CV142L

(2007). In, Davis, R.C., Luirigio, A.J., & Herman, S. (Eds.), Victims of crime (3rd ed) (pgs. 9-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

2

Developmental Victimology

The Comprehensive Study of Childhood Victimizations

DAVID FINKELHOR

In this chapter, I sketch the outlines of the field of developmental victimology. It is a field intended to help promote interest in and understanding of the broad range of victimizations that children suffer from and to suggest some specific lines of inquiry that such an interest should take. In promoting this holistic field, I contend that the problem of juvenile victimization can be addressed in many of the same comprehensive and conceptual ways that the field of juvenile delinquency has addressed the problem of juvenile offending.

The field of juvenile delinquency stands as a monument to social science, one of its most mature, theoretically and empirically developed domains. By contrast, despite substantial research on specific child victimization topics such as child abuse or child sexual assault, there is no similarly integrated and theoretically articulated interest that characterizes the field of juvenile victimization. In comparison to juvenile delinquency, juvenile victimization has much less theory about who gets victimized and why, much less solid data about the scope and nature of the problem, many fewer longitudinal and developmental studies that look at the "careers" of victimized children, and much less evaluation

Author's Note: The author wishes to thank Richard Ormrod and Stephanie Halter for their help with data analysis and computation and Kelly Foster for her help with preparing this manuscript.

For the purposes of compliance with Section 507 of PL 104–208 (the "Stevens Amendment"), readers are advised that 100% of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources (U.S. Department of Justice). The total amount of federal funding involved is $353,233.

to ascertain the effectiveness of policies and programs that respond to juvenile victims.

These deficiencies are ironic for a variety of reasons. For one thing, children are among the most highly victimized segments of the population (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999). They suffer from high rates of the same crimes and violence adults do, and then they suffer from much victimization specific to childhood such as child abuse and neglect. Second, victimization has enormous consequences for children, derailing normal and healthy development trajectories. It can affect personality formation, have major mental health consequences, impact on academic performance, and also is strongly implicated in the development of delinquent and antisocial behavior (Margolin & Gordis, 2000). It is clear that because of several factors, such as children's special developmental vulnerability to victimization, its differential character during childhood, and the presence of specialized institutions to deal with it (such as child protection agencies), the victimization of children and youth deserves both more attention and specialized attention within the larger fields of criminology, justice studies, and even developmental psychology. This chapter addresses a variety of issues: how to define and categorize juvenile victimizations, what is known about the epidemiology of child victimization in broad terms, and how victimization changes across the developmental span of childhood.

DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

The interpersonal victimization of concern to developmental victimology is a special kind of negative life experience that stands apart from other life events. This victimization can be defined as harms that occur to individuals because of other *human actors* behaving in ways that *violate social norms.* The human agency and norm violation components give victimizations a special potential for traumatic impact. It is different from other stresses and traumas, such as accidents, illnesses, bereavements, and natural disasters. Even though we sometimes refer to "victims of hurricanes," "cancer victims," or "accident victims," the more general referent for the term *victimization* is interpersonal victimization. In interpersonal victimization, issues of malevolence, betrayal, injustice, and morality are much more present than is the case for accidents, diseases, and natural disasters. To a large extent, moreover, interpersonal victimizations engage a whole special set of institutions and social responses that are missing in other stresses and traumas: police, courts, agencies of social control, and other efforts to reestablish justice and mete out punishments.

Although this area is the traditional domain for the field of criminology, one reason why traditional criminology may not have fully explored its childhood dimensions is that child victimizations do not map neatly onto conventional crime categories. Although children do suffer from all the crimes that adults do, many violent and deviant behaviors by human actors that harm children are ambiguous in their status as crimes. The physical abuse of children, although technically criminal, is not frequently prosecuted and generally is handled by a different set of social control agencies from the police and criminal courts. Peer assaults, unless very serious or occurring among older children, are generally ignored by the official criminal justice system.

To encompass these complexities, I have proposed that the victimization of children be defined as including three categories: (1) conventional crimes in which children are victims (rape, robbery, assault), which I will call "crimes"; (2) acts that violate child welfare statutes, including some of the most serious and dangerous acts committed against children, such as abuse and neglect, but also some less frequently discussed topics such as the exploitation of child labor—which I will call "child maltreatment"; and (3) acts that would clearly be crimes if committed by adults against adults, but by convention, are

not generally of concern to the criminal justice system when they occur among or against children. These would include sibling violence and assaults between preadolescent peers, and those that might be termed "noncriminal juvenile crime equivalents," which I will call "noncrimes."

Each of these categories is a complex domain, but each has its stereotypical forms, which sometimes help and at other times hinder thinking about the category. When the public thinks of crimes against children, what stands out are stranger abductions and extrafamily child molestations, situations of adults threatening children in which the proper domain of protective and retributive action is clearly the police, courts, and criminal justice system. When the public thinks of child maltreatment, they tend to think of parents abusing or neglecting parental responsibilities, and the appropriate domains of intervention are family courts, social work, and mental health remedies. The public also is aware that there is noncriminal violence against children, and they think of peer assaults, offenses that would be handled by parents or school authorities.

