



EXPLAINING AND SUSTAINING THE DECLINE IN STRANGER AND ACQUAINTANCE VIOLENCE

Summary

Violent incidents make up nearly a quarter of crimes recorded in the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The cost of violence to the UK economy is estimated at £13 billion annually (National Audit Office 2008). The effects are not just those of emotional and physical harm to the individual victim but spread much wider in terms of the impact on healthcare, cost to the criminal justice system, lost working hours, and a societal fear of crime. Unlike acquisitive crimes the motive (and therefore appropriate preventive mechanisms) is arguably less apparent. As such, it is important to identify those changes in personal security and routine activities which can be associated with trends in violence. No systematic research studies have been undertaken to assess the protective impact of these factors in relation to acquaintance and stranger violence, examined separately, to date. The current research is precisely concerned with such an assessment. The primary research question is:

What is the role of population group- and context- specific changes in personal security and routine activities in explaining the decline in stranger and acquaintance violence?

This study sought to identify the personal security and routine activities measures that offer effective protection from violence and repeat violence to (a) the population overall; (b) specific population subgroups according to their socio-economic attributes; (c) the residents of different areas; and (d) area types and population subgroups plausible combinations in England and Wales and internationally over time.

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Data and Methods

The CSEW, formerly the British Crime Survey, is by general agreement the best victimisation data set in existence internationally. It currently samples some 35,000 respondents annually. The CSEW is an unrivalled source of current and historic information on crime and assembles a wealth of factual information about the respondents, their households and area of residence, including their security measures and routine activities. The survey approach avoids key problems with police statistics due to changes in crime definition and in reporting and recording practices. This is so for all types of violence except robbery, sexual violence and attempted murder, which were omitted from this research due to their rare occurrence and limitations in the sample reach. Domestic violence which is theoretically unrelated to victims' routine activities was also omitted from the current analysis. Therefore stranger and acquaintance violence has been analysed employing all CSEW sweeps since 1992.

The CSEW data have been analysed using exploratory time series plots of different stranger and acquaintance violence sub-categories, and victims of specific gender and age groups from 1991 to 2013/14. Individual, household and area of residence characteristics as well as routine activities associated with high number of violent victimisations over time have been identified via multilevel negative binomial regression modelling. This methodology which examines the entire distribution of crimes is the most appropriate for analysing victimisation as it predicts the mean number of crimes, victimisation risk, and crime concentration across different population groups within various contexts.

Research Team

Principle Investigator: Prof. Andromachi Tseloni (NTU); Research Fellow: Dr Soenita Ganpat (NTU); Co-Investigators: Prof. Graham Farrell (University of Leeds), Dr Laura Garius (NTU), Dr Rebecca Thompson (NTU) & Prof. Nick Tilley (UCL).

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PROJECT CONFERENCE

**EXPLAINING AND SUSTAINING THE DECLINE IN
STRANGER AND ACQUAINTANCE VIOLENCE**

29TH JUNE 2016

9:30 - 15:30

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