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A MULTIVARIATE MODEL OF STALKING BEHAVIOURS

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In order to reveal the variations that exist among stalkers in terms of actual stalking behaviours the range of offence actions that should be examined was derived from theoretical accounts of the differences between offenders. Four distinct thematic foci were hypothesised characterised by sexual, intimate, possessive and aggressive-destructive modes of offender-victim interaction. To test these hypotheses 50 offences were content analysed into 24 behavioural categories. The occurrence of these categories of behaviour across all offences was examined using SSA-I. A modulating facet was proposed, by analogy with previous studies, of violent sexual assaults that reflected the intensity of personal contact the stalker imposes upon the victim, with the most intense being the most differentiated and least frequent. The results lend support to the existence of a intensity facet that modulates all four aspects identified from the published literature, providing further evidence for a *radex* of criminality. This radex model is used to indicate biases in the current sample of cases by postulating implicit elements for future study. The implication of the radex model of stalking for the management of and interventions in stalking are also considered as the basis for future explorations.

1. Explorations of Stalking

Stalking refers to repeated harassing or threatening behaviour directed at an individual. Yet although it has always existed and was often treated as a form of domestic violence it was as recently as 1990 that the state of California passed the first antistalking law, giving stalking a legal definition of "wilful, malicious and repeated following or harassing of another person". Three years later 48 states had such laws. In Britain, stalking was legally recognised by the introduction of the Protection from Harassment Act in 1997. The essence of the British Law being the outlawing of any repeated actions that can lead a person the reasonably believe they are at risk of violence or death.

The scale of stalking in the USA has been gauged from a telephone survey of 8,000 men and 8,000 women conducted by the National Institute of Justice and the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Responses indicated that 8.2% of the women in the sample and 2.2% of the men had been stalked some time in their lives and that an estimated 1 million adult women and 0.4 million men are stalked annually in the United States (Tjaden & Thoenness, 1997 as cited in Emerson et al, 1998). Research also shows that most cases of stalking take place between ordinary people who have had a prior intimate relationship or were acquaintances (Meloy, 1996).

Stalking typically consists of a broad range of behaviours (Mullen et al, 1999; Kam-

phuis & Emmelkamp, 2000). Stalkers most often persecute their victims by unwanted communication, which can consist of telephone calls, letters, e-mail, and gifts. The offender may camp outside the house or workplace of the victim, place announcements or spread rumours about the victim, or destroy the victim's property. In extreme cases the perpetrator may threaten the victim with violence and may actually assault, rape and murder, although of course these violent actions are covered by other criminal laws. The incidence of murder or manslaughter emerging out of stalking cases in the United States is estimated at 2% (Meloy, 1996). In many cases innocent parties and the target's circle of friends and associates become victims of the stalker's behaviour.

The variety of specific strategies employed and behaviours displayed by stalkers indicates that a number of different psychological processes may underlie stalking behaviour. This variety of possible psychological processes that may give rise to stalking is reflected in the mixture of explanations of this behaviour and the range of models that are proposed to describe how and why stalkers differ from each other.

One dominant perspective on stalking is the clinical one, usually embedded with in a psychiatric framework, seeeking to understand stalking in terms of the psychopathology of the offender (Geberth, 1992; Zona et al, 1993). Other researchers have established classification systems that are based on motivations (Holmes, 1993; Mullen et al, 1999), or on the relationship between the offender and the victim (Richie, 1994) or on the location of the stalking incidents (Hendricks & Spillane, 1993). Harmon et al (1995) developed a classification system using two axes: one defining the nature of the attachment and the other defining the previous relationship. Wright et al (1996) distinguished the domestic (delusional and non-delusional) stalker and the non-domestic (organised and delusional) stalker.

Different explanations and their related typologies are derived for different reasons, for example in an attempt to predict dangerousness or to offer aetiologies or to provide guidance to the courts on appropriate sentencing, but this diversity creates a lack of clarity in modelling the actions of stalkers. The mixture of sources of information from which the classifications are derived also adds to this confusion. Inferred motivations may be combined with characteristics of stalkers. These in turn may be fused with information about the prior relationships between victim and offender or the nature of the stalking actions themselves. Such a mixture of overt, covert and inferred aspect of the offence, offender and relationships with the victim makes it difficult to operationalise any classification as well as reducing the clarity in what it is that is actually being classified. A further, and possibly more severe criticism of these classification schemes is that they lack any firm empirical basis. The Zona et al (1993) and the Geberth (1992) typologies have received some support from clinical case studies but no multivariate statistical analysis was conducted to determine the robustness or empirical distinctness of the proposed types.

Beyond the need for empirical test of a clearly defined subset of phenomena the weakness of typologies such as those proposed by Geberth (1992), Zona et al (1993) and Holmes (1993) are that they require information that is only available if the stalker is willing to co-operate with a psychiatric assessment, as part of an exploration of appropriate clinical diagnoses offering the offender's own understanding of the motives for the actions. In

many cases stalkers are not willing to participate in the necessary in-depth face-to-face interviews before they are charged with the offence or even after they have been convicted.