Different as their stereotypes may be, however, these are not neat and distinct categories; there is substantial overlap. Child maltreatment is sometimes treated as criminal, sometimes not (Figure 2.1). Child molesting, for example, is often considered as both a crime and a child welfare violation. The same act of peer assault that might result in an arrest in one jurisdiction may be treated as a "noncrime" for parents or school authorities to sort out in another jurisdiction. Moreover, there are normative shifts that are in progress (illustrated by arrows in Figure 2.1). Sibling sexual assaults once may have been viewed as neither crimes nor child maltreatment, but increasingly they are being handled by criminal justice and child welfare authorities. The

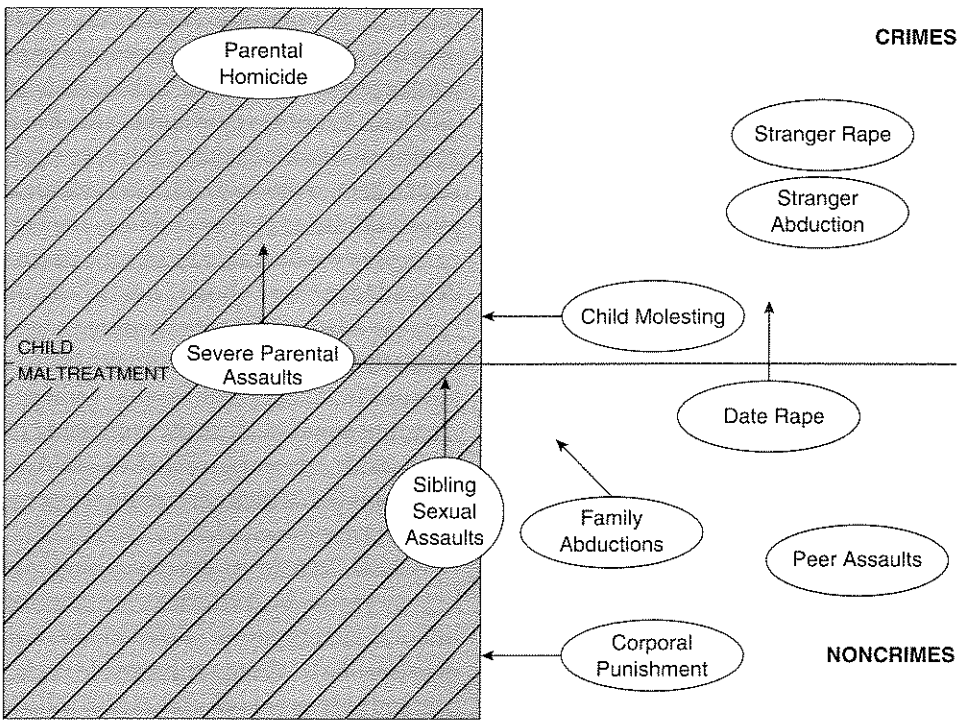

Figure 2.1 Child Victimization: Crimes, Noncrimes, and Child Maltreatment

abduction of children by family members is increasingly being viewed as both a crime and child maltreatment.

The category of "noncriminal juvenile crime equivalents" is one that often creates confusion or draws objections. Some might see it as a watering down of the concepts of "victim" or "crime" to include acts such as peer or sibling assault among children. But it is difficult to deny the functional equivalence, for example, between one adult hitting another, say, in a bar, and one child hitting another, say, on a playground. To study victimization in a developmental fashion, we must look at functionally equivalent acts across the life span, even if the social labels placed on the acts change as the participants get older. The cultural assumption is that these acts are less serious or less criminal when they occur at earlier ages. Whether and how these acts are different should really, however, be a matter of empirical investigation. When studied, violence between younger children has not been found to be less physically or psychologically injurious (Finkelhor, Turner, & Ormrod, in press). Understanding the basis for the social construction of victimization across the span of childhood should in fact be one of the key challenges for developmental victimology.

An even more problematic type of juvenile crime equivalent, however, is spanking and corporal punishment, which is a form of violence (defined as acts intended to cause physical pain) and would be considered an assault among adults. But corporal punishment is not just typically viewed as minor victimization but is actually viewed as salutary and educational by many segments of society. Because our definition of victimization requires the violation of social norms, forms of normatively accepted corporal punishment may not qualify. However, there are signs that a normative transformation is in progress regarding corporal punishment (Greven, 1990). A majority of states have banned all its forms in schools, several Scandinavian countries have outlawed spanking even by parents, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has officially opposed spanking. Social scientists have begun to study it as a form of victimization with short- and long-term negative consequences (Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994; Straus, 1994). Some have argued that it is the template on which other violent behavior gets built. Clearly, a developmental victimology needs to take account of corporal punishment, and spanking in particular, although it may deserve individualized theoretical and empirical treatment.

Another somewhat problematic category in developmental victimology concerns indirect victimizations, situations in which children witness or are closely affected by the crime victimization of a family member or friend. These include children who are first-hand witnesses to spouse abuse (Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990; Wolak & Finkelhor, 1998), who are deprived of a parent or sibling as a result of a homicide (Kilpatrick, 1990), or who are present but not injured in playground massacres or the public killing of a teacher (Nader, Pynoos, Fairbanks, & Frederick, 1990), all situations that have been studied by researchers. Although indirect victimization affects adults as well as children, the latter are particularly vulnerable to effects, due to their dependency on those being victimized. Because most of the acts creating indirect victimizations are crimes, these situations could be readily categorized in the "crime" category, but some, such as the witnessing of marital assault, also are treated as child welfare violations in which the child is seen as a direct, not indirect, victim.

