

VIOLENT LIVES: A LIFESTYLE MODEL LINKING EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE TO JUVENILE VIOLENT OFFENDING

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Studies examining the consequences of juvenile exposure to violence focus largely on psychological outcomes and often ignore the ways in which exposure is associated with deviant peers and juvenile offending. Using data from the National Survey of Adolescents (NSA), a nationally representative sample of juveniles between the ages of 12 and 17, we examine the relationship between various types of exposure to violence and violent offending. Based on Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo's Lifestyle model of victimization (1978), the authors argue that exposure to violence is indicative of a lifestyle of violence. Such a lifestyle makes juveniles susceptible to victimization, witnessing violence, and association with violent peers. The findings demonstrate that these indicators of violent lifestyles in turn act as a risk factor for violent offending.

Keywords: *exposure to violence; lifestyle; routine activities*

Exposure to violence may take many different forms. Public and political attention has predominantly focused on the impact violence in the media may have on juveniles. Although watching violent media may increase juvenile and adult aggressive behaviors (Huesmann et al. 2003), a potentially more important type of exposure is real-life violence—witnessing violence, having violent friends, or experiencing violent victimization. Children in America are at high risk for these forms of exposure to violence, with those in inner cities at greatest risk. Nearly all children and adolescents in inner cities report they have encountered firsthand exposure to violence in their homes or communities (Koop and Lundberg 1992; Margolin and Gordis 2000; Purugganan et al. 2000). Such exposure often begins at early ages. Using a sample of in-

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ner-city children, Hurt et al. (2001) found that by the age of 7, 75 percent of children report they have heard gun shots, 18 percent have seen a dead body, and 10 percent have been a witness to a shooting or stabbing in the home. The fact that violence has become a routine part of many juveniles' lives raises concerns about the consequences of exposure to violence.

The current research examines the interconnectedness of various forms of juveniles' exposure to violence by applying routine activities theory (Cohen and Felson 1979), or a lifestyle model (Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo 1978), to explain juvenile violent offending. Using data from a nationally representative sample, we examine how being a witness to violence, having violent friends, and being victimized by violence are associated with the risk of engaging in violent activities. In particular, we intend to demonstrate that routines or lifestyles that expose juveniles to violence serve as an important risk factor for juvenile violent offending.

CONSEQUENCES OF EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

Studies in a variety of fields find serious repercussions stemming from exposure to violence. Internalized consequences include a variety of mental health problems (Slovak 2002), including anxiety (Cooley-Quille et al. 2001), depression (Kendall-Tackett, Williams, and Finkelhor 1993; Kliewer et al. 1998; Oates et al. 1994), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Terr 1991), and problems during different psychological developmental stages (see Margolin and Gordis 2000:449-52 for review). In addition, a number of behavioral consequences are consistently found to result from exposure to violence, including higher risk of suicide (Berenson, Wiemann, and McCombs 2001; Vermeiren et al. 2002), poor academic performance (Schwartz and Gorman 2003), higher participation in risky sexual behaviors (Berenson et al. 2001), and a number of other delinquent or criminal actions. One type of deviant behavior attributed to violent exposure that has garnered substantial attention is problem use or abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Exposure to violence in childhood, either through direct victimization or through witnessing violence, increases the risk of drug and alcohol problems among adolescents, young adults, and adults (Berenson et al. 2001; Caetano, Field, and Nelson 2003; Kaplan et al. 1998; Kilpatrick et al. 2000; Pelcovitz et al. 1994; Vermeiren et al. 2003). Within the psychological and public health literature, exposure to crime and violence is suggested to lead to high levels of stress. In turn, individuals engage in a variety of drug-related behaviors to reduce these adverse feelings (Bean 1992; Brown 1989; Ireland and Widom 1994; Kilpatrick et al. 1997, 2000). For example, a recent study by Kilpatrick et al. (2000), found that PTSD and exposure to violence lead to

maladaptive coping strategies—namely drug abuse and dependence. The strongest predictor of this behavior was witnessing violence. Therefore, there is some indication from the psychological literature that victimization and witnessing violence may be empirically important in predicting some forms of deviant behaviors.

An important potential consequence of exposure is violent offending. Findings supporting a link between exposure and offending, however, are mixed. Schwartz and Proctor (2000) find a direct relationship between violent victimization and aggressive behaviors, such as starting fights or bullying other kids. However, this association fails to remain significant when the ability to self-regulate emotions is included in structural models. Song, Singer, and Anglin (1998) found that being exposed to violence was associated with violent behaviors but only accounted for 26 percent of such outcomes for boys and 22 percent for girls.

What many of these studies fail to consider is whether juveniles are exposed to violence as “innocent bystanders” or if their lifestyles place them in situations where violence is more likely to occur, thus precipitating exposure. Juveniles who are thrust into violent situations by forces beyond their control may respond in any of the psychological or behavioral manners previously studied. In contrast, a juvenile who seeks out situations and actively participates in activities that create opportunities for violence may be “exposed” to violence due to their own routines and lifestyles. Fully understanding the relationship between exposure and offending thus requires a model that can examine how juveniles participate in their own violent experiences.