There is therefore considerable value in studying the observable actions that occur in stalking incidents and to derive any classification scheme from appropriate statistical procedures. This will allow test and integration of the various models of stalking derived from clinical and related sources. It will also provide a basis for hypothesising whether certain subsets of stalking actions are more likely to lead to violence, in advance of any direct contact between a stalker and a clinician. The significant prior relationships can also be studied rather than being assumed as part of any typology. In more general terms, it lays the foundations for building empirically validated models of the relationships between the criminal actions and the characteristics of the offender. This is what Canter (1995) has called solving the A→C equation (where A are the actions of the offender during the crime and C are the distinguish characteristics of the offender). He argues that it is the eventual solutions to this equation that will be of especial assistance to police investigations in the future.

2. Varieties of Stalking Actions

Stalking consists of interactions between two people. Variations in stalking are therefore reflected in different aspects of interpersonal behaviour. Many authorities draw particular attention to two aspects of the interactions the stalker initiates, sexuality and intimacy. Holmes (1993) in his typology describes the "lust stalker" who is motivated by a perverse sense of sexual predation, whose anticipated gain is a sexual experience. A sexual element exists also in Mullen et al's (1999) five-factor model but here the "predatory stalker" is preparing a sexual attack. In Geberth's (1992) model the "Psychotic Personality Stalker" suffers from a delusional fixation. He is obsessed with the target who is often a stranger, making the victim aware of the stalker's presence through letters, gifts, visits etc. Zona et al's (1993) category of "love obsessional" who believe that their target could love them if given the opportunity is similar to Geberth's, as is the subtype of the Wright et al's (1996) "non-domestic stalker" that the call a "delusional stalker". All of these categories therefore give emphasis to a form of sexual infatuation that would be revealed in actions that were either implicitly or explicitly sexual in nature.

A rather different emphasis is provided in what Mullen et al (1999) include in their typology under the heading "intimacy seeking stalker". The central purpose of this type of stalker is to establish a relationship with the victim. In Holme's (1993) typology the "love-scorned stalker" is similar, expecting affection from the victim not necessarily sexual contact. Harmon et al (1995) draw attention to a related process by considering the nature of the attachment between the offender and the victim. They describe affectionate/amorous attachment in which the object is pursued for amorous reasons, driven by the emotion of love. Furthermore DeBecker includes in his typology an attachment seeking type. Dietz (1991) in his study of threatening and inappropriate letters to celebrities reports that public figures are besieged by a constant onslaught of unwanted attention from mentally disordered persons in search for identity, love, power, relief and most of all

contact.

Another style of offence behaviour, which emerges from an examination of the existing literature on stalking, involves aggressive-destructive behaviour. Mullen et al (1999) report that one third of their sample belonged to the "rejected stalker" who acknowledged a complex mixture for both reconciliation and revenge. In this category the victim and the offender were either ex-intimates or acquaintances. DeBecker in his typology includes also a rejection-based type, similar to Holmes (1993) "domestic stalker" who is usually an estranged husband who hunts his former wife. Perez (1993) comments on "deranged spouses who hunt down their exes" (p.263). The pursuit of a person because of some real or imagined injury is also a category in the framework that Harmon et al (1995) proposed.

Geberth (1992) provides a different emphasis from one of destructive revenge. His category of "Psychopathic Personality Stalker" destroys property, phones anonymous threats and engages in various forms of harassment in order to gain some control over the victim. He is motivated by the perverse psychology of "If I can't have you, then no one will". Zona et al's (1993) calls these people "simple obsessional" stalkers who stalks an ex-intimate partner or an acquaintance after (a) the relationship had gone "sour" or (b) the perception by the subject of mistreatment. They report that the domestic stalker is initially motivated by a desire to continue or re-establish a relationship and if this attempt at control is unsuccessful it may culminate in a violent attack on the victim.

Wright et al (1996) report that in 12 out of the 30 cases that they examined the stalker was angry and retaliating against the victim whom he perceived as rejecting him. They classified 10 domestic as the offender seeking possession of the victim. The stalker made it clear that the victim was still "his property" and if he could not have her no one could. In this cases stalking has been described as 'plain male possessiveness' (Lowney & Best, 1995). Indeed, Tjaden and Thoenness (1997) found that the most common motivation for stalkers was the desire to maintain control over their victims.