A new domain in developmental victimology in recent years focuses on the topic of Internet victimization. Three kinds of diverse offenses have been subsumed under this rubric: (1) Internet sex crimes and solicitations for such crimes, (2) unwanted exposure to

pornography, and (3) harassment and cyberbullying (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). When adults solicit underage youth for sexual activities or even online interactions, it falls in the category of conventional crime. But although youth receive an apparently large quantity of online sexual solicitations, it is difficult to assess how much of this is from adults and involves individuals who are aware of the underage character of their targets. The Internet has also created an enormous exposure of young people to inadvertent and unwanted sexual material, but although offensive to many youth and parents, it is not yet clearly defined as a crime or child welfare problem, in part because the harm element has not been clearly established. Harassment and cyber-bullying appear to be fairly straightforward extensions of conventional bullying behavior into the realm of electronic communication and are therefore the easiest to categorize. It is still early to fully understand how the development of a large electronic communications environment will alter the conception of or risk for victimization.

Another problematic category for developmental victimology is the one that includes mass victimizations, class victimizations, and institutional and policy victimizations. Warfare and generalized ethnic violence have great impact on children. Because the main agent of this impact is individual violent or hurtful acts perpetrated by individual people, this does not stray too far from the class of victimizations I am considering here. Children victimized by governmental or institutional policies, however, are in a different domain. Children deprived of rights or affected by budget cuts or land expropriations or environmental policies are often seen as victims of human agents, sometimes acting outside of established norms. However, these are victimizations that fall far enough outside the domain of the other interpersonal actions I am considering within this field that they need to be the subject of their own specialization.

An additional definitional complexity in the domain of developmental victimology is that, unlike in the domain of adult victimization, specific victimization categories have been much less clearly drawn. Thus, for example, child sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and child molestation are often thought of interchangeably, but these terms also can refer to very different portions of the problem of sexual offenses involving children. Thus child sexual abuse, when discussed in child welfare contexts, often means sexual offenses committed against children by caretakers and thus might not include sexual assaults by strangers or peers. Child molestation in colloquial terms is thought of as sexual offenses committed against children by adults and thus might exclude date rapes and sexual assaults by other juveniles. Child sexual assault is sometimes taken in its literal meaning to refer to violent and forceful sexual crimes against children and thus excludes nonassaultive sexual crimes against children. All this suggests that the field could benefit from a great deal of definitional refinement and organization.

DIFFERENTIAL CHARACTER OF CHILD VICTIMIZATION

The discussion of how child victimization should be defined highlights the fact that child victimization differs from adult victimization. Children, of course, suffer from all the victimizations that adults do—homicides, robberies, sexual assault, and even economic crimes such as extortion and fraud. But one salient difference is that children also suffer from offenses that are particular to their status. The main status characteristic of childhood is its condition of dependency, which is a function, at least in part, of social and psychological immaturity. The violation of this dependency status results in forms of victimization, such as physical neglect, that are not suffered by most adults (with the exception of those,

such as the elderly and sick, who also become dependent).

The dependency of children creates what might be thought of as a spectrum of vulnerability. Interestingly, the victimization types that children suffer from can be arrayed on a continuum, according to the degree to which they involve violations of children's dependency status (Figure 2.2). At the one extreme is physical neglect, which has practically no meaning as victimization, except in the case of a person who is dependent and needs to be cared for by others. Thus it is a form of victimization that is created by children's dependent status and occurs primarily, if not exclusively, to children. Similarly, family abduction is a dependency-specific victimization, because it is the unlawful removal of a child from the person who is supposed to be caring for him or her. Other kinds of child victimization are a bit more ambiguous. Emotional abuse happens to both adults and children, but the sensitive psychological vulnerability of children in their dependent relationship to their caretakers is what makes society consider emotional abuse of children a form of victimization that warrants an institutional response. Therefore it is fair to say that emotional abuse is a dependency-related victimization as well.

At the other end of the continuum are forms of victimization that are defined largely without reference to dependency and that exist in very similar forms for both children and adults. Stranger abduction is prototypical in this instance, because both children and adults are taken against their will and imprisoned for ransom or sexual purposes. Homicide is similar: the dependency status of the victim does little to define the victimization. In some cases, to be sure, children's deaths result from extreme and willful cases of neglect, but there are parallel instances of adult deaths resulting from extreme and willful negligence.

One might think that most forms of child victimization are either dependency related or not. But in reality, there are forms of child victimization that actually should be located along the midsection of the dependency continuum. Sexual abuse falls here, for example, because it encompasses at least two different forms, one dependency related and one not. Some sexual abuse entails activities ordinarily acceptable between adults, such as consensual sexual intercourse, that are deemed victimizing in the case of children because of their immaturity and dependency. But other sexual abuse involves violence and coercion that would be victimizing even with a nondependent adult.

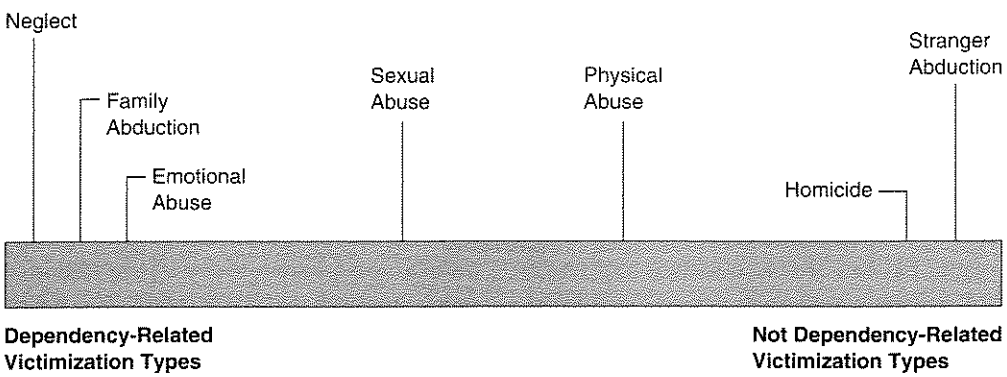

Figure 2.2 Dependence Continuum for Child Victimization Types

In the case of physical abuse, there also is some mixture of types. While most of the violent acts in the physical abuse category would be considered victimizing even between adults, some of them, such as the shaken baby syndrome, develop almost exclusively in a caretaking relationship in which there is an enormous differential in size and physical control. The dependency continuum is a useful concept in thinking about some of the unique features of children's victimizations. It also is helpful in generating some hypotheses about the expected correlates of different types of victimization at different ages.

