

Current Explanations of Stalking

This chapter begins with a brief account of the dominant theoretical orientation drawn upon to locate stalking within the broader landscape of social behaviours. This is then followed by an overview of what we know about the background and *modus operandi* of “typical” stalkers. Finally, the chapter concludes with an examination of the typologies developed to categorise offenders.

In very general terms, this chapter suggests that if we are to advance our understanding of stalking, and our responses to it, we need to move beyond psychiatric models that emphasise the psychological at the expense of the social. A very simple threefold categorisation of stalking is presented which is capable of incorporating the insights derived from the psychiatric models without sacrificing the gains to be obtained by an approach which is more sensitive to the role of social factors.

Current Research

As noted in the previous chapter, the issue of stalking is one that has only very recently begun to receive sustained academic attention. Consequently, at this point, the literature is relatively sparse and generally rather specialised. To date, the research investigating the characteristics of stalking behaviours, including the impact upon victims of stalking and the attributes of offenders, has been characterised by forensic investigations into the psychological profiles of stalkers, with more recent excursions into the area by sociologists, feminists and policy makers. Nonetheless, this research has contributed significantly to our understanding of stalking, specifically with respect to the who, what, why and how of stalking activities.

Given the psychological or forensic orientation of stalking research, specifically in the early days of academic interest in the area, the primary focus of examinations of stalking to date has been upon the mental health of stalkers. This emphasis has resulted in a considerable body of information

concerned with the backgrounds of stalkers. This is useful, indeed crucial, baseline information, although some caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of such data.

Before discussing the research findings, it is necessary to elaborate a little upon the ways in which the existing literature cannot be accepted without some significant qualifications. The first qualification we need to bear in mind is that many of the investigations into stalking are based on small samples comprised of already committed (charged and psychiatrically diagnosed) stalkers. The weaknesses of small samples are reasonably well known, most particularly in that they do not allow for ready generalisation to larger populations. The focus upon convicted stalkers also creates problems because in researching those stalkers who have been sent to a psychiatric unit as an aspect of their sentence, it is likely that such research “recruit[s] the more distressed and aware victims, skewing our data to the more severe end of the spectrum” (Pathé and Mullen 1997, p. 12). This means that cases that are more ambiguous, that have not been reported to the police, and that are far less likely to have resulted in a court order of some sort incorporating psychiatric treatment, tend not to be recognised, acknowledged, or investigated.

These issues have been addressed more recently by sociologists investigating stalking, although these projects also need to be understood within context. While recent investigations have involved larger and more representative samples, many have also relied upon one resource pool of respondents, mainly college students. While these findings are more scientifically sound in terms of generalisability, they are also necessarily biased with respect to their ability to incorporate the experiences of more marginalised members of the community. Nonetheless, from these varied investigations into stalking, some critical trends have been uncovered.

Who: Characteristics of Stalking Offenders and Victims

What we do know of stalkers provides crucial indicative data concerning the magnitude of stalking. The National Institute of Justice has been conducting an annual project on stalking since 1996. Using the National Violence Against Women Survey (n=16000), it was found that 8.1 per cent of all women and 2.2 per cent of all men surveyed were stalked at least once in their lifetime (National Institute of Justice 1997, p. 7) (see also Tjaden and Thoennes 1999). Of those who responded, over 90 per cent were stalked by one person (National Institute of Justice 1997, p. 8). The 1998 British Crime

Survey also included questions on stalking, and found that 11.8 per cent of adults aged 16 to 59 had experienced stalking (defined as persistent and unwanted attention) at some time in their lives, with 16.1 per cent of women and 6.8 per cent of men having experienced such behaviours (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000). The Australian Women's Safety Survey reported similar figures, despite only looking at women who had been stalked by men, with 2.4 per cent of women (aged over 18 years) having been stalked by a man in the last 12 months, and 15 per cent having been stalked by a man at least once in their lifetime (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, p. 62).³

There also appears to be a link between domestic violence and stalking (Burgess et al. 1997; Coleman 1997; Kurt 1995; Mechanic, Weaver and Resick 2000). The risk of stalking rises if the victims/offenders have been involved in a relationship that incorporates domestic violence (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996) and husbands who engaged in emotional abusive behaviours towards their wives were discovered to be more likely to engage in stalking behaviours (National Institute of Justice 1998). These results are reinforced when examining lethal domestic violence resulting in murder or femicide, with 76 per cent of femicide and 85 per cent of attempted femicide respondents reporting an episode of stalking within 12 months of their subsequent murder (McFarlane et al. 1999, p. 308; see also Walker and Meloy 1998).