Broadly therefore, the existing literature on stalking identifies at least four distinct modes of interaction with the victim, reflecting:

(1)   sexuality
(2)   intimacy
(3)   aggression-destruction, and
(4)   possession

Each of these themes implies defining characteristics in offence behaviour–actions, which exemplify the different styles of interaction. The central hypothesis for the present study is therefore that the activities characteristic of each of the four themes will co-occur within any of the four hypothesised sub-group of offences, and that actions from different themes will tend not to co-occur in the same offence. It is the establishment from actual details of cases that there is an empirical differentiation between sub-sets of actions that is the basis for testing and validating any classification scheme (Canter, 2004).

Canter (1995, 2004) uses the term 'theme' rather than 'type' to draw attention to the well-established finding in psychology that no form of individual variation ever allows the majority of people to be assigned to one of a set of pure types. Instead it is likely that

the criteria that contribute to the themes, in this case the actions of the perpetrator, will overlap to some extent. Indeed, since the initial study by Canter and Heritage (1990) a number of attempts at the empirical classification of crimes on the basis of the actions of the criminal (reviewed in Canter 2004) have drawn attention to the need to distinguish between frequent actions that are typical of broad classes of crime and the less frequent actions that are the most productive basis on which to distinguish between crimes. The themes are the dominant aspects of any subset of less frequent actions.

From this perspective it is also hypothesised that the defining actions of each of the four themes combine together to produce a composite model of offence behaviour in stalking with an interpretable structure to it. In other words, the structural hypothesis is that the four hypothesised themes, far from being totally distinct types, will actually relate to each other in a meaningful way.

Empirical support for distinct themes as part of an overall structure that also incorporates variations in offence action frequencies will provide a firm basis for understanding the varieties of stalking and relating the themes to other forms of criminal activity. Beyond this utility in enriching the theory of stalking such a model would have practical value for developing assessments of dangerousness and the implications of various forms of intervention, including both therapeutic and penal interventions as well as ways of managing stalking before and arrest or conviction.

3. Method

3.1 Data

The data set used in the present study was collected from the police records of the Threat Management Unit (TMU) of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and consisted of descriptions of 50 recorded incidents of stalking. In 24 of the offences considered the victim and the offender had an ex-intimate relationship (married, dating, casual sex, cohabiting, dating) in12 cases they were acquaintances (friends, neighbours, schoolmates, co-workers, professional relationships), in 10 celebrities and only in 4 cases they were strangers. Twelve of the victims were males and 38 were females.

3.2 Procedure

The first stage was to identify those stalking actions that could meaningfully distinguish between the different offences. These variables were recorded in dichotomous form with yes/no values based on the presence/absence of each behaviour in any one offence. Dichotomies were used because the information was drawn from police records not initially collected for research purposes. Previous research has demonstrated that content analysis any more refined than presence/absence dichotomies is likely to be unreliable (Canter & Heritage, 1990). A list of all the variables with description is given in Appendix I. The 24 dichotomous variables across the 50 offences provided the data matrix upon which subsequent analysis was conducted.

4. Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) of Behaviour Matrix

The data was analysed using SSA-I (Lingoes, 1973). Smallest Space Analysis allows a test of hypotheses concerning the co-occurrence of every variable with every other variable. In essence the null hypothesis is that the variables have no clear interpretable relationship to each other. Smallest Space Analysis is a non-metric multidimensional scaling procedure based upon the assumption that the underlying structure, or system of behaviour, will most readily be appreciated if the relationship between every variable and every other variable is examined. An examination of the raw mathematical relationships between all the variables, however, would prove difficult to interpret, so a geometric (visual) representation of the relationship is produced.

The SSA program computes association coefficients between all variables. It is these coefficients that are used to form a spatial representation of items with points representing variables. In the present case Jaccard coefficients were the measure of association used. This has now become the standard coefficient used with this type of data since the initial Canter and Heritage (1990) study. Its great advantage is that it only calculates co-occurrence across recorded events. Any absence of activity is not used in the calculation. This means it only draws upon what was known to have happened and does not take account of what was not recorded to have happened. With this sort of data such lack of recording can be in error, whereas noting that something had taken place is less likely to be inaccurate.

Thus the more often variables co-occur during stalking, the closer will be the points representing those variables in the SSA space. The pattern of points (regions) can hence be examined and thematic structures delineated. Actions with similar underlying themes are hypothesised to be more likely to co-occur than those that imply different themes. These similarly themed actions are therefore hypothesised to be found in contiguous locations, i.e. the same region of the plot.

The coefficient of alienation (Borg & Lingoes, 1987) indicates how well the spatial representation fits the co-occurrences represented in the matrix. The smaller the coefficient of alienation is the better the fit, i.e. the fit of the plot to the original matrix. However, as Borg & Lingoes (1987) emphasise there is no simple answer to the question of how "good" or "bad" the fit is. This will depend upon a combination of the number of variables, the amount of error in the data and the logical strength of the interpretation framework. In the present study the data are mainly derived from police crime records which are not created for research purposes and thus do not adhere to strict collection protocol and procedures. It would therefore be expected that the data are not error free and would contain considerable "noise" that would reduce the possibility of interpreting the results. On the other hand, a reasonably clear set of distinguishing concepts can be derived from the literature on stalking behaviour.