SCOPE OF CHILD VICTIMIZATION

There is no single source for statistics on child victimizations. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is the ultimate authority on crime victimization in general, has two unfortunate deficiencies when it comes to child victimization. First, it does not gather information on victims younger than age 12. Second, it does not cover certain forms of child victimization such as child abuse, sexual abuse, and kidnapping that preoccupy public policy regarding children. But national estimates that compensate for these deficiencies of the NCVS are available from some other sources. Some of these various estimates are arrayed in Table 2.1.

Under some victimization categories, the estimates of several different studies have been listed, sometimes showing widely divergent rates. These differences stem from a variety of factors.

Some of the studies listed base their rates on cases known to authorities (NCANDS) or professionals (NIS-3). Such studies are certain to count fewer cases than studies that obtain information directly from youth and their families. While it misses many cases, the advantage of information from authorities and professionals, however, is that professional judgment is typically involved in assessing whether a real qualifying victimization (e.g., physical abuse) occurred.

Other discrepancies are more complicated to explain. For a variety of victimizations in Table 2.1, estimates are available from both the NCVS and the Developmental Victimization Survey (DVS; Finkelhor et al., 2005b), a study conducted by the author and colleagues. The NCVS is a highly rigorous survey conducted every year by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, that interviews nearly 10,000 youth ages 12 to 17. The DVS was a survey of both youth and caretakers regarding the experiences of 2,020 children from the ages of 2 to 17. The NCVS estimates are considerably lower than those from the DVS for every crime and also lower than many other survey estimates of specific forms of juvenile victimization (Wells & Rankin, 1995). This is generally attributed to several factors. The NCVS uses a complex definition for each crime it measures, and respondents need to endorse several sets of questions in specific ways in order to qualify. Second, the NCVS interviews respondents on several occasions over a period of three years to make sure that the incidents reported clearly fall within and not outside the exact one-year time period being investigated. Third, the NCVS survey clearly orients respondents to the topic of conventional "crime," so incidents that respondents might not think of as crimes (e.g., forced sex by a dating partner or being beaten by a parent) may not get reported. Fourth, the NCVS does not require that youth be interviewed confidentially, and young people may fail to disclose incidents they would not want their parents or family members to know about.

What this means is that the NCVS estimates are very conservative and count primarily incidents that would be considered conventional crimes in the narrow sense. The DVS estimates, by contrast, are probably inflated with minor incidents and incidents that some observers might dismiss as "not

Table 2.1 Rates and Incidence of Various Childhood Victimizations

	Age	*Rate/1000*[a]	*No. Victimized*	*Year*	*Source*[b]	*Report Type*	*Notes*
Assault, any physical	2–17	530	33,651,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	12–17	(72.8)	(1,686,842)	1993–2003	NCVS	Self-report	
Sibling assault	2–17	355	22,481,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
Robbery	2–17	40	2,543,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	Nonsibling
	12–17	7.8	(180,733)	1993–2003	NCVS	Self-report	
Theft	2–17	140	8,887,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	Nonsibling
	12–15	2.1	(35,874)	2004	NCVS 2003	Self-report	
Sexual assault/Rape	2–17	32	2,053,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	12–17	3.2	(74,147)	1993–2003	NCVS	Self-report	
Sexual abuse (sexual assault by known adult)	2–17	6	*	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	0–17	(1.2)	88,656	2002	NCANDS	Agency reports	
	0–17	4.5	300,200	1993	NIS-3	Agency reports	
Sexual harassment	2–17	38	2,411,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	8th–11th grade	(810)	(13,006,580)	2000	Hostile Hallways	Self-report	
Physical abuse	2–17	37	2,320,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	0–17	(2.3)	166,920	2002	NCANDS	Agency reports	
	0–17	9.1	614,108	1993	NIS-3	Agency reports	
	0–17	49	(3,359,195)	1995	CTSPC-Gallup	Self-reports	
Neglect	2–17	14	909,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	0–17	(7.7)	541,832	2002	NCANDS	Agency reports	Includes medical neglect
	0–17	(19.9)	(1,355,100)	1993	NIS-3	Agency reports	
	0–17	270	(18,509,850)	1995	CTSPC-Gallup	Self-reports	
Psychological/ Emotional abuse	2–17	103	6,498,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	0–17	(0.8)	58,022	2002	NCANDS	Agency reports	
Witnessing/ Domestic violence	2–17	35	2,190,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
	2–17	17	1,099,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
Family abductions (or custodial interference)	0–17	(2.9)	203,900	1999	NISMART-2	Caretaker reports	

