before the American Society of Criminology, 1980) [hereinafter cited as The Compound Poisson Model].

exposure model; i.e., that such victimization is not adequately described as a random process. Sparks, Genn, and Dodd found that Poisson expected and observed frequencies of multiple victimizations for both property and violent offenses were significantly different in their London survey.¹⁵ Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo showed that Poisson expected and observed frequencies of personal victimization in the twenty-six NCP city surveys (considered in aggregate) differed significantly—multiple personal and household victimizations were reported substantially more often than the independence model predicted.¹⁶ Furthermore, they found that, regardless of the age, race, income, marital status, or sex of the respondent, the likelihood of being the victim of a personal crime was much greater for persons whose households were also victimized during the reference period.¹⁷ A clustering of risks was also found within households. Persons residing in households in which other household members reported a personal victimization were far more likely to report experiencing a victimization themselves than were persons in “victimization-less” households. Also, repetitive victims were more likely to be victimized by nonstrangers than were non-repetitive victims, though two-thirds of the repetitive victims were victimized by strangers. These data are important insofar as they establish a link between personal and household victimization independent of the demographic correlates of victimization, thus implying a time and space risk dimension.¹⁸ Recently, Nelson showed that the Poisson model is not compatible with the household burglary data in the twenty-six city surveys.¹⁹ He also discovered that a contagion model—in which once a person has suffered a victimization, the chances of subsequent victimization are enhanced—may not be compatible with the victimization data.

The simple Poisson model of independence has consistently been found to be an inadequate fit to the observed data on multiple victimization for the population. Research to date has been unable to partition the population along demographic dimensions in such a way that identifies groups of persons who have the same rate of victimization, i.e., subgroups for which the number of victimizations follows the simple Poisson model.²⁰ However, Nelson has recently shown that the negative binomial model—a model consistent with the view that persons have different victimization rates and that these rates remain constant over

¹⁵ R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *supra* note 5, at 90, cite similar results for studies in Finland, Denmark, and Maricopa County, Arizona.

¹⁶ M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 137.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 148.

¹⁹ *Multiple Victimization*, *supra* note 14.

²⁰ R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *supra* note 5; *Multiple Victimization*, *supra* note 14.

time—could not be rejected as being compatible with the observed frequencies of burglaries and personal victimizations in the NCP five largest cities samples.²¹

Such data are consistent with the proposition that probabilistic exposure is non-random (that is, that there exist high risk persons, objects, times, and places), but do not demonstrate that differential exposure is a critical determinant of personal victimization. The establishment of large differences in the likelihood of victimization for different groups and the demonstration of victim proneness are requisites to the idea that differential opportunity is a tenable component of the etiology of criminal victimization. However, the link between such differences and exposure needs to be forged. The available research supports the idea that some people are more victim-prone than are others. To date the link between the characteristics of the observed victim-prone people and criminal victimization, through the concept of exposure, has been largely a matter of inference. Several recent inferential statements in this regard can be briefly highlighted as one mechanism by which future research hypotheses might be advanced.

THE PREDICTION OF PROBABILISTIC EXPOSURE

The prediction of probabilistic exposure to criminal victimization must begin with a statement of the time-space-person coordinates in which victimization is most likely. Once identified, the task becomes one of describing the characteristics of persons and objects that are most likely to intersect those coordinates. In attempting to define these coordinates my colleagues and I²² as well as others²³ look to the distribution of victimization as described in both official and unofficial measures of crime. These measures are largely consistent for the United States in indicating substantial differences and the direction of these differences in common crimes according to time of day, place of occurrence, victim-offender relationship, and demographic characteristics. In the lifestyle model that we have proposed, these characteristics of criminal incidents are taken as given. Because we are, in effect, trying to predict who will likely intersect with these coordinates, it is obviously critical that they be as accurate as possible. Certainly, the measurement of these characteristics of criminal incidents is not now error free, and the greater the precision in measurement, the greater will be the precision in predicting victimization. Considerable research effort should thus be expended in enhancing the accuracy of the measurement of these characteristics, as

²¹ *Multiple Victimization*, *supra* note 14; The Compound Poisson Model, *supra* note 14.

²² M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 11.

²³ *See, e.g.*, Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3.

specifically as possible. The lifestyle-exposure model of the etiology of victimization overlaps considerably at this point with work in the etiology of criminal offending. Both require precise and valid measures of the offending population, and to the extent advances in etiological work on offending occur, they are likely, if the model is correct, to yield advances in the etiology of victimization as well.