5. Results of the SSA

The 3-dimensional SSA solution has a Guttman-Lingoes coefficient of alienation of 0.15 with 35 iterations indicating a good fit. Figure 1 shows the projection of vector 1 against vector 2 for the resulting configuration. The SSA uses a principal component analysis as the starting configuration prior to any iterations. This has the advantage of the resulting configuration tending to produce the dominant structure in the first two dimensions. So although a third dimension may be interpretable in the present case it would normally be expected that the hypothesised structure would be clear in the projection of the first two dimensions. For simplicity, therefore, only this projection is presented here.
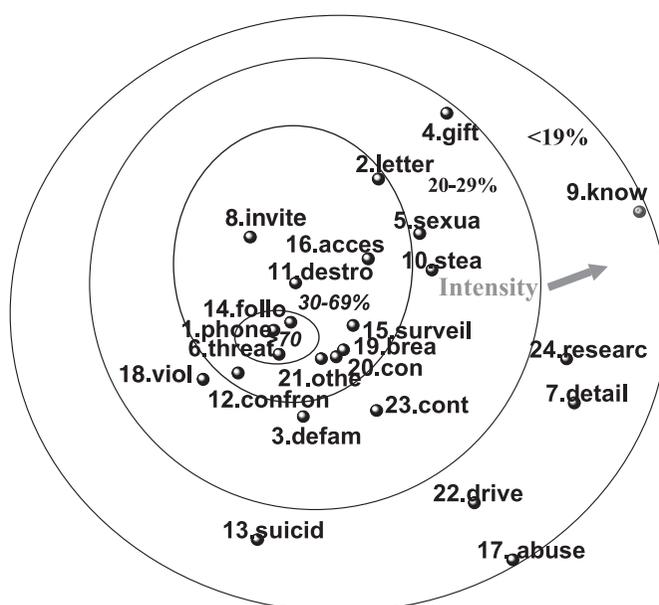

Figure 1: SSA of offence behaviours. (Numbers refer to variables in Appendix I) and frequency contours

Each point in Figure 1, is a variable describing an offence behaviour. The closer any two points are the more likely it is that the actions they represent will co-occur in offences, in comparison with other actions. The numbers in Figure 1 refer to the variable numbers in Appendix I. Brief labels have been put on the plot to assist interpretation.

5.1 Frequencies of Variables

As indicated above, a number of studies of offence actions have indicated that there are likely to be a set of actions that are typical of a whole class of offence, whereas others actions will be less frequent and differentiate between offences more readily. One implication of this hypothesis is that the higher frequency actions are more likely to co-occur

and the lower the frequency of the actions the less likely, in general, they are to co-occur. In terms of the regional structure this implies an hypothesis of a focal area of higher frequency variables with lower frequencies radiating out from this 'core' so that the lower frequencies form the largest spread across the space, being least related to each other.

The move from the high to the lower frequencies has been found in other studies (e.g. Canter et al 2003) to reflect an increase in intensity that may in part parallel temporal developments through the course of the crime. This accords with the idea that the more differentiated aspects of the crimes are the ones which most strongly reflect the individual's emerging dominant motif and so their intensity is partially an aspect of their rarity. Within this hypothetical model the differences between individuals will most clearly be revealed in their most intense actions that are lowest in overall frequency across the sample.

To test this structural hypothesis the first step in exploring the structure of behaviour depicted in Figure 1 is to consider the frequency of occurrence of each of the variables. The contours of similar frequency have been indicated on Figure 2. In accord with the structural hypothesis, it is possible to draw on the plot contours of similar frequency. Close together are the actions that occur in above 70 per cent of the cases. Threatening the victim, in essence the key defining act of stalking that occurs in 80% of cases; following or visiting the victim, another key aspect for the event to be regarded as harassment, in 78% of cases, and telephoning the victim in 76% of case. These three actions thus provide a focus for the whole configuration. Around these are actions that happen in 30 to 69 per cent of the cases. Farthest from the focus are those that occur in 10 to 20 per cent of the cases.

The highest frequency variables that characterise the stalking act and are present in most cases are: the offender phones the victim (variable 1 in Appendix I), the offender follows/visits the victim (variable 14) and the offender threatens the victim (6) all of which occur in over 70% of the offences considered. The facet depicted by these frequency contours can be conceptualised as representing the various stages that occur in contacting the victim. The first stage is telephoning (1), following/visiting (14), and threatening (6). The next stage contained within the 30-69% involves an effort for more contact, the offender tries to come closer to the victim by sending letters (2), making sexual remarks in communication (5), accessing the victim's house (16), inviting contact (8), destroying personal property or belongings of the victim (11), carrying out surveillance of the victim (15), breaking a restraining order (19), confronting the victim (12), contacting the victim after he/she has intervened (20), threatening another person (21), contacting another person (23), and finally by perpetrating physical violence to the victim (18). A third stage is represented by the 10-29% contour. In this the behaviour become even more personal as the offender sends gifts to the victim (4), reveals knowledge about the victim (9), researches the victim (24), asks for personal details (7), defames the victim (3), drives by the victim's place of residence or workplace (22), abuses the victim's family (17), steals personal property (10), and threatens to commit suicide (13).