Despite the paucity of replicated findings, as the literature develops there appears to be recurrent themes. For example, it has been reasonably consistently demonstrated that most stalkers are male and most victims are female (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000; Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker 1997; Geberth 1992; Meloy 1998; National Institute of Justice 1997, 1998; Pathé and Mullen 1997), with the most cited finding being that women were found to be four times more likely to be stalked than males (National Institute of Justice 1997). Some research has replicated these results, such as Pathé and Mullen (1997), whose sample (n=100) contained 83 female and 17 male victims while other research has resulted in closer ratios, such as that by Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker (1997),

³ It is important to note, however, that when the definition is broadened, or specifically when a potential stalking scenario is provided to women, Hills and Taplin's research has shown that "29 per cent of participants reported having had an experience similar to that depicted in the scenario, [a figure] much higher than the 15 per cent reported from a survey of Australian women by the Australian Bureau of Statistics." (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 145)

demonstrating that 35.2 per cent of female students compared to 18.4 per cent of male students reported having been stalked (n=593) (Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker 1997).

It should be noted, however, that when the definition of stalking is broadened to whether respondents have experienced being followed, telephoned or sent gifts repetitively (rather than experiencing fear or apprehension), these gender differences are less. For example, research focusing upon college students' experience of stalking demonstrates no significant gender differences in experiencing a range of behaviours which could constitute stalking (Spitzberg, Nicastro and Cousins 1998; Logan, Leukefeld and Walker 2000). Hills and Taplin's work also shows no significant difference between males (29%) and females (31%) reporting having had an experience similar to the stalking scenario provided by the researchers (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 145).

This gender dimension also becomes slightly more complicated when we examine who is likely to stalk whom, with some research demonstrating that males and females were likely to be stalked by different people as "female victims are significantly more likely than male victims to be stalked by spouses or ex-spouses, whereas, male victims are significantly more likely to be stalked by acquaintances and strangers" (National Institute of Justice 1997, p. 9). Similarly, while females are more likely to be stalked by males, the sex of offenders stalking males appears to be more evenly distributed, with research demonstrating that 57 per cent of offenders stalking males were male, and 43 per cent were female (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000, p. 26).

In general, however, stalkers appear to be older than the average criminal, aged on average between 35 and 45 years (Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995; Meloy and Gothard 1995; Mullen and Pathé 1994; National Institute of Justice 1997; Schwartz-Watts and Morgan 1998; Zona, Sharma and Lane 1993), and victims tend to be younger than their offenders, on average between the ages of 18 and 29 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996; Tjaden 1997; Tjaden and Thoennes 1999).

Most stalkers pursue their ex-partners (Meloy and Gothard 1995; Mullen et al. 1999; Zona, Sharma, and Lane 1993; Zona, Palarea and Lane 1998), or follow someone they know (Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995; Meloy 1996; Mullen et al. 1999; Roman, Hays and White 1996; Zona, Palarea and Lane 1998). It appears that stalkers are more likely to be violent if they have had an intimate relationship with the victim (Coleman 1997; Lingg 1993;

McFarlane et al. 1999; Meloy 1996; Pathé and Mullen 1997; Palarea et al. 1999, Perez 1993; Tjaden and Thoennes 1999).

The duration of stalking ranges considerably, with Pathé and Mullen's (1997) research including cases that ranged from 1 month to 20 years, resulting in an overall median of 2 years. The National Institute of Justice (1998, p. 21) found that approximately two-thirds of all stalking cases last maximum of 1 year, about a quarter last 2–5 years, and about a tenth last more than 5 years. On average, stalking cases lasted 1.8 years, although it is important to note that those cases involving intimates tended to last longer than cases involving non-intimates (2.2 years compared to 1.1 years respectively) (National Institute of Justice 1998, p. 21).⁴