Broadly, the exposure model then suggests that the probability of victimization depends on the amount and kind of interaction that people have in these high risk coordinates.²⁴ Our own predictions of this interaction invoke the concept of lifestyle. Briefly, we argue that variations in lifestyle, i.e., the characteristic way in which individuals allocate their time to vocational activities and to leisure activities, are related differentially to probabilities of being in particular places at particular times and coming into contact with persons who have particular characteristics. Because criminal victimization is not randomly distributed across time and space and because offenders are not representative of the general population, this implies that lifestyle differences are associated with differences in exposure to situations that have a high victimization risk. Hindelang and his colleagues were able to derive a series of theoretical propositions from the lifestyle idea that were consistent with a wide variety of victimization and police data.²⁵

A theoretical model quite compatible with the lifestyle model has been described by Cohen and Felson²⁶ to explain rates of what are referred to as "direct-contact predatory violations." Cohen and his colleagues rely on the concept of "routine activity"—by which they mean "any recurrent and prevalent activities which provide for basic population and individual needs . . . [R]outine activities would include formalized work, as well as the provision of standard food, shelter, sexual outlet, leisure, social interaction, learning, and childrearing."²⁷ They argue that routine activity patterns can influence crime rates "by affecting the convergence in space and time of the three minimal elements of direct-contact predatory violations: (1) motivated offenders, (2) suitable targets, and (3) the absence of capable guardians against a violation."²⁸ The probability of a victimization is thus taken to be a function of the convergence of likely offenders and suitable targets in the absence of

²⁴ M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 11; R. SPARKS, H. GENN & D. DODD, *supra* note 5; Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3.

²⁵ H. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, ch. 11.

²⁶ Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3. *See also* L. Cohen, M. Felson & K. Land, *Property Crime Rates in the United States: A Macrodynamic Analysis, 1947-77, with Ex-Ante Forecasts for the Mid-1980s* (unpublished PASS working paper, Univ. of Ill. Dept. of Sociology, 1979).

²⁷ Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3, at 593.

²⁸ *Id.* at 589.

capable guardians, and this convergence is seen to be influenced by routine activities.

Cohen and Felson argue that shifts in routine activity patterns over time have produced changes in the property crime rates. Taking a measure of the dispersion of activities away from the home as an indicator of routine activity, their predictions about crime rate changes were consistent with the data about homicide, rape, assault, robbery, and burglary in a time-series study of UCR data from 1947-74.²⁹

The concept of lifestyle, or routine activities, is thus seen as one mechanism by which static or changing social structural arrangements may lead to variations in crime rates via changes in the amount and kind of exposure people or objects have. In the Cohen and Felson study, dispersion of activities away from family and household were seen to increase the amount of exposure to crime and, as a consequence, to increase the amount of crime. Thus, it is argued that probabilistic exposure can be predicted on the basis of routine activities which themselves are determined by the social structure and by role expectations. Research such as accomplished by Cohen and his colleagues³⁰ that operationalizes components of routine activities and tests these predictions against the crime data is critically important in the development of theory about the etiology of criminal victimization.

SOME IMPEDIMENTS TO PREDICTIVE EFFICIENCY

There are, however, several major deficiencies in existing data and theory that impede progress in the area of the prediction of probabilistic exposure. For example, extant research has been forced to rely on crude indicators for both of the important theoretical concepts, lifestyle and exposure. At the individual level, lifestyle differences, by which we mean differences in the way people spend their time, where they go, and with whom they associate, have been assumed to be reflected in major demographic characteristics such as age, sex, race, income, and "major activity."³¹ Certainly considerable variation within these categories exists; it would be preferable to have direct measures of the kinds typically used in time-budgeting studies³² of how, where, and with whom people spend their time.³³ Such data need to be collected in conjunction with

²⁹ *Id.* at 588-607. See also L. Cohen, M. Felson & K. Land, *supra* note 26.

³⁰ Cohen & Cantor, *supra* note 11; Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3; L. Cohen, M. Felson & K. Land, *supra* note 26.

³¹ M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4; Cohen & Cantor, *supra* note 11; Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3; C. Steinmetz, *supra* note 10.

³² F. CHAPIN, HUMAN ACTIVITY PATTERNS IN THE CITY 4-5 (1974); DeGrazia, *The Uses of Time*, in AGING AND LEISURE 113-53 (1961).