This study draws on routine activities and lifestyle approaches to determine whether various forms of exposure to violence are indicators of a violent lifestyle. Specifically, we argue that having violent friends, witnessing violence, and being a victim of violence are all indicators of a lifestyle of violence that increases the risk of violent offending.

ROUTINES AND LIFESTYLES OF VIOLENCE

This study proposes that the link between exposure to violence and violent offending is that these experiences are all indicators of a deviant lifestyle. This explanation draws on two theories that focus on activities influencing the likelihood of victimization. Routine activities theory argues that the movement of activities away from the home in modern society has provided increased opportunities for criminal victimization. The normal activities of individuals increase the probability for the convergence of what Cohen and Felson (1979) identify as the necessary elements for victimization: (1)

motivated offenders, (2) suitable targets, and (3) absence of capable guardians. Juveniles who engage in regular activities away from the home and among strangers, and out of the direct control of parents or other responsible adults, are easier targets for victimization and are exposed to a greater number of criminal events.

A similar theory by Hindelang, Gottfredson, and Garofalo (1978:241), proposed that "lifestyles," or the routines associated with work, school, or leisure activities, influence rates of victimization. According to this model, lifestyles develop from demographically based role expectations and structural constraints. Role expectations are defined as the "cultural norms that are associated with achieved and ascribed statuses" (Hindelang et al. 1978:242) that dictate the appropriate activities of an individual. For example, there are clear role expectations based on age and sex. As children age, the expectation is that they move away from the strict control of their parents and families and spend more time within school- and peer-based activities. Similarly, girls are expected to spend more time within the family home, both as children, when they are more closely supervised by parents than male children, and as adults when they assume responsibility for home care and child rearing (Hindelang et al. 1978:247-48). These role expectations would influence the probability of becoming a victim of crime due to the lifestyle adopted by individuals of different demographic characteristics. A second way demographics contribute to lifestyles is through structural constraints. Instead of the general social influences on lifestyles based on role expectations, structural constraints are the specific limitations on the opportunities to choose between alternative lifestyles. For example, economic deprivation limits where individuals live, the types of leisure activities they engage in, and the ability to take advantage of educational opportunities (Hindelang et al. 1978:242).

Hindelang et al. (1978:244) proposed that role expectations and structural constraints result in individuals developing "adaptations" that allow them to function in society within the imposed limitations. These adaptations include a variety of skills and attitudes that in turn develop into the routines or lifestyle of the individual. The lifestyle is what determines whether the individual associates with deviant peers, is exposed to criminal opportunities, and ultimately if they are victimized by crime. Therefore, both lifestyle and routine activities theories explain rates of victimization based on the activities routinely engaged in by individuals.

Much of the early work with these approaches only examined victimization, and indicated that victims of crime often lead lifestyles that expose them to greater risks (Hindelang et al. 1978; Jensen and Brownfield 1986; Mustaine and Tewksbury 1998a, 1998b). Lifestyles that are subject to higher rates of victimization typically are those that draw the individual away from home. For example, playing sports at a certain time, going to bars, movies, or

regular meetings all increased the risk of victimization in the Canadian Urban Victimization Study (Kennedy and Forde 1990). Other studies that focus on the time of routine activities find that engaging in nighttime activities away from home are those that produce highest risk for victimization (Miethe and Stafford 1987).

An important contribution of the current study is to switch the emphasis from explaining victimization to understanding offending. Several tests of these theories have created a bridge between offending and victimization by arguing that those who engage in delinquent activities are vulnerable to criminal victimization. Specifically, the daily routines engaged in by the deviant individual create more frequent opportunities for crime to occur and thus increase victimization. Support for this connection is indicated by research that finds engaging in deviant behavior and associating with delinquent peers increases the probability of victimization (Lowry, Cohen, and Modzeleski 1999; Rani and Thomas 2000). This link between deviance and victimization is not unique to the American lifestyle but is found in several cross-cultural studies. Delinquent or violent lifestyles have also been found to relate to victimization in studies of adolescents in Iceland (Bjarnason, Sigurdardottir, and Thorlindsson 1999) and Columbia (Klevens, Duque, and Ramirez 2002).

Although these studies do examine how offending relates to victimization, very few reverse the order of this association to examine whether victimization and other measures of violent lifestyles are risk factors for violent offending. Such an association is within the framework of the routine/lifestyle theories because routines that expose individuals to events where criminal victimization is possible also present opportunities to become an offender. The current study extends routine activities and lifestyles approaches by investigating how a range of experiences with exposure to violence relate to juvenile violent offending. Instead of focusing exclusively on risks for victimization, we argue that victimization and other indicators of violent lifestyles are risk factors for violent offending.