Why: Characteristics of Stalking Motivations

Few researchers have explicitly focused on the motivations of stalkers, but those which do tend to argue that power, revenge and insecurity are the primary motivations. Stalking is seen as a phenomenon rooted in the particular *psyche* of the offender rather than deriving more directly from social factors or contexts. This may of course reflect the background of the researchers rather than the more complex socio-genesis of stalking behaviours. Nevertheless, Wright et al. (1996) argue that stalker crimes are “motivated by interpersonal aggression rather than by material gain or sex. The purpose of stalking resides in the mind of stalkers who are compulsive individuals with a misperceived fixation. Stalking is [said to be] “the result of an underlying emotional conflict that propels the offender to stalk or harass a target” (1996, pp. 494–95). Social factors are acknowledged as contributing to this final psychological malaise, with Meloy hypothesising that “chronic failures in social or sexual relationships through young adulthood may be a necessary predisposing factor for some obsessional followers” (Meloy 1996, p. 151).

The third annual report published by the National Institute of Justice included victims' perceptions of why they had been stalked. Victims reported perceived motivations of control, with 21 per cent feeling that the stalker wanted to control them, 20 per cent feeling the stalker wanted to keep them in a relationship, and 16 per cent believing the stalker wanted to scare them, in comparison to 7 per cent believing that there stalker was

⁴ For an overview of stalking victims' and offenders' age and sex within the Australian context, as recorded by self-report survey data and police statistics, see Appendix A.

psychotic or delusional (National Institute of Justice 1998, p. 14). These motivations of possession and power are reflected in Wright et al.'s research with 40 per cent reporting anger or retaliation, 33.3 per cent possession, 20 per cent infatuation, and 6.7 per cent another reason for stalking (n=30) (Wright et al. 1996). In terms of intimate-partner violence, it has been argued that stalking, together with battering and emotional abuse, is motivated by attempts to control and intimidate the victim, and is also likely to be precipitated in the context of perceived or actual threats to the relationship (Mechanic, Weaver and Resick 2000, p. 68). It is important to note, however, that again there may be significant gender differences in motivation, with Budd, Mattinson and Myhill's research demonstrating that women were more likely to state that the offender wanted to start a relationship, and men being more likely to state that the offender wanted to annoy or upset them (2000, p. 29).

How: Characteristics of Stalking Behaviours

The two most common reported stalking behaviours appear to be being watched and being telephoned (see Brewster 2000, Meloy 1998; Pathé and Mullen 1997). In an Australian survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1.6 per cent of women reported receiving telephone calls and 1.2 per cent reporting being watched (proceeded closely by being "followed" at approximately 1%) in the last 12 months (Australian Bureau of Statistics 1996, p. 62). Tjaden reported higher incidences for these behaviours using the National Violence against Women Survey, which examined stalking across the respondents' life. While the percentages were higher, the trend was the same. Of those surveyed, 78 per cent received telephone calls (with professionals being more likely than other groups to receive harassing calls); 71 per cent were followed; 62 per cent received letters; 58 per cent received direct threats; 50 per cent received unsolicited "gifts" (dead animals, flowers and photos); 36 per cent experienced damage to property, especially cars and outside of homes; 31 per cent were physically assaulted; 7 per cent were sexually assaulted; 3 per cent experienced attempted murder; and 2 per cent were abducted (Tjaden 1997). Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000) reported that the most common behaviours were silent phone calls (45%), being physically intimidated (42%) and being followed (39%). Women were more likely to experience being forced into talking to the offender, while men were more likely to experience silent phone calls (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000, p. 35).

Forensic studies have come up with similar results, with Mullen et al.'s (1999) analysis of diagnosed stalking offenders finding that the most common method of communicating was via the telephone (78% of respondents), with 65 per cent also sending letters. Fifty-eight per cent of the stalkers made threats to the victim or a third party, with 52 per cent attacking the victim (Mullen et al. 1999, p. 1246). Other authors have identified a cycle of violence, involving specific phases of stalking acceleration.