	Age	Rate/1000[a]	No. Victimized	Year	Source[b]	Report Type	Notes
Nonfamily abductions	0–17	(0.8)	58,200	1999	NISMART-2	Caretaker reports	Legal definition, includes stereotypical kidnappings
	0–17	(0.0016)	115	1999	NISMART-2	Law enforcement	Stereotypical kidnapping
Homicide	0–17	(0.02)	1,571	2002	SHR	Agency reports	
Bullying	6th–10th grade	(168.8)	(3,245,904)	1998	HBSC	Self-report	Moderate and frequent bullying
	2–17	217	13,735,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
Teasing or emotional bullying	0–17	614	42,092,770	1995	CTSPC-Gallup	Caretaker reports	
	2–17	249	15,745,000	2002	DVS	Self/Caretaker report	
Online victimization							
Sexual solicitations and approaches	10–17	130	3,220,000	2005	YISS-2	Self-reports	
Unwanted exposure to sexual material	10–17	340	8,430,000	2005	YISS-2	Self-reports	
Harassment	10–17	90	2,230,000	2005	YISS-2	Self-reports	
Corporal punishment	0–17	(147.6)	(29,887,672)	1999	PCAA	Caretaker reports	
	0–17	(171.7)	34,800,000	2002	ABC News Poll	Caretaker reports	Spanked or hit ever

a. Numbers given in parentheses did not appear in original source, but were derived from data presented therein.

b. Source acronyms: DVS, Developmental Victimization Survey (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005b); NCVS, National Crime Victimization Survey (Baum, 2005); NCVS 2003, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2003 (Catalano, 2004); NCANDS, National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System, 2002 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Administration on Children Youth and Families, 2004); NIS-3, Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993 (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996); Hostile Hallways (Axelrod & Markow, 2001); NISMART-2, Second National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Thrownaway Children, 1999 (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002; Sedlak, Finkelhor, Hammer, & Schultz, 2002); SHR, Supplemental Homicide Reports (Fox, 2005); HBSC, Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (Nansel et al., 2001); CTSPC-Gallup (Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998); YISS-2, Second Youth Internet Safety Survey (Wolak et al., 2006); PCAA, Prevent Child Abuse America, (Daro, 1999); ABC News Poll (Crandall, 2002).

real crimes," such as sibling and peer assaults and disciplinary acts. Table 2.1 reveals an enormous quantity and variety of victimizations occurring to children and youth. Based on the DVS, over half of all children experienced a physical assault in the course of the previous year, much of it by siblings and peers. One fifth experienced physical bullying, and one fourth, emotional bullying. In addition, 1 in 7 experienced a theft, and 1 in 20 a robbery. The NCVS rates are typically only a fraction, in some cases a 10th or less of the DVS estimates, which suggests how far we may still be from a consensus about the epidemiology of child victimization. But even the NCVS estimates suggest that conventional crime victimization rates for youth are at least three to four times larger than what is known to police (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2001) and two to three times the victimization rate for adults (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999).

A TYPOLOGY OF CHILD VICTIMIZATION BY INCIDENCE

The estimates for various types of child victimization, in spite of their methodological limitations, definitional imprecision, and variability, nonetheless can be broken into three rough and broad categories according to their order of magnitude. First, there are the **pandemic** victimizations that appear to occur to a majority or near majority of children at some time in the course of growing up. These include, at a minimum, assault by siblings and theft, and probably also peer assault, vandalism, and robbery. Second, there is what might be called **acute** victimizations. These are less frequent and occur to a minority, although perhaps a sizeable minority, of children, but may be on average of a generally greater severity. Among these we would include physical abuse, neglect, and family abduction. Finally, there are the **extraordinary** victimizations that occur to only a very small number of children but that attract a great deal of attention. These include homicide, child abuse homicide, and nonfamily abduction.

Several observations follow from this typology. First, there has been much more public and professional attention paid to the extraordinary and acute victimizations compared to the pandemic ones. For example, sibling violence, the most frequent victimization, is conspicuous for how little it has been studied in proportion to how often it occurs. This neglect of pandemic victimizations needs to be rectified. For one thing, it fails to reflect the concerns of children themselves. In a survey of children, three times as many were concerned about the likelihood of their being beaten up by peers as were concerned about being sexually abused (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). The pandemic victimizations deserve greater attention if only for the alarming frequency with which they occur and the influence they have on children's everyday existence. It is a rule of public health that threats to well-being that are minor or only have enduring consequences in a small number of cases can be very serious in their total effects if they occur frequently in a large population. So, peer assaults could potentially, on a population basis, be responsible for more mental health problems than child abuse.

Second, this typology can be useful in developing theory and methodology concerning child victimization. For example, different types of victimization may require different conceptual frameworks. Because they are nearly normative occurrences, the impact of pandemic victimizations may be very different from the extraordinary ones that children experience in relative isolation.

Finally, the typology helps illustrate the diversity and frequency of children's victimization. Although homicide and child abuse have been widely studied, they are notable for how inadequately they convey the variety and true extent of the other victimizations that children suffer. Almost all the figures in

Table 2.1 have been promoted in isolation at one time or another. When we view them together, we note that they are just part of a total environment of various victimization dangers in which children live.

Poly-Victims

With so many victimizations occurring to so many children, it is obvious that there must be considerable overlap. Ironically, though, the fragmentation of the field of child victimization has impeded inquiry into just how much overlap there is and why. Advocates and policymakers concerned about one form of child victimization or another, such as dating violence, have tended to present estimates and studies about their victims as though this was the primary or only victimization that such children suffered from. They could do this because studies of one kind of victimization rarely ask about other kinds. Some studies might inquire about multiple forms of child maltreatment, such as physical and sexual abuse. Other studies, like the NCVS, inquire about multiple forms of conventional crime, such as rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. But studies almost never ask about a very broad and comprehensive range of victimizations, including child maltreatment, conventional crime, and exposure to peer violence, for example.