A second contribution of this study is the specific focus on violence. Although theoretically routine activities/lifestyle approaches should be able to predict all forms of victimization, many studies have focused on property offenses. In fact, Miethe and Stafford (1987) argue that these theories are more suited to predicting property crime and find in their work that violent victimization is not as strongly linked to routines. They propose that because violent victimization often occurs in or near the home, and is perpetuated by intimates or acquaintances, the routine activities/lifestyle approaches are less relevant. In fact, they argue that these theories cannot predict violent victimization due to the fact that most acts of violent offending “defy the rational

characterization of criminal motivation underlying routine activity/lifestyle approaches" (Miethe and Stafford 1987:192).

We argue that existing studies have failed to adequately predict violence because they measure routines in such ways that they do not incorporate routines of violence. One exception is a study by Halliday-Boykins and Graham (2001). This study examines four competing models that attempt to explain the association between exposure to violence in the community and violent offending. Within their models, they include measures of violence exposure, aggressive cognitive style, and deviant peers (Halliday-Boykins and Graham 2001:390-91). Their study found that the best model for understanding the relationship between these variables is one that assumes violent offending is part of a lifestyle of violence. Specifically, they conclude, "violence exposure and violent behavior are associated because they are both manifestations of a general involvement in violence" (Halliday-Boykins and Graham 2001:395). Although this study provides important support for a lifestyle or routines of violence model, it has several important limitations. The primary problem is that the data for the study include only 277 adolescent males who were incarcerated in two detention camps in Los Angeles (Halliday-Boykins and Graham 2001:388). Although this may be useful for examining serious offenders, it does not allow for assessment of more typical juveniles.

By drawing from a nationally representative sample, and focusing on measures of violence within juveniles' lifestyles, our study allows us to examine whether lifestyle and routine activities approaches can provide an explanation of violence within the general juvenile population. Violent lifestyles are measured by the juvenile's exposure to violence in three ways; directly witnessing violence, having violent friends, and being the victim of violent behavior. All three of these types of exposure to violence indicate that the juvenile engages in lifestyle activities that take him or her into situations where crime, and in particular, violence is occurring. By examining the effects of these three types of violence exposure, we attempt to determine whether exposure to violence is part of a violent routine in the lifestyles of juveniles that ultimately increases the risk of violent offending.

DATA

To examine a lifestyle model to predict violent offending, we use data from the National Survey of Adolescents (NSA), collected by Kilpatrick and Saunders in 1995 (see Kilpatrick et al. 2000 for full description). These data were collected through a nationally representative telephone survey of 4,023 adolescents between 12 and 17 years old. The sample includes a household probability sample and an oversampling of central cities in order to include a

good representation of racial minorities. To ensure the data are representative of the experiences of all American youth, the data are weighted by age, sex, and race to be in accordance with the juvenile population as described by the 1995 census.

MEASURES

For the purposes of this project, three sets of variables from this survey are used: demographic characteristics, exposure to violence variables, and violent offending. Demographic characteristics are key in these analyses because the lifestyle model proposes that routines or lifestyle are developed through role expectations and structural constraints that are based on demographics. The specific demographic variables included in these analyses are age, sex, race, family income, family structure, and the type of community where the family resides.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age and sex are the primary demographic characteristics that influence role expectations in this study. One of the most consistent findings in criminology is that criminal activity rises rapidly through childhood and peaks in late adolescence (see for example Gottfredson and Hirschi 1987, 1990; Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983). Within the lifestyle model this can be explained due to the greater freedoms and increased autonomy given to older adolescents. For this study, age is measured as the respondents stated age at the time of the interview. All respondents were required to be between the ages of 12 and 17.

Although there has been a social movement toward greater equality between the sexes, there still remain many different expectations concerning the appropriate activities for juvenile girls and boys. Girls tend to be more highly supervised by parents and restricted in their activities (Bottcher 2001; LaGrange and Silverman 1999), which diminishes their opportunities to develop lifestyles that include violence. Girls are also still much less likely to engage in deviance, particularly violence (Heimer and DeCoster 1999; Mears, Ploeger, and Warr 1998; Wilson and Herrnstein 1985). Therefore, we expect that this study will find that boys are more likely to be involved in violent offending than girls due to the role expectations that influence lifestyles. For this analysis, sex is measured as a dichotomous variable with one indicating female and zero male.

Family structure, family income, family residence and race are all considered to be structural constraints that may influence lifestyle. Hindelang et al. (1978:249) argue that marital status is a characteristic that influences both role expectations and structural constraints. Individuals who are married are expected to spend more time with their families than those who are not married and marriage brings together two extended families, thus increasing the likelihood of spending time with family members. Because this sample is drawn from adolescents living at home with their parents, the respondents' own marital status is not an issue. However, the marital status or family structure of the respondents' parents could be important in several ways. First, if the respondent lives in an intact family structure, this would increase the family networks in a similar way as being married would for adults. Family structure can also greatly influence the economic stability of the family with two parents generally being able to provide greater economic resources. For this study, family structure is measured as a dichotomous variable dividing those who report they have always lived with both biological parents coded as one and all other respondents coded zero.