Three factors of classification of stalking behaviour are suggested by the data. In the first factor, stalkers are open in their attempts to contact their ex-partner; when this fails they begin to contact others and discredit their partner. The second factor is the conversion of positive emotion of love to the negative of hate they essentially go underground with the clandestine behaviour being non-revealing and including anonymous or hang-up phone calls and entering the residence without permission. Just before they go public again, there is a phase of ambivalence indicating the splitting of love and hate where they send gifts and flowers. When they move from the mix of public and secret behaviour to a public display of stalking and targeting behaviour, they suddenly explode and in this sample, entered the victim's residence and were very violent. (Burgess et al. 1997, p. 399)

Given these findings, the relevance of different behaviours should not be underestimated in attempting to ascertain levels of danger of potential stalkers. Whilst an overview of violence and stalking will be undertaken later in the chapter, it is worthwhile noting at this point that:

The most frequently reported stalking behaviour for both femicide and attempted femicide victims was being followed or spied on. Additional stalking behaviour reported by almost half of all women was the intimate partner perpetrator sitting in a car outside her home or work site and receiving unwanted phone calls. (McFarlane et al. 1999, p. 308)

What: Consequences of Stalking for Victims

The final factor to be considered before dealing more systematically with the phenomenon of stalking is that of the impact on victims. Some research has

suggested that the experience of being stalked is “akin to psychological terrorism” (Hall 1998, p. 133), with many victims moving address, quitting jobs and changing their names and appearance in an effort to hide from their stalkers (Hall 1998, p. 134). In a study of 100 victims, Pathé and Mullen’s research revealed that over 94 per cent of victims of stalking reported lifestyle changes. Within the sample, a high proportion of subjects made specific lifestyle changes. Eighty-two per cent modified their usual activities, 73 per cent increased their security and 70 per cent curtailed social outings. An equally high proportion reported more psychological impacts on their lives. For example, 83 per cent reported jumpiness, shakes and panic attacks; 75 per cent reported feeling powerless; and 74 per cent reported chronic sleep disturbances. Twenty-four per cent (nearly a quarter) of the sample seriously considered or attempted suicide (Pathé and Mullen 1997).

The National Institute of Justice recorded less serious negative mental health impacts (although still substantial), with 30 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men reporting that they had sought psychological counselling. Extra precautions were taken by 22 per cent of victims, with 18 per cent enlisting the help of friends and family, and 17 per cent purchasing a gun. Eleven per cent changed address or moved out of town (National Institute of Justice 1998, p. 19). The British Crime Survey recorded that overall 92 per cent of victims of stalking behaviours were annoyed and upset, with 71 per cent of those who had been stalked changing their behaviours by either avoiding certain places, taking additional security measures, or going out less than they would have previously. Overall, women were more likely to change their behaviours than men were (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000, pp. 43–44).

Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker discovered less extreme coping strategies, but with one particularly interesting gender differences. For females, the top four coping strategies for handling being stalked were ignoring the stalker, confronting them, changing their schedule and carrying a spray weapon (for instance, mace). In contrast, the top four coping strategies for males were confronting the stalker, ignoring them, reconciling with them and changing their schedule (Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker 1997, p. 668). Thus, both males and females chose three similar responses to being stalked, with the one difference of females carrying spray, and males reconciling with their stalker.

In sum, there have been a number of empirical investigations into stalking, which have revealed a variety of demographic data concerning the characteristics of both stalking offenders and stalking victims, based upon a variety of research samples (see Table 2).

Categories

The categorisation of offenders is a means of understanding the effectiveness of policy responses to stalking. If stalkers typically suffer from mental illness, then imprisonment is unlikely to constitute a particularly useful strategy in preventing further stalking behaviour. However, if the majority of stalking derives from dysfunctional intimate relationships, then this has crucial implications for domestic violence policies. An accurate and comprehensive classification of stalkers would, thus, facilitate the development of “a guide to the course and duration of harassment, the risks of escalation to assaultive behaviours, and, above all, the most effective strategies for ending the stalking” (Mullen et al. 1999, p. 1245; see also Mullen, Pathé and Purcell 2000). Given the importance of such an endeavour, it is not surprising that much of the research to date has focused upon the development of typologies of stalkers. These attempts at categorisation vary in their levels of sophistication.

Typologies can be based upon: the characteristics of the victim (for example, celebrities/strangers. See Holmes 1993); the relationship between the stalker and the victim (for example, workplace acquaintance, electronic acquaintance and ex-partner. See Davis and Chipman 1997, Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner 1998); the motivations of the stalker (for example, revengeful, love, rejected. See Dietz et al. 1991; Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995; Mullen et al. 1999); and the psychological characteristics of the stalkers (for example, erotomaniac and simple obsessional. See Meloy 1998; Zona, Sharma, and Lane 1993, 1998; Rudden, Sweeney and Francis 1990).