It is important to note that the focus of this facet is not at the geometric centre of the plot. This implies a bias in emphasis in the sample that will be explored later. However,

support for this facet that radiates out from the focus does indicate that the variations between offenders in the intensity of their contact with the victims is likely to provide the basis for differentiating between them. In other words, this facet of differing intensity modifies the variations between the offence actions. At the lower intensity levels there is little differentiation, with more as the intensity increases. For this reason this facet is often called the 'modulating' facet.

5.2 Behavioural Themes

The regional hypothesis of offence variation has been found in other studies to form a radial structure that moves round the focus (e.g. Canter et al 2003). This accords with the proposal that the actions will overlap with each other in their implications, not producing distinct types but giving rise to different thematic emphases, most clearly at a distance from the focal high frequency actions. The hypothesis is therefore that the four different emphases derived from the literature will be identifiable as radial segments of the configuration.

Visual examination of the SSA plot reveals that it can partitioned into four distinct regions or themes as shown in Figure 2. These four themes may be labelled Sexuality, Intimacy, Possession and Aggression-Destruction representing the sexual, intimate, possessive and aggressive-destructive modes of interaction in stalking behaviour derived from the literature.
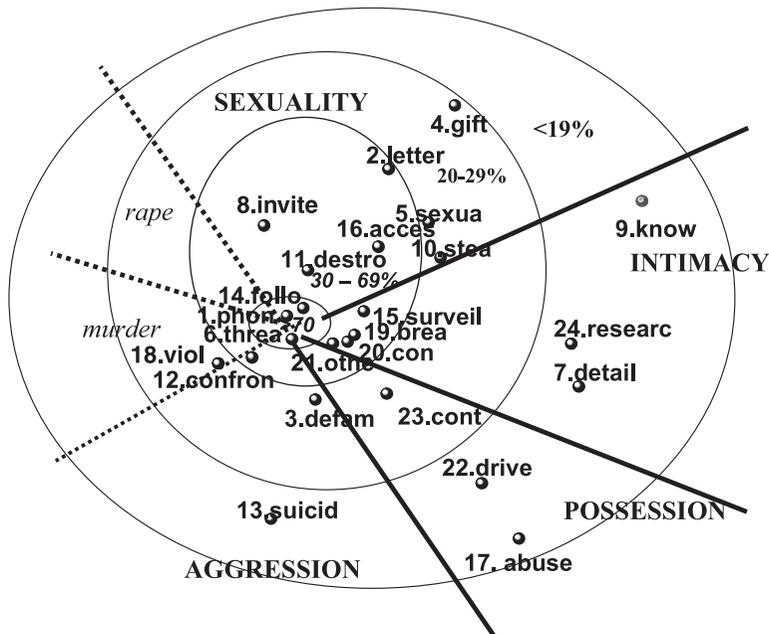

Figure 2: SSA showing frequency of occurrence of behaviour with regional interpretation and indication of implicit regions.

5.2.1 Sexuality

As can be seen from Figure 2 there is a region that contains a number of behaviours indicating a strongly personal and probably sexual component to stalking. For although only one of the eight variables in this region deals specifically with sexual content of communications from the stalker the others all imply a form of contact that carries sexual innuendo. The theft and destructive actions are of particular interest in this region because their focus is on personal possession of the victim. This is distinct from the violent confrontations that form a different region. The gifts here are those of a 'romantic' nature that also imply potential sexual contact. The eight variables are:

Gifts (4)
Letters (2)
Sexual Content (5)
Invites Contact (8)
Steals personal (10)
Destroys personal (11)
Follows/visits (14)
Access house (16)

The co-occurrence of these variables supports the view of most authorities that there is often a strong sexual component to stalking even when overt sexual activity is not mentioned.

5.2.2 Intimacy

Close to the sexual region is one in which intimacy can be seen to be the dominant theme. This region includes behaviours indicative of the offender's distorted search for intimacy. Through his or her behaviours the offender tries to come closer to the victim. Five variables indicate that the offender is attempting to enter into some sort of relationship with the victim:

Reveals knowledge (9)
Researches the victim (24)
Asks personal details (7)
Breaks restraining order (19)
Surveillance (15)

Examining the above behaviours one can see that these are concerned with the stalker making efforts to decrease interpersonal distance between him and the victim. This provides empirical support for an intimate interpersonal style in some cases of stalking. It is logical that this should be adjacent to the sexual region as some of the actions in that region can also have implications of seeking further intimacy, most notably stealing personal objects. The position of this latter variable on the boundary between the two regions is therefore quite appropriate.