It turns out that most juvenile victims experience multiple victimizations. To ascertain this, we have developed a questionnaire that asks about 34 different kinds of child victimization, the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire. This questionnaire asks about victimizations in five broad domains: conventional crime, child maltreatment, peer and sibling, sexual victimization, and witnessing/indirect victimization. This questionnaire was utilized in a national survey of 2,020 American children ages 2 to 17. Some of the estimates from the survey, the Development or Victimization Survey, are listed in Table 2.1.

The survey found that victimization was a frequent occurrence with 71% of the children and youth experiencing at least one victimization in the last year. But more important, it found the experience of multiple victimizations very common as well. We defined multiple victimizations as having a different kind of victimization in a different episode over the course of a year. This meant that an assault and robbery on different occasions, even by the same perpetrator, would count as multiple victimizations, but two assaults by the same or even different perpetrators would not count as multiple victimizations. This conservative way of defining multiple victimization was adopted in light of findings that different kinds of victimization seem to be more harmful than repeated episodes of the same type (see Finkelhor et al., in press; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005a). Of the children with any victimization in the last year, two thirds had experienced two or more. The average number of victimizations for a victimized child was three in the last year, and the total ranged all the way up to 15. Obviously, children who had had one kind of victimization were at increased likelihood to have other victimizations as well. For example, if a child had been physically assaulted by a caretaker, he or she was 60% more likely than other children to also have been assaulted by a peer.

Children with multiple victimizations should be of particular professional concern. In other fields, it has been widely recognized that multiple intersecting adversities frequently have impacts far beyond those of individual stressful events. So, for example, clients with several psychiatric diagnoses (comorbidity) or who abuse different kinds of drugs (poly-drug users) have been found to pose particularly challenging problems. There is every reason to believe that this is also the case with child victims.

We have proposed to call this group of multiply victimized children "poly-victims."

(We prefer to the term "poly-victim" over "multiple victim" because the term "multiple victim" can mean a victimization in which there were several victims, a meaning that could be confused with what we were intending to designate—a victim who has had several victimizations.) We expected that research on poly-victims would show them to be particularly highly victimized, vulnerable, and distressed young people.

In fact, the DVS confirmed these predictions. We categorized as poly-victims the youth in our national survey who had experienced four or more victimizations over the course of the single year. Such youth comprised 31% of all victims and 22% of the full sample. But they were the youth with the most serious kinds of victimization. Forty percent of the poly-victims had had a victimization injury, 42% had experienced a form of maltreatment, and 25% had been victimized by a weapon-toting assailant. Although they were not that different from other youth in their demographic profile, they had considerably more other lifetime adversities, such as major illnesses, accidents, or other family problems. They were also clearly the most distressed youth. They were 5.8 times more likely than other youth to be angry, 20.2 times more likely to be depressed, and 10.3 times more likely to be anxious. In fact, most of the clinically distressed kids were also poly-victims. For example, 86% of the clinically depressed children also fit the criteria as poly-victims (Finkelhor et al., in press).

It appears increasingly that professionals should be looking for poly-victimization among children, not just one individual type of victimization, even a serious one. Our analyses have suggested that poly-victimization is most associated with mental health problems and bad outcomes and that poly-victims are the kids harboring the greatest amount of distress. The associations between distress and individual victimizations disappear when poly-victimization is taken into account (Finkelhor et al., in press). That is, children who experience a single kind of victimization, such as bullying or even child maltreatment, appear to be able to recover from it. But youth who experience victimization of multiple kinds from multiple sources are showing signs that they are locked in a pattern or trapped in a downward spiral that should be of the greatest concern to those trying to help.

As we come to understand poly-victims, it may change some of the assumptions that we have been used to making about victimization in general. Victimizations have in the past mostly been thought of as stressful or traumatic events. This is in part a legacy of the field's close connection to the literature on post-traumatic stress. The earliest victimization experiences to be studied in detail were sexual assaults, which were considered to be highly threatening individual episodes, happening to otherwise ordinary victims, who were overwhelmed by a short-term incident.

But as victimization research has expanded, we have come to understand that many victims are subjected to repeated episodes over a period of time, as with the child who is bullied again and again on the playground or emotionally and physically abused again and again by a parent. We are also now seeing that many children are subjected to a variety of different kinds of victimization, such as being beaten and sexually assaulted and robbed, over a relatively short period of time. This suggests that victimization for some children is more like a **condition** than an **event.** A condition is a much more stable and ongoing process, whereas an event is more time-limited. It is like the difference between failing a test and failing a course, or the difference between an acute medical condition such as appendicitis and a chronic one such as diabetes. One of the most important diagnostic challenges that face professionals concerned about child victimization is discerning those children for whom victimization has

become a condition, rather than just an event. We should expect them to have different characteristics and a different prognosis.

Currently, most of what we know about poly-victims is that they experience a lot of victimization. They appear to be equally divided between boys and girls, and they appear to be somewhat more common among older youth, although there are certainly considerable numbers of poly-victims even at a very young age (Finkelhor et al., in press). Current evidence does not strongly suggest that they come from poor or minority backgrounds. Importantly, one feature that does seem to be associated with poly-victimization is living in a family that has been affected by divorce, separation, and/or remarriage. Obviously, we need considerably more study of these youth so that we can identify them and prevent or remediate their poly-victimization as a condition as early as possible.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROPOSITIONS

Childhood is such an extremely heterogeneous category—4-year-olds and 17-year-olds having little in common—that it can be inherently misleading to discuss child victimization in general without reference to age. We would expect the nature, quantity, and impact of victimization to vary across childhood with the different capabilities, activities, and environments that are characteristic of different stages of development. This is the key principle of developmental victimology.