However, classificatory schemes are not always clear cut, with many researchers using a combination of these variables in their typologies. For example, Zona, Palarea and Lane’s (1998) research, which is predominantly concerned with psychiatric classification, divides two of these classifications (simple obsessional and love obsessional) on the basis of the relationship between the offender and the victim. Similarly, Mullen, Pathé and Purcell (2000), Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1998) and Wright et al. (1996) use a mixture of motivations and psychiatric characteristics in the development of their typologies.

Table 2: Selected Empirical Studies of Stalking

Authors	Sample
Kurt (1995)	4 case studies of stalkers with psychotic disorders.
Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995)	48 individuals referred to a forensic psychiatry clinic.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (1996)	National survey of 6 300 women.
Wright et al. (1996)	30 stalking cases (no information regarding where cases came from).
Kienlan et al. (1997)	Archival files of 25 forensic subjects whose criminal offences met criteria for stalking.
Burgess et al. (1997)	Police incident reports. Charged subjects interviewed (120 participants).
Coleman (1997)	141 subjects from undergraduate psychology classes: control group 90; harassed group 38; and stalked group 13.
Pathé and Mullen (1997)	100 clients referred to forensic psychiatry clinic.
Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker (1997)	West Virginia University undergraduates: Study I: 294 college undergraduates. Study II: 299 college undergraduates.
National Institute of Justice (1997, 1998)	National survey of 16 000 people: 8 000 female and 8 000 male.
Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998) for temporary restraining orders).	41 qualitative interviews with people who had been “followed”: 25 female and 16 male (plus examining petitions
Hills and Taplin (1998)	172 respondents, random survey of metropolitan Perth.
Sandberg, McNeil and Binder (1998)	17 mental health patients who were identified as having engaged in stalking behaviours.
Schwartz-Watts and Morgan (1998)	Medical records of 42 pre-trial detainees charged with stalking. Group divided into 22 non-violent and 20 violent.
Palarea et al. (1999)	223 intimates (n=135) and non-intimate (n=88) stalking cases (via LA Police Threat Management Unit).
McFarlane et al. (1999)	Closed police records from 10 cities in the United States (141 femicides and 65 attempted femicides included).
Ehrhardt Mustaine and Tewksbury (1999)	861 female university students (from 9 separate institutions).
Pathé, Mullen and Purcell (1999)	12 “false victimisation” individuals; and 100 “genuine victim” individuals.
Mullen et al. (1999)	145 (stalking) offenders located in a forensic psychiatric clinic.
Brewster (2000)	282 college students: 123 male and 159 female.
Logan, Leukefeld and Walker (2000)	337 college students: 147 males and 190 females.
Sinclair and Frieze (2000)	241 college students: 197 female and 44 male.
Sheridan, Davies and Boon (2000)	358 female union members.
Mechanic, Weaver and Resick (2000)	114 women who had experienced intimate-partner violence.
Farnham, James and Cantrell (2000)	50 (stalking) offenders located by a forensic service.
Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000)	9 988 people aged 16 to 59 years (the British Crime Survey). Of those stalked at least once in their lifetime, n=1179 approximately).

While some researchers have attempted to develop clear definitions of their concepts (for example, quality of obsession. See Zona, Sharma, and Lane 1993) or checklists based upon the style of stalking, risk level, motive and outcome (see Wright et al. 1996), in general, a failure to provide a clear operationalisation of stalking has proven to be a significant handicap to research into this area. The lack of “reliability” in these diverse (albeit overlapping) studies obviously hinders the development of “valid” typologies. With the added disadvantages of small samples, deriving from forensic populations of already diagnosed offenders, much psychiatric research is limited to exploratory hypotheses rather than explanatory data (Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner 1998; Hills and Taplin 1998; Westrup 1998). Nonetheless, it remains the one discipline to have empirically investigated stalking and, as such, one of the few to make any major contribution to the field.