³³ NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, PANEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF CRIME SURVEYS, SURVEYING CRIME 94-97 (1976).

measures of victimization experiences so that variability in the routine activities of individuals may be related to variability in their victimization experiences. A good deal more specificity is also needed with respect to incident indicators. These relate to the situational characteristics of criminal incidents; precisely where are these events most likely to occur, what type of activity was taking place immediately prior to the victimization, who else was there, what were they doing, and so forth. Such indicators are, theoretically at least, capable of being incorporated into the survey method, although retrospective surveys may not be the most profitable course to pursue; the "daily diary" approach may have much to commend it. However, two impediments to their inclusion may require some attention. First, the depth and complexity of these measures may conflict to some extent with surveys designed to measure the extent of victimization in the population, due to resource limitations. Special smaller-scale studies, perhaps selected to include disproportionate numbers of persons likely to report victimization experiences, may thus be indicated. Second, some privacy issues may become involved as persons are asked to respond to inquiries about their lives in such detail. Provided such inquiries are framed with sensitivity and mechanisms are built to ensure confidentiality of response, both privacy interests and quality research standards can be maintained.

These potential impediments are raised because they pertain especially to the area most critically in need of indicator refinement in victimization surveys—the extent to which the victim's behavior in situational contexts enhances his exposure to violence. Given the probabilistic exposure to high violence-risk coordinates, i.e., exposure to places, times, and people where the likelihood of violence is increased, do some people, by virtue of their actions or words, place themselves in greater risk of violence? This is, in part, what Wolfgang³⁴ has referred to as victim precipitation and what is embodied in Toch's³⁵ typology of violent activity.

The situational data now available from victimization surveys are inadequate to assess this aspect of exposure. We do know that a victim's report of using self-protection measures is associated with a greater probability that the event resulted in injury to the victim since a victim who reports using physical force is more than twice as likely to also be injured in a personal victimization.³⁶ We also know that some males and younger persons are more likely than others to report using such

³⁴ M. WOLFGANG, *PATTERNS IN CRIMINAL HOMICIDE* 245-65 (1958).

³⁵ H. TOCH, *VIOLENT MEN* (1969).

³⁶ M. HINDELANG, M. GOTTFREDSON & J. GAROFALO, *supra* note 4, at 45.

self-protection measures. We do not know, however, whether the violence preceded or followed such resistance. What are needed are studies that emphasize detailed and systematic tracking of the intricate and undoubtedly complex series of moves and countermoves, both words and deeds, between the victim and the offender as the event unfolds. Also, it would be profitable if such research relied on the "own story" of both parties to the event.

The absence of refined and direct measures of lifestyle and exposure impedes significant and unequivocal tests of the model and future theoretical development. For example, with a few exceptions, available research has dealt only with cross-sectional data. Many important derivations from the lifestyle idea relate, however, to rate changes for both individuals and social groups over time. But the indicators we now have do not permit specific and unambiguous predictions in this regard. At the individual level, for example, two common indicators of lifestyle are age and marital status. The young and the unattached are thought to have routine activity patterns quite distinct from older married persons; they go out of the home more often, particularly at night, are likely to go places at times that put them in proximity with other young, unattached persons, and so forth. But how are these indicators predictive of victimization probabilities over the life cycle? Does marriage override youth with respect to lifestyle? Does a change in marital status, from married to single, significantly alter the lifestyle of persons over thirty?

At the aggregate level, in time-series analyses, similar indicator problems are apparent. For example, do increases in the unemployment rate reduce the property crime rate because it reduces the number of attractive targets away from the home, or, do increases in the unemployment rate increase the property crime rate because it places more people in proximity to high-risk persons at high-risk times? Although the first hypothesis appears more tenable,³⁷ the second could be derived from the existing model—direct measures of lifestyle would clearly begin to solve such problems.

THEORETICAL DIRECTIONS

The principal assertion of the lifestyle model is that probabilistic exposure and its antecedents have a central role in the etiology of criminal victimization. The concept of opportunity for crime is not best regarded as only anecdotal or "common sense" but should be regarded as "scientific sense" and of explanatory power.³⁸ But the views put forth so

³⁷ See L. Cohen, M. Felson & K. Land, *supra* note 26.

³⁸ See Gould, *The Changing Structure of Property Crime In an Affluent Society*, 48 SOC. FORCES 50-59 (1969).

far should be regarded only as guides to theoretical action in an area of considerable conceptual complexity. There exist other guides for such action, and consequently there may be merit in considering what these alternative guides imply about one another and about the prospects for future research on the etiology of victimization. Two concepts present in this area seem to be particularly important—typologies of victim proneness and motivation.