5.2.3 Possession

Seeking intimacy can readily merge into a desire to control the victim. It therefore makes senses that adjacent to the intimacy region are a set of actions that show a determination for even more intense contact and some control of the victim. This may be indirectly though contact people associated with the victim, associates or family members. Keeping a close watch on the victim by driving past is a particularly intense way of making the victim aware that the stalker is trying to take control. The four variables in this region are:

Contact after intervention (20)
Contact another (23)
Drive by (22)
Family abuse (17)

The contact with those other than the victim is compatible with the claim from a number of researchers that these stalkers see the victim as their property and believe that if they do not "possess" them then no one will. This region provides empirical support for the possessive interpersonal style in some stalking cases.

5.2.4 Aggression-Destruction

A stalker who aggressively expresses his desire to control the victim will make more overt threats and confront the victim directly, unlike the possessive stalker who drives by and contacts the victim's associates. Therefore it is appropriate that adjacent to the possession region is that of overt aggressive actions. It is interesting that the threat of suicide sits here as well, supporting the fundamentally aggressive quality of this threa. The six variables in this region are:

Threats (6)
Threat another (21)
Physical violence (18)
Confrontation (12)
Public defamation (3)
Threatens suicide (13)

These behaviours appear to be intended to harm, abuse, humiliate and intimidate the victim. It is important to note that in the present sample just over half (53%) of those offenders that threatened their victims proceeded to assault them. Such a high proportion of assaults were not related to any other of the actions.

5.3 Implicit Themes

The order from sexual through intimacy to possession and on to aggression around the structure in Figure 2 has logic to it. It complies with the proposal that the different actions in stalking do not give rise to totally distinct types of stalker but that as differences

in emphasis. These differences reflect different ways in which the stalker may develop the intensity of his/her attempts for contact with the victim.

However, as has been noted the aggression region is not adjacent to the sexual region. This is partly a consequence of the focus, which centres on one of the most common action of telephoning the victim, being eccentric to the plot as a whole. One explanation for this eccentricity is that a subset of possible offenders is omitted from the present sample because of the way the sample was drawn. These were all cases that had come to the attention of a special unit set up to deal with stalking. If the offenders committed a more serious crime those details would have been part of another enquiry and would not be covered by the content dictionary in Appendix I. However, one of the advantages of the model that is summarised in Figure 2 is that it facilitates inferences about what sorts of activities may be missing from the present sample. For example it is logical that an intense form of activity adjacent to the aggressive theme would be one of such a violent assault that the offence would not be recorded as stalking but as some sort of grievous bodily harm or even murder, as indicated in Figure 2. Similarly the region next to sexuality and adjacent to extreme violence would logically be, at its most intense, an offence of sexual assault or rape, as indicated in Figure 2. These implicit themes may be regarded as hypotheses for future research that can be tested by considering the actions of stalkers that go beyond those that would be recorded under the heading of harassment legislation. For example the possibly counter-intuitive hypothesis would be that a stalker who threatened suicide may be more likely to go on to commit murder than say one who sent gifts to his victim or did research into the victim's background. However, the hypothesis would also be derived from this model that offenders who invite contact may also be prone to carry out sexual assaults.

6. Discussion and Implications

The model proposed in this study is consistent with the view that stalking has a number of different psychological origins. By examining the SSA plot this study identified the sexual, intimate, possessive and aggressive-destructive mode of offender-victim interaction. The content of the different regions and their relationships to each other open up further hypotheses for future research and raise implications for managing stalking and therapeutic or custodial interventions.

The sexual theme revealed sexual innuendo as central to a number of stalking activities that are not always understood as overtly sexual. Gaining access to the victim's house and stealing objects co-occur typically with sexual content in communications. It may therefore be inferred that these activities relate to a strong sexual orientation in the offence. This would lead to hypotheses about the offender having a strong sexual focus, which may be reflected in his background or how the stalking behaviour may develop. The contiguity in the SSA of gifts and letters with stealing and accessing the house would also lead to the prediction that if the relatively rare action of gifts were to be accompanied by letters, especially those with a strong sexual content then theft and/or access to the house of the victim may be anticipated.

The search for detailed information on the victim and implying that the offender knows the victim carries a rather different emphasis from letters and gifts. It was proposed that this information focus owes more to a quest for intimacy than an overtly sexual desire. Interestingly these are these are the least frequent of the actions in this sample, possibly because these actions are so relatively benign that they are not always brought to the attention of the police. However, the SSA indicates that if the sort of direct contact that comes with driving by the victim is added to the research about the victim then the stalking is moving into the more dangerous realm of attempts at possession.