The psychiatric literature focuses predominantly upon stalking behaviours as indicating the presence of obsessional disorders, specifically that of erotomania (Goldstein 1998; Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995; Leong 1994; Wright et al. 1995; Zona, Palarea and Lane 1998). The examination of erotomania can be argued to have defined early research into stalking, with Meloy undertaking a review of all studies of stalking and finding only five studies that did not exclusively focus on erotomania (Meloy 1996). Erotomania was first discussed by Esquirol in 1838 (see Meloy 1989). It has been defined as a “mixture of morbid infatuation and delusions of being loved by another” (Abrams and Erlick Robinson 1998a, p. 474) and a “fixed delusional belief that one is loved by another, usually someone of a higher status or power” (Fremouw, Westrup and Pennypacker 1997).

Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993) were amongst the first researchers to use understandings of obsession in analysing a group of stalkers. They categorised 74 stalkers as representative of three distinct groups: erotomaniac (cases in which in which the offender (delusionally) believes the victim loves them), love obsessional (cases in which the victim and the offender have no prior relationship), and simple obsessional (cases in which the victim and the offender have a prior relationship).

There has also been discussion concerning which sex is likely to be erotomaniac. Clinical tests suggest that males are more likely to suffer erotomania (Mullen and Pathé 1994, Goldstein 1987), while larger non-forensic samples demonstrate higher incidences of the disorder in females

(Zona, Sharma, and Lane 1993; Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995). For a detailed discussion of these findings, see Meloy (1996).

It should be noted though that, while the majority of early forensic investigations focus upon issues of erotomania, most have discovered that erotomania exists in an extremely small percentage of stalkers, and that most stalkers are not psychotic at the time of their stalking (Meloy 1998). Despite these relatively consistent findings, there has been little discussion as to the possible consequences of stalking not being a mental health problem.

Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995) conducted analysis on 48 individuals who had been referred for evaluation to a Forensic Psychiatry Clinic for harassment, aggravated harassment and/or menacing. They developed a classification scheme for the offenders along two axes: “one relating to the nature of the attachment between the defendant and the object of their attentions, and another relating to the nature, if any of the prior interaction between them” (Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1995, p. 189).

The two axes were broken down further, whereby the nature of attachment was divided into “affectionate/amorous” or “persecutory/angry”, and the nature of prior interaction was divided into six categories: personal (prior intimate), professional (for example, business, professor and therapist), employment (employer or employee), media, acquaintance (superficial previous relationship), none (no clear reason for selection of victim), and unknown. Harmon, Rosner and Owens’s (1995, pp.190–94) research is interesting in that the majority of prior interaction was in the professional (25%) and employment (25%) categories, indicating a level of familiarity between the offender and the victim, but not intimacy. Indeed, only 13 per cent reported a personal prior relationship, the same percentage that reported having a relationship through media familiarity.

The nature of the relationship, however, was predominantly “amorous/affection” (63%) in comparison to a smaller (yet, still concerning) 31 per cent in the “persecutory/angry” category. In their later research, Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1998) further investigated these issues, affirming that there were statistically significant differences between individuals who harass for reasons relating to love compared to those who harass for reasons relating to persecution and anger (Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1998, pp.

246–47). They make the important point, however, that the law-enforcement community should consider *both* categories a threat (Harmon, Rosner and Owens 1998, p. 247).

Somewhat more comprehensively, Mullen et al. conducted analysis on 145 stalkers located in a forensic psychiatric clinic. The authors defined stalking as the repeated and persistent unwelcome attempts to approach or communicate with a person (1999, p. 1245). Thirty per cent of the stalkers were previously in a domestic relationship with their victim, while 23 per cent were in a professional relationship. Fifty-seven per cent of the stalkers had previous criminal histories (Mullen et al. 1999, p. 1246). Of particular interest is Mullen et al.'s analysis of the motivations reported by offenders for their stalking behaviours. They identified five specific “types” of stalkers, these being:

- the “rejected”;
- the “intimacy seeking”;
- the “incompetent”;
- the “resentful”; and
- the “predatory”.

Thirty-six per cent of respondents engaged in stalking behaviours in response to “rejection from a relationship”, usually that of an ex-partner. Thirty-four per cent were “seeking intimacy”, identifying the victim of their stalking as the true love (Mullen et al. 1999, p. 1247). The incompetent stalkers made up 15 per cent of the sample, and were similar to the intimacy seekers in that they were seeking intimacy but acknowledged that the object of their stalking did not return their feelings. Of the original 145 stalkers, 16 men (11%) were identified as “resentful stalkers”, who stalked in order to “frighten and distress the victim”, and 6 men (4%) were defined as “predatory”, being those who were planning a sexual attack (Mullen et al. 1999, p. 1247).