The contrast between the typological approach and the lifestyle approach appears dramatic. The typological approach, which has a distinguished history in victim studies,³⁹ sees distinct causal mechanisms operating for different victimization events. Some may be caused by simple carelessness, others by active provocation; some may be the result of physical impairments, and yet others the result of greed. Although the events that happen to persons in these circumstances may share a common label—"victimization"—they share virtually nothing else. The determinants of these events are diverse, ranging as they do from biological factors (e.g., infirmity due to age) to psychological factors (e.g., predisposed to perceive a wide variety of stimuli as requiring a violent response) to physical factors (e.g., apparent wealth) to situational factors (e.g., the "john" who is robbed by the prostitute because he is unlikely to report the offense to the police). And victims vary on a continuum of culpability themselves.⁴⁰ It could well be argued that productive theory must acknowledge these numerous causative factors, perhaps through the development of distinctive explanatory mechanisms. Research agendas faithful to this view would seek factors that distinguish victims from one another, rather than only searching for what they have in common.

The lifestyle-exposure model may seem to stand in contrast; comfortable with the idea of predicting the common label, unconcerned with the homogenization of so obviously diverse phenomena, in search of a single theory capable of generating multiple causes. And so it is. For according to the lifestyle-exposure model, each of these causative factors is plausible precisely because its presence enhances and its absence decreases exposure to crime. They relate to the probability that the person will come into contact with a motivated offender and will be seen to be a suitable target for the offense. Certainly some such factors are more easily derived from the lifestyle model than are others, such as the examples of the "john" and the "provocative" victim. This is not to argue that a variety of causes should not be studied—indeed, the life-

³⁹ H. VON HENTIG, *THE CRIMINAL AND HIS VICTIM* (1948).

⁴⁰ Mendelsohn, *The Victimology*, 1 *ETUDES INTERNATIONALES DE PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGIE CRIMINELLE* 25 (1956).

style-exposure model both permits and encourages multiple-factor research. The point is that, in this very early stage of theorizing about criminal victimization, there is no logical need to abandon a search for a theory capable of accounting for distinct causes, nor any reason to argue the futility of a common criterion. As a consequence, there is incentive, with respect to future research agendas, to continue to search for what victims may have in common—and how they differ from those who are not victimized.

The second theme that merits some consideration in relation to directions for research on the etiology of victimization concerns the role of offender motivation. To a large extent, the absence of mechanisms that produce variation in the motivation to offend places exposure models in sharp contrast to most theories of criminality. Motivation to offend is assumed and the task is seen to be the explication of situations in which such motivation is least likely to be restrained. Cohen and Felson make this point most directly in the initial statement of their routine activity approach: "Unlike many criminological inquiries, we do not examine why individuals or groups are inclined criminally, but rather we take criminal inclination as given and examine the manner in which the spatio-temporal organization of social activities helps people to translate their criminal inclinations into action."⁴¹ Contrary to most criminological research, their model strives to predict crime-rate changes on the basis of social-structural relationships without positing changes in the structural factors motivating people to engage in crime. Changes in the possibility to offend, rather than in the desire or impetus to offend, are seen as being of primary importance. The general consistency between their data and their predictions implies that such a posture may be worthy of future attention, particularly given the repeated difficulty that motivational theories have experienced in making similarly accurate predictions.

There is, of course, a body of theoretical literature about criminality that is also silent with respect to variations in the motivation to offend—control theory.⁴² Control theory asserts that offending occurs when social control mechanisms are weak or absent. There may be some advantage in these speculations about the prospects for future work in this area to note how these two theoretical positions—control theory and lifestyle—might complement one another heuristically.⁴³

One of the central building blocks of the lifestyle concept has been the discovery that the factors most closely associated with victimization

⁴¹ Cohen & Felson, *supra* note 3, at 589.

⁴² T. HIRSCHI, *CAUSES OF DELINQUENCY* 16-34 (1969); R. KORNHAUSER, *SOCIAL SOURCES OF DELINQUENCY* (1978).

⁴³ M. HINDELANG, *supra* note 2, at 154.

are factors which have also been found to be associated with offending. That is, by and large, combinations of characteristics predictive of offending are also predictive of victimization. These findings at least suggest that similar mechanisms may operate to produce both. In control theory terms, the processes that reduce the restraints to offend are similar to the processes in lifestyle terms that affect the probability that persons will be in places at times and around people where the risk of victimization is high.

Much of the data about victimization are compatible with the idea that common social control mechanisms affect routine activity patterns in ways relevant to the production of higher risks of victimization. The lower rates of personal victimization for those who have greater family ties, who are employed, and who are in school, for example, are certainly suggestive of this.

The argument is not that these processes produce offenders and victims who are one and the same, though often this is the case; rather it is that they produce the likely pools of victims and the likely pools of offenders and the circumstances that they are likely to come into contact with one another.

In this sense then, efforts to increase our understanding of offenders and of victims may very well turn out to be mutually beneficial. If we understand one we may understand the other. Thus our task may only be half as onerous as it appears to be.