Family income, race, and family residence are all forms of structural constraint that can significantly affect the life chances and lifestyle of juveniles. These variables influence where individuals live, through both racial and economic segregation of housing, educational and leisure opportunities, and with whom juveniles associate. For example, within a small, racially homogeneous, rural community, it is less likely that a juvenile has regular exposure to strangers than a juvenile in an inner city. For this analysis, family income is coded as a categorical variable with 1 representing the lowest income group of \$0 to \$5,000 and 9 the highest income group reporting more than \$100,000. Race is coded as a set of dummy variables—Caucasian (including Asian respondents), Black, Hispanic, and Other. In the analyses, Caucasian is used as the left-out category. Finally, family residence is also coded as a set of dummy variables with “city” being used as left-out category in analyses.

Exposure to Violence

The second set of variables focus on the experiences of violence the juvenile has been exposed to. Most studies of routine activities focus on the minutia of daily life, determining how many hours and minutes is spent on a variety of daily tasks and activities, where such activities take place and who the respondents associate with during these activities. Although such data may provide rich information to assess how routines may predict more common forms of victimization or offending, violence is a rare event, even in highly deviant lives. To adequately assess whether violence is part of a lifestyle or routine, we argue a different approach is needed. For juvenile samples, many

of the routine activities will be similar—going to school, participating in school-based activities, and hanging out with peers—so what is needed is a measure of how common violence is within the juveniles' lifestyle. To develop measures for a lifestyle of violence, we use several variables: peer violence, witnessing violence, and victimization.

One very important type of exposure to violence is having friends that engage in violent acts. Several studies find that juvenile victimization increases with the presence of deviant peers (Jensen and Brownfield 1986). Association with violent peers is a good indicator that violence is a routine part of the juveniles' lives. Violent friends escalate the risk of being a witness to violent acts or to being drawn into violent situations that may result in either victimization or offending. Therefore, assessment of the violence engaged in by friends is an important element in determining whether juveniles participate in violent lifestyles. For this study, this type of exposure to violence is measured by several indications that respondents' peers are involved in violent offending (see appendix for specific survey items). Juveniles are asked if their friends had ever tried to force sexual activity and if they have threatened to hit or actually hit another person. In addition, the respondents could report a friend as the offender in any of six types of violent behavior witnessed by the respondent. To assess how regularly peers engage in violence, these eight measures are combined into an additive scale.¹

Witnessing violence is the second type of exposure, measured by respondents' answers to a series of questions concerning whether they had directly observed violent behavior. The respondents were asked if they witnessed six types of violence: having seen someone shoot, stab, sexually assault, mug, or threaten someone else with a weapon or having seen someone beat-up another person so that they were hurt pretty badly. Although the stipulation of the victim being "hurt pretty badly" was included for the last form of witnessed violence, juveniles may interpret this in many different ways, depending on their own involvement in violence. Juveniles who regularly experience violence in their daily routines may not interpret the victim's injuries as serious, whereas someone who is not exposed to violence may construe serious harm from a minor fight. However, this type of violence exposure is included in the measure to provide the widest range possible of how common witnessing violence is in juveniles' lives. The final measure of witnessed violence represents how many of the six different acts of violence the juvenile has witnessed.

Violent victimization is the final measure of exposure to violence, indicating participation in a violent lifestyle. Numerous items assessing direct victimization were included in the survey. For example, three items are used to determine if the juvenile has been a victim of physically abusive punishment. These items ask if a parent or other adult in charge of the juvenile has ever

spanked the juvenile so hard that they had to see a doctor or so that there were bad marks, bruises, cuts, or welts. A final item in this series asks if the juvenile has ever been punished by being burned, cut, or tied up. Physical assault was measured by a total of five items on the survey and sexual assault by five or six items, depending on the sex of the respondent. Because each of these types of victimization is measured with multiple items, and individually are rare, one dichotomous measure was developed for each form of victimization. A yes response to any of the individual items for each type of victimization is coded as one, with all other respondents coded as zero. In addition, for one part of the analysis, a measure of any victimization is created indicating a positive response to any of the three general types of victimization: sexual assaults, physical assaults, and physically abusive punishments. Having been a victim of any of these three types of violence is coded as one and respondents indicating they have not experienced any of these acts are coded as zero.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Because the main focus of the original survey was on drug and alcohol use, there are limited items related to other forms of juvenile deviance. Therefore, violent offending is measured by affirmative answers to any of four questions assessing the respondents' involvement as an offender in violent acts. The survey items for violent offending are as follows: Have you been involved in a gang fight? Have you used force or strong-arm methods to get money or things from people? Have you had or tried to have sexual relations with someone against their will? Have you attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing that person? Due to the relative infrequency of any of these acts of violence, a dichotomous variable is created by coding an affirmative answer to any of the four types of offending as one and all other respondents coded as zero.

Analysis

Prevalence data and relational data for the key variables of violence exposure and offending are presented to determine whether violence is a significant problem in the lives of the juveniles in the sample and to assess whether violence occurs as isolated events or appears to be part of a lifestyle. Frequencies and correlation analyses are employed to assess the relationships between violence exposure, victimization, and offending.