Unfortunately, the general culture is already full of assumptions about development and victimization, many of them questionable and sometimes even contradictory. Some victimizations are presumed to be worse for younger children, others worse for older children—mostly based on stereotype, not evidence. We have already alluded to some of these assumptions. Peer violence is presumed to be more serious, injurious, traumatizing, and crimelike as it occurs to older children, for example. That is, a teenager punched by another teen would be regarded as experiencing something much more serious than a five-year-old punched by another preschooler. Is there evidence for this? In fact, when we looked at these issues in a research study, we did **not** find less injury or psychological impact for younger children in instances of peer violence (Finkelhor et al., in press). Still, they are not entirely equivalent kinds of offenses if only because we have different mechanisms for responding to them—police might want to arrest the teenage assailant. But we probably should not assume until we can study the matter more that the acts are more dangerous or the consequences more serious simply because the participants are older.

In contrast to peer violence, the colloquial assumption about child molestation is that it is more serious for younger children. Some people make the naïve assumption that because children are at an earlier developmental stage, they may be vulnerable to more serious developmental disruption. For example, a child who has not yet been introduced to sex will be more affected by the molestation than one who has developed some ideas and concepts. But, here again, much of the available evidence casts doubt on the colloquial assumptions. Some studies have found sexual abuse and child molestation to have more consequences at younger ages, and others have found the opposite. One of the big problems is that victimizations that happen at an earlier age tend to go on for a longer period of time. It is clear that what developmental victimology needs is a rigorously empirical approach to developmental issues, one that does not accept facile developmental assumptions at their face value. Things are generally more complicated than most people, even experts, presume.

One good place to start an empirical developmental victimology is with propositions

about how the types of victimization and types of perpetrators change over the course of childhood. The mix of victimization types is very likely to be different for younger children and older children. Based on one of the concepts introduced earlier, we would expect, for example, that victimizations stemming from the dependent status of children should be most common among the most dependent, hence, the youngest children. A corollary is that, as children get older, their victimization profile should come more and more to resemble that of adults.

We can examine such propositions in a crude way with the data that are available. In fact, we do know that some of the dependency-related victimizations are most concentrated in the under-12 age group. For example, physical neglect, the failure to take care of the needs of a dependent child, is heavily concentrated among younger children. Family abduction is also heavily concentrated among younger children. When children are no longer so dependent, they tend to make their own choices about which parent to live with, and abduction is no longer a feasible strategy for disgruntled parents. By contrast, victimizations that we grouped at the nondependency end of the continuum involve a greater percentage of teenagers. Homicide is a crime defined equivalently for minors and adults, and it is concentrated among teenagers (Figure 2.2).

Homicide is a particularly good crime for some additional insights about development and victimization, because fairly complete age data are available and because other efforts have been made to interpret the patterns (Christoffel, 1990; Christoffel, Anzinger, & Amari, 1983; Crittenden & Craig, 1990; Jason, 1983; Jason, Carpenter, & Tyler, 1983). Child homicide is also a complicated crime from a developmental point of view. It has a conspicuous bimodal frequency, with a high rate for the very youngest children, those under age 1, and another high rate for the oldest children ages 16 and 17 (Figure 2.3). But the two peaks represent very different phenomena. The homicides of young children are primarily committed by parents, by choking, smothering, and battering. In contrast, the homicides of older children are committed mostly by peers and acquaintances, primarily with firearms. Although the analysts do not agree entirely on the number and exact age span of the specific developmental categories for child homicides, a number of propositions are clear. There is a distinct group of neonaticides: children killed in the first day or few weeks of life. The proportion of female and rural perpetrators is unusually high in this group (Jason et al., 1983). Homicide at this age is generally considered to include many isolated parents dealing with unwanted children.

After the neonatal period, there follows a period through about age five during which homicides are still primarily committed by caretakers using "personal weapons," the criminologist's term for hands and feet, but the motives and circumstances are thought to be somewhat different from those pertaining to the neonatal period. These preschool victim homicides appear to be mostly cases of fatal child abuse that occur as a result of parents' attempts to control children or angry reactions to some of young children's aversive behavior—uncontrollable crying, hitting parents or siblings, soiling themselves, or getting dirty (Christoffel, 1990; Crittenden & Craig, 1990). Such children are frequently thrown against hard surfaces, struck hard with a blow to the head or belly, or smothered. Because of their small size and physical vulnerability, many children at this age die from acts of violence and force by adults that would not be fatal to an older child.

As children become school age, the rate of child homicide declines, and the nature of child homicide becomes somewhat different. Among school-age children, killings by parents and caretakers gradually decrease