In their more recent work, Mullen, Pathé and Purcell expand more comprehensively upon this typology, arguing that the categories are intended to “capture the function of the behaviour for the stalker” (Mullen, Pathé and Purcell 2000, p. 75). If, as Mullen and colleagues suggest, the particular behaviours engaged in by stalkers have a meaning which is some

way relates to their goals (Mullen, Pathé and Purcell 2000, p. 75), this is of critical importance to any intervention strategies that are developed to address stalking behaviours.

Kienlan et al. (1997) constructed a simpler typology that focused specifically on comparing psychotic versus non-psychotic stalkers. While again the samples are extremely small, the authors concluded that more than one-third of their sample (35 per cent, n=8) were psychotic, and the remaining (65 per cent, n=15) were non-psychotic at the time of their offences (Keinlan et al. 1997, p. 320). They discovered that the psychotic stalkers were characterised by delusional beliefs at the time of stalking, usually (in interesting contradiction to erotomania) these delusions were of a “persecutory or grandiose nature” (Keinlan et al. 1997, p. 331).

Wright et al. also used a simple definitional typology of non-domestic (where the stalker has no interpersonal relationship with the victim) and domestic (where the stalker is a former boy/girlfriend, family or household member). In the non-domestic category, there are two styles of stalking. The organised stalker, where the target is initially unaware of being stalked or of who is stalking them. In this context, “an organised stalker is one who targets and communicates with the victim through hang-up, obscene or harassing telephone calls, unsigned letters; and other anonymous communication” (Wright et al. 1996, p. 496). This is in comparison to (non-domestic) delusional stalking. The delusional stalker stalks because of a psychological fixation on the victim, either one of “fusion” where the stalker “blends his or her personality into the target”, or “erotomania” where the offender engages in an idealised romantic love for the victim (Wright et al. 1996, p. 497). For delusional stalkers, their preoccupation with the victim becomes all consuming, as the offenders create elaborate fantasies regarding the relationship to their victim.

The second category of domestic stalkers is where the victim knows the stalker or may have been in an intimate relationship that the victim has attempted to terminate (Wright et al. 1996, p. 499). In this category, there is often a history of prior abuse, domestic violence or conflict, often compounded by external factors (financial, vocational or educational) (Wright et al. 1996, p. 500).

It should be noted, however, that the classifications of offenders has not been exclusively confined to psychiatric research. However, those not specifically deriving from a psychiatric orientation tend to focus upon the

relationship between the victim and the stalker (as opposed to the motivations or the mental state) as the most useful variable in distinguishing between types of stalking. Examples of this approach include the very simple typology employed by the National Institute of Justice, which simply uses three categories: “intimate or former-intimate stalking”, where the stalker and the victim are (or have been) in an intimate relationship; “acquaintance stalking”, where the offender and victim may know one another informally, such as through work; and “stranger stalking”, where some what self-explanatorily, the stalker and victims are strangers (National Institute of Justice 1998, p. 2). The Home Office has used a similar typology based upon both the victim-offender relationship and the sex of the victim (Budd, Mattinson and Myhill 2000, p. 30). This has resulted in four categories.

- Female victim—intimate relationship with offender.
- Female victim—non-intimate relationship with offender.
- Male victim—intimate relationship with offender.
- Male victim—non-intimate relationship with offender.

Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998), in one of the very few sociological investigations of stalking, develop a similar typology, although with the addition of an extra category. In their seminal piece of research investigating the concept of “relational stalking”, Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998) identify four variations of stalking associated with levels of (or lack of) familiarity. These comprise: unacquainted stalking (where the victim/offender is a stranger), pseudo-acquainted stalking (where the victim is a public figure for whom the offender “feels” they have a special understanding), and semi-acquainted stalking (where the victim and the offender have had some type of social contact, for example in the workplace). Finally, they use a category of intimately-acquainted stalking (where the victim and the offender have been in a relationship which the offender is trying to maintain or recreate) (Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner 1998, p. 295). It should be noted, however, that Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998) do not actually provide a label for this fourth group but refer to the fact that “here the parties involved are not only previously acquainted, but usually intimately linked” (Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner 1998, p. 295).⁵

⁵ It is important to note that this definition does not take into account revenge stalking leading to violence.