The second step in the analysis is to conduct multivariate analysis to determine whether exposure to violence serves as a risk factor for violent

offending. Because the types of violence examined in this study are very serious, only a small percentage of the sample reported engaging in any one of the specific acts. Thus, it was determined that logistic regression analysis, assessing the likelihood of engaging in any of the acts of violence studied, was the most appropriate analytic technique. The primary goal in the logistic-regression analysis was to determine whether a lifestyle model, focused on demographic characteristics, association with violent peers and other forms of violent exposure provides an explanation for violent offending. To ensure the results are representative of the juvenile population in the United States, all analyses are conducted with data weighted by age, sex, and race based on 1995 U.S. Census figures.

Findings

The three types of measures indicating violent lifestyles are relatively infrequent in the sample. Appendix A provides the frequencies for the individual items that are used to indicate the presence of violent friends, witnessed violence, and the different types of victimization. Table 1 displays the final distribution and means for the measures of exposure to violence used in the analysis.

Witnessing violence is a form of violent exposure that the majority of juveniles in the sample have experienced at least once. By far the most common type of witnessed violence is seeing a beating, with 68 percent of the sample reporting they have witnessed such an event. In contrast to this form of violence, other forms of witnessed attacks are rare, with only 3 to 11 percent of the sample reported witnessing the actual use of weapons, sexual assaults, or muggings and only 33 percent witnessing a threat with a weapon. As displayed on Table 1, more than 72 percent of the sample has been exposed to at least one act of witnessed violence but less than 2 percent (69 respondents) indicated they have witnessed five or six types of violence included in this study. The mean number of acts witnessed by the sample is 1.30, indicating that the average respondent has seen just over one of these types of violence.

The second type of violent lifestyle or exposure to violence measure, peer violence, is substantially less common in the sample. In comparison to the more than 70 percent of respondents who have witnessed violence directly, just fewer than 30 percent of the sample reported that their friends have engaged in any of the acts of violence included in this measure. Of those who did report having friends engaged in violence, nearly 70 percent reported that their friends had only committed one act (818 out of the 1,175 reporting any peer violence). No juvenile reported a friend engaging in all the types of

TABLE 1: Distribution of Friends' Violence and Witnessing Violent Events

	<i>Total Acts of Violence</i>	<i>Frequency (percentage)</i>
Peer violence (Mean = .419)		
Zero	2,848	70.8
One	818	20.3
Two	254	6.3
Three	70	1.8
Four	20	.5
Five	7	.2
Six	1	.0
Seven	4	.1
Witnessed violence (Mean = 1.301)		
Zero	1,121	27.9
One	1,457	36.2
Two	857	21.3
Three	363	9.0
Four	156	3.9
Five	62	1.5
Six	7	.2

violence possible and only five respondents indicated they have friends who have participated in six or more out of eight total possible violent acts.

The final measures of exposure to a violent lifestyle are associated with the three different types of victimization: sexual assault, physical assault, and physically abusive punishments (see appendix). Physical assaults are the most frequently reported victimization, with 701 respondents, 17.4 percent of the sample, revealing that they have been the victims of a physical attack. Just over 9 percent, 376 respondents, have been the victim of physically abusive punishments. Sexual victimization is the least common form reported in this sample, with only 326 or 8.1 percent of the respondents reporting this type of assault. Just over 26 percent of the sample has experienced at least one of these forms of victimization and 61 respondents (1.5 percent) reported having been a victim of all three types of violence.

Because this is a general population survey of juveniles, violent offending, the dependent variable in this study, is also not very common. Only 370 respondents, just over 9 percent of the sample, committed at least one of the violent acts included in the survey. The most common type of violence participated in by the sample is involvement in a gang fight (5.6 percent), and the least common is for a respondent to report having committed an attempted rape, actual rape, or sexual assault (only three respondents).

To determine how these forms of exposure to violence are associated with each other and violent offending, Pearson maximum likelihood correlation

TABLE 2: Correlation Matrix for Violent Lifestyle Measures***

	<i>Violent Offending</i>	<i>Friend Violence</i>	<i>Witnessed Violence</i>	<i>Sexual Assault</i>	<i>Physical Assault</i>
Friend violence	.399				
Witnessed violence	.405	.467			
Sexual assault	.129	.157	.218		
Physical assault	.374	.312	.424	.213	
Physical abuse	.178	.133	.206	.195	.250

*** All correlations are significant at $p < .001$.

analyses are conducted. The data on Table 2 show that every type of violence in this analysis is significantly correlated with every other form ($p < .001$), indicating that all of these measures of violent lifestyles are highly associated. This finding provides support for the assumption that juveniles who experience one form of violence are likely to participate in routines or exhibit lifestyles that put them at risk for other types of violence. For example, having violent friends opens opportunities for witnessing violence, being a victim, or engaging in violence.