This third area is notable for the presence of abuse of the victim's family and the abuse of others close to the victim. It was proposed that the offender is attempting to control the victim through this contact with the victim's associates. The fact that this may often be after there had been some legal or intervention serves to show how stalkers may broaden their actions if they think they are being thwarted by legal means. One direct implication of this is for restraining orders to include close associates of the victim.

The importance of understanding how offenders will broaden the range of victims they will abuse and harass is shown by the closeness of variable 20, action after an intervention, to variables 18 and 12 that record confrontation and violence. This shows how intervention may give rise to more extreme actions by the stalker. These latter actions are clearly in a region of aggression indicating a distinct theme in which violence is the focus. As noted earlier threats of violence against the self, the stalker threatening suicide, sits in this region too. Any such threats can be seen as part of a generally aggressive mode of interaction that could lead to others besides the stalker suffering violence.

The relationship between these four regions supports the view that there are no totally distinct types of stalker. Stalking seems to have common roots in a mixture of psychological processes that include frustration, aggression and the desire to control the target of the actions. The different themes identified therefore may not be a productive of very different aetiologies as indicated in some clinical literature but rather different modes of expressing the same underlying processes, possible due to different stages in the development of the stalking process. Future research that explored the patterns of activity at different stages in a stalking case (information that was not available in the present sample) would help to test the possibility of stages being inherent in the model in Figure 2.

Other research could determine if the variations identified here were related to the background characteristics of offenders and differences in their prior relationship to the victim. For example, as indicated above, there are some suggestions from the literature that the aggressive theme was more likely to emerge from stalkers who had a previous relationship with the victim. Detailed examination of a larger sample of cases would enable appropriate statistical tests for these possibilities to be carried out on the data. It might also be hypothesised that the intimate theme would be more typical of people who have difficulty forming relationships with others, in contrast to the possessive theme where such relationships might be expected to be uncomfortably intense.

The model in Figure 2 is an example of a radex (Borg and Shye, 1995). A number of such models have been reported in studies of crimes (Canter, 2004) since the first illustration by Canter and Heritage (1990). It has been suggested that for violent crimes they

each represent an example of a general model in which the victim servers as a 'person', 'vehicle', or 'object' (Canter, 1994). If the close regions of possession and aggression are regarded as one area of the stalker wishing to reduce the victim something less than fully human that would be under his/her control then this may be regarded as a 'victim as object' region. The sexuality region may similarly reflect the victim as a vehicle for the offender's sexual desires. The victim as a person of significance to the offender would be plausibly included in the intimacy region. These are suggestions worthy of future exploration with more extended data sets, but hold the promise of a general psychological model of the differentiation of violent crime.

Beyond the theoretical interest of the radex model proposed, the empirical structure itself, shown in Figure 2 also has direct practical applications. The co-occurrence of actions can be used by those examining ongoing stalking to consider what other related actions may be expected and planned for. One example would be the recognition that someone who was closely watching a victim may well be doing that as part of the breaking of a restraining order and that further contact from the offender may be anticipated. Another instance would be the consideration that some one who drives by the victim may move on to abuse the victim's family so that so alerting or preventive action could be appropriate.

A further application would be plotting on to the SSA the actions that were known to occur in any given stalking case. This would help identify the thematic focus of the stalking, which in turn could carry implications for whether it was thought appropriate to intensify personal security—as would be indicated by confrontation and defamation—or to heighten property security that would be indicated by the arrival of letters and gifts.

7. Conclusions

The current work differs from previous attempts at classifying stalkers. It is an empirical test based on behavioural, observable variables rather than inferred motives and psychiatric diagnoses. This approach helps demonstrate that the varieties of classifications of stalkers may well be aspects of one overarching system of interactions between offender and victim. However, the present sample is small and the information available was limited. Much more detailed information on the offenders and their backgrounds would be valuable, but such information is rarely available in police records.

In drawing attention to variations in themes central to the actions of stalkers it has been necessary to make a number of inference that could be best tested by richer clinical information. For practical purposes in relation to interventions it is often necessary to make decisions without clinical support and the present study offers a first step towards assisting such decisions. However, the theoretical implications of the present study would benefit from complementary clinical information that will usually only be available when a stalker is charged and convicted. Hopefully this study is one small step towards that process.

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APPENDIX I: VARIABLES USED TO DESCRIBE OFFENDER'S BEHAVIOUR DURING OFFENCES
(with percentage of occurrence in the present sample indicated)

Variable 1. Phone Calls (76%)

The stalker makes phone calls (verbal or silent) or leaves messages on victim's answer phone. This includes any calls at the victim's home, workplace or mobile telephone.

Variable 2. Letters Sent (46%)

The stalker sends written material to their victim. This includes letters, cards, and electronic mail sent via the Internet.

Variable 3. Public Defamation (28%)

The stalker leaves offensive, untrue and/or inappropriately personal notes in public about the victim. This includes graffiti.