Following on from Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner's research, there has been an increased focus upon stalking "in everyday life", with Tjaden, Thoennes and Allison (2000) examining the differences between self-definition versus legislative definitions of stalking, and Sinclair and Frieze (2000) and Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al. (2000) investigating expressions of stalking in relationship courting practices and dissolution practices respectively. This relatively recent orientation into stalking research is extremely valuable, as it allows for the analysis of what constitutes "criminal" stalking as opposed to "conformist" pursuit. Thus, it has enormous potential to contribute to future policy initiatives addressing stalking. It should be noted, however, that the categorisations that result refer more to stalking victims than offenders. Importantly, all of these classification schemas allow for the investigation of the relationship between stalking and "normal" social relations. See Table 3 for a list of stalking typologies.

Table 3: Stalking Typologies

Authors	Classification
Dietz et al. (1991)	Jilted Lover. Narcissistic. Over-idealised. Romantic. Batterer. Perverted. Psychotic.
Zona, Sharma and Lane (1993)	Erotomantic. Love obsessional. Simple obsessional.
Holmes (1993)	Celebrity. Lust. Hit. Love scorned. Domestic. Political.
Harmon, Rosner and Owens (1995)	Affectionate/amorous. Persecutory/angry.
Geberth (1992)	Psychopathic. Psychotic.
Roberts and Dziegielewski (1996)	Domestic violence. Erotomania/delusional. Nuisance.
Wright et al. (1996)	Non-domestic (organised or delusional). Domestic.
De Becker (in Orion) 1997	Attachment seeking. Identity seeking. Rejection based. Delusionally based.
Kienlen et al. (1997)	Psychotic. Non-Psychotic.
National Institute of Justice (1998)	Intimate or former-intimate. Acquaintance. Stranger.
Emerson, Ferris and Brooks Gardner (1998)	Unacquainted. Pseudo acquainted. Semi-acquainted. Intimately acquainted.
Mullen et al. (1999) (see also Mullen, Pathé and Purcell 2000)	Rejected. Intimacy seeking. Incompetent. Resentful. Predatory.
Budd, Mattinson and Myhill (2000)	Female victim—intimate relationship with offender. Female victim—non-intimate relationship with offender. Male victim—intimate relationship with offender. Male victim—non-intimate relationship with offender.
Tjaden, Thoennes and Allison (2000)	Self-defined (victims). Legally-defined (victims).

Discussion

Research has, thus, yielded a number of reasonably consistent findings. In sum, approximately 10 per cent of people have experienced stalking-type behaviours at some time in their life (8% according to the National Institute of Justice research; 15 per cent according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics research; 29 per cent according to Hills and Taplin). Victims are most likely to be female and younger than their stalkers. Stalkers are most likely to be male and older than the average male criminal. The majority of stalkers appear to pursue their ex-partners and most stalking episodes last (on average) between 1 to 2 years. The most common behaviours involve being watched, followed and telephoned.

Accordingly, classification criteria have developed around such factors as psychological motivations and the relationship between the victim and the offender.

Given that legislation is typically developed with the objective in mind of impacting upon behaviours that “exceed normal social interaction and that have the potential for harm” (Hills and Taplin 1998, p. 140), understandings of what is appropriate social interaction are perhaps most easily investigated by examining social relationships (intimates/strangers). Similarly, to the extent that attitudes of police and magistrates are representative of wider social norms, the extent to which they take stalking seriously is a “barometer” of how comprehensively stalking is understood as criminality by the wider populace. If an individual persistently leaving unwanted flowers is viewed as a rather pathetic “sap”, for which pity rather than police intervention is considered necessary, this will inevitably be implicated in the manner in which such cases come to court. Conversely, if behaviours such as repeatedly threatening an ex-partner are considered more representative of a domestic violence offence (rather than stalking), this may also decisively impact upon the manner in which police choose to intervene.

Given these decisions, the following chapter will briefly review the literature available using the National Institute of Justice’s criteria of stranger stalking, acquaintance stalking and intimate or former-intimate stalking. It will also include case study examples.