Sexual assault has somewhat lower magnitudes of association with all of the other types of violence, ranging from .129 with violent offending and only reaching .218 with the total number of types of violence witnessed. Therefore, it could be that victims of sexual assault are somewhat less involved in a violent lifestyle and are more "innocent" victims. The strongest association in this analysis is between violence committed by friends and witnessed violence. This is very likely due to the way in which friend's violence is measured, which includes acts witnessed by the respondent that were committed by the friend. However, because the magnitude of this association is only .467, problems with multicollinearity in regression analyses are not a concern.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To assess the relationship between lifestyles of violence and offending, logistic-regression analysis is performed. Following the lifestyle model, several demographic characteristics that are associated with role expectations and structural constraints are included as controls. Age and sex are hypothesized to exert influence through different role expectations for girls and boys and younger and older juveniles. Race, family structure, family income, and the type of community that the juvenile lives in are all measures of structural constraints as described by Hindelang et al. (1978). Along with these

TABLE 3: Logistic Regression Analysis on Violent Offending—Model 1

Variable	B	SE	OR
Age	.034	.010	1.035***
Female	-1.075	.138	.341***
Black	.526	.161	1.692***
Hispanic	.824	.208	2.280***
Other race	.980	.249	2.665***
Intact family	-.771	.131	.463***
Income	.000	.003	1.000
Suburb	-.016	.200	.984
Large town	-.011	.200	.989
Small town	-.329	.194	.720
Rural	-.413	.232	.662
Any victim	1.540	.134	4.662***
Any friend	1.558	.136	4.752***
Any witness	2.162	.461	8.688***

*** $p < .001$.

controls, the three measures of exposure to violence that are associated with a violent lifestyle are included in the models.

Two models are developed to assess the importance of lifestyles on violent offending. The first model coded victimization, witnessing violence, and having violent friends as three dichotomized variables. This model allows us to make preliminary conclusions of whether any of these types of exposure to violence serve as risk factors for violent offending. The second model recodes the violence exposure variables to assess the impact of the different types of victimization and the relative risk of increasing exposure to witnessed violence or violent friends.

Model 1 provides at least partial support for a lifestyle of violence approach. Age and sex, the two main measures of role expectations in the model, both exert significant influence on offending in the expected direction: older juveniles and boys are at greater risk for violent offending. Girls are 66 percent less likely to participate in violent offending than boys ($p < .001$), and for each increase in age, juveniles become almost 4 percent more likely to engage in violence ($p < .001$; see Table 3).

Measures indicating structural constraints in the model are not as consistently predictive of offending. In support of lifestyle theory, all the dummy variables for race in Model 1 indicate that minority respondents are significantly more likely to engage in violence than the left-out category of Caucasians. The greatest risk is for non-Black, non-Hispanic respondents, who are nearly 167 percent more likely than Caucasians to participate in violent offending. Black respondents are at least risk among the minority groups,

being only 69 percent more likely than Caucasians to be at risk for violent offending. Race is considered to be a structural constraint according to Hindelang et al. (1978) due to the ways in which race limits opportunities for freedom in selecting housing locations, social activities, and the link between race and socioeconomic status. However, in this model, neither family income nor where the juvenile lives are significant risk factors. The only other structural constraint that is significant is family structure. Always having lived with both biological parents appears to be a protection against violent offending (OR .463).

Experiences of violence in the juveniles' lives all serve as substantial risk factors for violent offending. All three measures of violent lifestyles are significant ($p < .001$), and all substantially increase the risk of offending. The odds ratio for violent victimization is 4.662, indicating that respondents who have experienced sexual assault, physical assault, or physically abusive punishment are more than 366 percent more likely to be a violent offender than those who have not experienced any of these forms of victimization. Having friends who are violent increases the likelihood of offending by 375 percent, and being a witness to violence increases the risk of offending by 769 percent, by far the most substantial risk factor in this model.

This first model indicates that exposure to violence has serious consequences for violent offending and implies that a lifestyle approach may be an important tool for understanding this relationship. To assess whether increasing levels of exposure to violence and more specific information about the types of victimization provide a clearer understanding of the relationships between lifestyles and offending, a second model is analyzed (see Table 4). Although there are not dramatic differences in the conclusions from these two models, there are several important changes in the importance of structural constraints and victimization measures.

In Model 2, the findings related to role expectations remain largely unchanged, with older juveniles and boys still being at higher risk for offending. However, several measures of structural constraints fall from significance or become significant in this model. The OR for Black respondents falls to nonsignificance, indicating there is no additional risk of being Black as compared to Caucasian for violent offending within this model. However, Hispanic respondents and other minority groups do continue to be at higher risk than Caucasian respondents for violent offending ($p < .05$). Similarly, those from intact homes continue to be at less risk for offending (OR .578, $p < .001$). One important change in this model is that in comparison to juveniles from large cities, juveniles living in small towns and rural communities are significantly less likely to engage in violent offenses. Those in rural communities are at least risk, being nearly 46 percent less likely to engage in violent offending than juveniles within the city.