Variable 4. Gifts Sent (28%)

This includes gifts sent to the victim at home, at work and/or via another address. Gifts may be left near the victim's home, work, car and/or where the victim will find them. Gifts include flowers, chocolates, photographs, and clothing. Gifts, which infer threat, should not be counted here but within Threatening Content (6). These may include dead animals or parts of animals, the delivery of coffins and/or any other unusual object.

Variable 5. Sexual Content (32%)

An obscene or sexual content is observed in communications from the stalker. This includes sexual remarks in letters, phone calls and/or e-mails, heavy breathing during telephone calls. Also includes acts such as the stalker throwing underwear at the victim.

Variable 6. Threatening Content (80%)

A threatening or abusive content is observed in communications from the stalker. This may be within letters, phone calls, e-mails, graffiti, gifts. The threat content may include threats to harm or kill (towards the victim), or indirect threats such as sending severed animal heads or coffins. Direct physical confrontations between the stalker and victim should not be coded here, but under Threat of Violence (16) or Violence to Victim (22).

Variable 7. Asking Personal Details (16%)

The stalker asks via letter, phone, email and/or in person for personal details about the victim. This may include questions about what they like to wear in bed (which also should be coded as sexual content), where they live or work, or any similar questions.

Variable 8. Offender Invites Contact (42%)

The stalker indicates via communication that they would like/expect to meet the victim, that they expect a future relationship and/or invites the victim to make contact with them. (Any such statement, which includes sexual or threatening contents, should also be coded under the appropriate category.)

Variable 9. Reveals Knowledge About Victim (12%)

The stalker reveals knowledge about the victim via letter, phone, e-mail or directly. This may include knowledge about the victim's family, workplace, activities, colour of clothing or location at specific times and/or photographs that the victim was unaware of

being taken.

Variable 10. Steal Personal Property (24%)

The stalker steals personal property from the victim's house, garden, car or place of work. This may include underwear, photographs or any item belonging to the victim. This category does not necessarily include burglary or trespass.

Variable 11. Destroy Personal Property (32%)

The stalker destroys or attempts to destroy property belonging to the victim or associated with the victim (such as neighbour's car tyres being slashed). Any attempt that could endanger life (i.e. arson) should not be coded here, but under Threat of Violence (16).

Variable 12. Confrontation (52%)

The stalker makes a physically immediate confrontational threat of violence towards the victim. (This may occur separately from or in conjunction with actual violence; however only the immediacy of the threat content should be coded here.) The threat(s) may be verbal, physically with fists, with weapons and/or arson (whereby the victim is physically threatened but not physically harmed).

Variable 13. Threat to Commit Suicide (18%)

The stalker threatens either by correspondence or directly to the victim that they will commit suicide if the victim does not satisfy the stalkers request(s).

Variable 14. Follows/Visits Victim (78%)

The stalker follows the victim and/or visits them at their house, estate, place of work or in transit. This may be on foot, via public transport and/or by vehicle. The victim is aware of this behaviour.

Variable 15. Surveillance of Victim (44%)

The victim may or may not be aware of the following surveillance types (which can become apparent during police investigations, court cases or subsequent discoveries); electronic bugging of their house or telephone, the stalker taking photographs or film of the victim and/or the stalker spying on the victim successfully concealing their activity or without revealing their presence.

Variable 16. Access Victim's House (46%)

The stalker gains entrance to the victim's house or private estate through illegal entry or con-approach (such as getting victim's children to let in stalker as their mother's friend).

Variable 17. Abuse to Family (10%)

The stalker makes threats, abusive remarks or harasses persons connected to the victim. This may include children, partners, friends, work colleagues and/or neighbours. These may include threats to harm or kill.

Variable 18. Violence to Victim (42%)

The stalker perpetrates physical violence upon the victim. This may include punching, stabbing or any other kind of physical assault. The act of homicide should be included in this category.

Variable 19. Break Restraining Order (50%)

The stalker breaks a legal restraining order or injunction preventing them from con-

tacting the current victim. This offence may not necessarily have been prosecuted.

Variable 20. Contact After Intervention (52%)

The stalker makes contact with the victim after intervention, legal or other has been carried out.

Variable 21. Threat to Another (40%)

The stalker threatens to harm or kill persons connected to the victim. This may include relatives, partners or friends

Variable 22. Drive By (14%)

Stalker repeatedly drives by, or passes victims' place of residence or work place. This may occur on foot or in a vehicle.

Variable 23. Contacts Another (40%)

Stalker contacts a person connected to the victim. This may be in order to elicit information about the victim, to pass on messages to the victim or to threaten, abuse or converse with the receiver of the call.

Variable 24. Researching (16%)

Offender researches the victim. This can be done by means of contacting and questioning those connected to the victim, accessing recorded information pertaining to the victim, or surveilling the victim. The knowledge of this research is imparted through correspondence with the victim/others connected to the victim.