TABLE 4: Logistic Regression Analysis on Violent Offending—Model 2

Variable	B	SE	OR
Age	.032	.012	1.033**
Female	-.925	.148	.397***
Black	.136	.172	1.145
Hispanic	.488	.203	1.629*
Other race	.541	.275	1.718*
Intact family	-.548	.135	.578***
Income	.002	.003	1.002
Suburb	-.066	.735	.937
Large town	-.012	.189	.988
Small town	-.387	.196	.679*
Rural	-.629	.245	.533**
Sexual abuse	.188	.204	1.206
Physical assault	1.183	.138	3.263***
Physical punishment	.533	.167	1.703***
Friend total	.684	.070	1.982***
Witnessed total	.589	.058	1.803***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Another important difference in this second model is that we separated the different types of victimization. Juveniles who are regularly in situations or locations where fights occur may be at higher risk for violent exposure, as either a victim, or offender, or simply as a witness. However, being the victim of a sexual assault, especially if such victimization takes place in the home, may be less indicative of the lifestyle of the juvenile. Therefore, just measuring any type of victimization may mask important information concerning how lifestyles are related to violence. In this model, when the three types of victimization are separated, sexual victimization in fact fails to reach significance, indicating that this type of victimization may not be an indicator of participation in a violent lifestyle. In contrast, victimization through physical assault or physically abusive punishment both continue to be significant risk factors ($p < .001$). Physically abusive punishment increases the risk for violent offending by 70 percent, whereas having been the victim of physical assaults dramatically increases the risk of offending by 226 percent.

The two other measures of violent lifestyles—peer violence and witnessing violence—both continue to be important predictors of violent offending. Witnessing violence generates an OR of 1.803 ($p < .001$) and friend's violence has an OR of 1.982 ($p < .001$). Because both these measures are continuous additive variables, the OR indicates the relative odds for a one-unit increase. Differences of more than one unit increase the OR exponentially (Kilpatrick et al. 2000:22). Therefore, compared to respondents who have never witnessed any violence, those who have seen half the types of violent

acts (3 out of 6) are 486 percent more likely to offend, and juveniles who have seen all six types are 3,335 percent more likely to engage in violent offending ($1.803^6 = 34.354$). Similarly, juveniles who reported having peers involved in half of the different types of violence (four out of eight possible) are 1,443 percent more likely to engage in violent offending than respondents reporting no violence by friends.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of these analyses, we conclude that the more exposure to violence is a part of the individuals' everyday lifestyle, the more likely juveniles are to engage in violent offending. The differences between the two models in this analysis demonstrate that simply measuring exposure to violent experiences is less informative for predicting offending than understanding the volume of exposure and the types of victimization that are experienced.

This study points to several important issues for future research. First, our results indicate that all forms of exposure to violence are highly associated with each other. For studies examining consequences of exposure to violence, this indicates that it is vital to include peer violence as well as both witnessing violence and victimization. If such measures are not included, significant forms of exposure to violence may be missed.

Second, our study provides support for a lifestyle model of juvenile violent offending. Variables associated with role expectations influence offending in expected patterns, with older juveniles and boys being more involved in violence. Structural constraints are not as consistent, however, indicating that this study is not able to fully measure how income or the type of community of residence are structurally limiting the juveniles' lifestyles, or indicating that the idea of structural constraints within the theory needs further elaboration and testing. However, very consistent with the theory is the finding that juveniles are at much higher risk of violent offending if they have experienced any other type of violence in their lives. For Hindelang et al. (1978:243), lifestyle predicts both the associations one has and the level of exposure to violence that in turn effect victimization. For our model, we include victimization as one form of exposure to violence and find that all three outcomes of lifestyle—associations, exposure and victimization—lead to offending.

Exposure to violence may lead to offending in a number of ways. First, witnessing violence in daily life may lead to beliefs that violence is an appropriate behavior or at least an acceptable solution to conflict. Second, having peers that use violence may increase the juvenile's view of violence as

acceptable behavior as well as providing opportunities where violence is occurring. Third, juveniles who are victimized by violence are also at greater risk to become violent, either through responding to victimization in kind or through attempting to escape victimization in settings such as the home. Together, these types of exposure to violence lend support for the conclusion that violent lifestyles perpetuate exposure, victimization, and offending.

However, we argue that it is important to consider the context of the violence the juvenile is exposed to. Several of our findings indicate that it is not sufficient to simply determine whether juveniles have been exposed to violence but that it is more important to understand the types and frequency of violence and the nature of the exposure. For example, when any victimization is included in one measure, the findings mask the reality that sexual victimization is not a risk factor for violent offending and that there are substantial differences in the magnitude of the effect of physical assault and physically abusive punishments.

In attempting to explain the impact of physically abusive punishment on offending, several of the potential problems with interpretation of these findings are made clearer. It is possible that such physical abuse occurs due to actions of the juvenile who may be getting into trouble or rebelling, thereby increasing tensions at home and contributing to family violence. However, being a victim of physically abusive punishment may only be related to the lifestyle of the juvenile due to the desire to escape from a physically abusive family situation. As juveniles spend more time away from home in an attempt to avoid parental abuse, they may be more open to other forms of exposure to violence such as witnessing violence in the neighborhood or being drawn to violent peers. Thus, to better understand the relationship between family violence and violent offending, more detailed information about where violence occurs, and possibly longitudinal data are recommended for future research on this topic.

Due to these issues, the contextual information about where and with whom exposure to violence occurs may be important pieces of information in future studies. For example, if all exposure occurs within the home or school, this may not be a good indication of the juveniles' lifestyles because most juveniles have little control over their activities within these settings. However, juveniles who experience violence in other settings, such as the neighborhood, may be actively engaging in lifestyles that increase their exposure and their likelihood of offending. The importance of examining both the setting of their activities and the peers juveniles associate with as part of their routines has in fact been demonstrated in past research. In a study of delinquent street groups, Kennedy and Baron (1993) found that victimization is related both to the location where juveniles spend time and their association with groups that include violent offenders. Juveniles indicated that their own

participation in violence developed “out of the circumstances that they were placed in by participating in the group out on the street” (Kennedy and Baron 1993:99). Therefore, juvenile victimization or offending is not only dependent on the choice of associations but also the location of the routine activities. Future studies should thus attempt to examine the impact of exposure to violence within different settings to determine if these differences affect violent offending.

Further research on the context in which juveniles carry out their routines is also potentially important in understanding how events may escalate into serious acts of violence. Violent events are dynamic processes influenced by understood rules or scripts that are applied to a specific situation. Such scripts develop through earlier experiences and through observing others within similar contexts (Fagan and Wilkinson 1998). Youth participating in a violent lifestyle do not instigate violence at every provocation but limit offending based on the appropriate script. Assessment of the context that determines which actions are necessary includes how successful an attack would potentially be, the risk to the participant, and how important an act of violence is in maintaining reputation or gaining a desired end (Kennedy and Baron 1993:101-106). Therefore, routines and lifestyles that expose juveniles to situations that provide a context for the playing of violent scripts provide increased opportunities for violent offending, victimization, and witnessing violence.

In conclusion, we argue that lifestyles contribute to exposure to violence and ultimately offending. In our study, physical assault victimization had a much larger impact on juvenile violent offending compared to other forms of exposure to violence. However, all forms of exposure to violence were highly associated both with each other and offending. This is an indication that juveniles who are regularly in situations where they are exposed to violent events encounter these experiences as part of a lifestyle that simultaneously increases the risk of violent offending.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several important limitations. Due to the nature of cross-sectional data, it is not possible to determine the casual order to the different forms of exposure to violence. Although data are available for the age of the juvenile when various forms of victimization or witnessing of violence occurred, such specific information is not available for all the forms of violence in this study. Therefore, any conclusions about the causal order of the types of violent activities within the juveniles' lives are impossible to make with these data.

In addition, the data for witnessed violence are limited due to the way in which the information was coded in the original study. Respondents were asked if they had ever witnessed any of six different types of violent acts but then were only allowed to discuss one incident for each type of violence. A juvenile who had witnessed multiple shootings or stabbings, and who thus would arguably have a much more violent lifestyle, would only be able to report one shooting and one stabbing. Ideally, future studies should expand this information to allow juveniles to report on multiple instances of each type of violence they have witnessed. Although the current measure is an adequate assessment of whether juveniles experience a range of violent events, it does not fully address how often or how many times juveniles are exposed to violence.

Most studies of routine activities or lifestyle models gather more specific information about both the deviant and nondeviant activities of the respondents. This study does not have these types of details about the juveniles' daily activities because such information is not included in the data. However, we argue that our focus on violence requires measures of lifestyles that would not emerge from such daily recording of events. Violent events are relatively rare, so measuring a "routine" that incorporates such events would be very difficult. Our study makes it possible to examine how experiences with violence are an indication of violent tendencies.

These data were also limited to measuring very serious types of violent offending. It is possible that if a wider range of types of violence were available, there would be sufficient variation within the sample to allow for other forms of analysis, such as structural equation modeling, to provide a more complete test of lifestyle models. In spite of these limitations, the current study does allow us to recommend that future research needs to examine how various forms of exposure to violence contribute to juvenile violent offending.

APPENDIX A

**Survey Items and Frequency for Measures for
Witnessing Violence, Victimization and Peer Violence**

<i>Witnessed Violence</i>	# Yes	%
Have you ever seen someone actually shoot someone else with a gun?	200	5.0
Have you ever seen someone actually cut or stab someone else with a knife?	425	10.6
Have you ever seen someone being sexually assaulted or raped?	111	2.8
Have you ever seen somebody being mugged or robbed?	418	10.4
Have you ever seen someone threaten someone else with a knife, a gun or some other weapon?	425	10.6
Have you ever seen someone beaten up, hit, punched, or kicked such that they were hurt pretty badly?	2,735	68.0
<i>Peer violence</i>		
Peer identified as offender in acts of witnessed violence	547	13.6
Friend hit another person	811	20.2
Friend forced or attempted to force someone to have sex	164	4.1
<i>Victimization</i>		
Sexually assaulted	326	8.1
Physically Assaulted	701	17.4
Physically abusive punishment by parent or some other adult in charge.	376	9.4

NOTE

1. Although there are six possible instances of witnessed violence that may be committed by a friend, no respondent reported friends as the offender in all six witnessed acts.

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