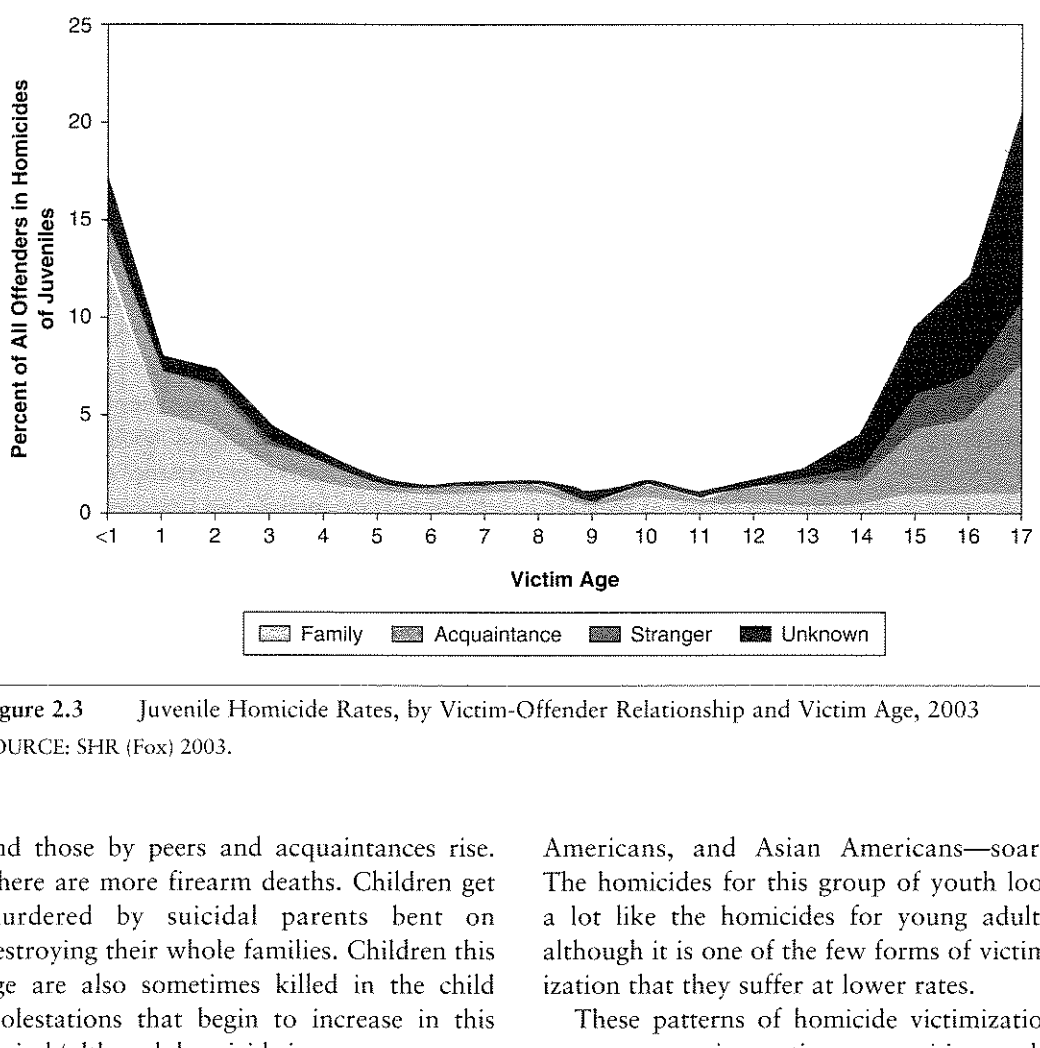

Figure 2.3 Juvenile Homicide Rates, by Victim-Offender Relationship and Victim Age, 2003
SOURCE: SHR (Fox) 2003.

and those by peers and acquaintances rise. There are more firearm deaths. Children get murdered by suicidal parents bent on destroying their whole families. Children this age are also sometimes killed in the child molestations that begin to increase in this period (although homicide is a rare accompaniment to child molesting). Some of the children in this age group die as innocent victims in robberies and arsons. There is a mixture of the kinds of homicides that affect younger children and also some of those that affect older children, but the overall rate is low, and it is one of the safest times in the life span in terms of homicide risk.

Then, at age 13, the homicide picture changes again, and rapidly. The rate for boys diverges sharply from that for girls. Acquaintances become the predominant killers. Gangs and drugs are heavily implicated for this group, and the rate for minority groups—African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans—soars. The homicides for this group of youth look a lot like the homicides for young adults, although it is one of the few forms of victimization that they suffer at lower rates.

These patterns of homicide victimization suggest some interesting propositions relevant to developmental victimology. First, they suggest at least three somewhat different "ecological niches" in which victimization occurs: (1) a preschool, family-based, early development niche (with a possible neonatal subenvironment); (2) a middle childhood, somewhat protected, mixed school and family niche; and (3) an adolescent, risk-exposed, transition-into-adulthood niche. The types of homicide suffered by children are related to the nature of their dependency and to the level of their integration into the adult world. Among the things that may well change across childhood and across these niches are the victim-offender relationship,

the locale where the homicide occurs, the nature of the weapons, the motives involved, and the contribution victims make to the crime in terms of risk taking and provocation. The homicide variations provide a good case for the importance and utility of a developmental perspective on child victimizations and a model of how such an approach could be applied to other types of victimization.

INTRAFAMILY VICTIMIZATION

Unlike many adults, children do not live alone; they live mostly in families. Moreover, their involvement in their families wanes as they get older. So a plausible principle of developmental victimology is that younger children have a greater proportion of their victimizations at the hands of intimates and correspondingly fewer at the hands of strangers. This is because they live more sheltered lives and spend more time in the home and around family.

Figure 2.4 indeed confirms this. Figure 2.4a shows data on crimes against children known to the police from the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Family offenders are highest for the youngest age victims. But the percentage declines from near 70% to below 20% after age 12. At the same time, acquaintance victimizations rise during childhood until adolescence, where they plateau at about 70%. Stranger victimizations remain low throughout childhood but start to increase a bit after age 15. The patterns are very similar in data on victimizations reported in the DVS, shown in Figure 2.4b.

These trends are very consistent with what we know about children's social development. Social activities expand throughout childhood to include an increasingly large and more distant network of contacts. But, overall, children have fewer of the characteristics that might make them suitable targets for strangers, such as money and valuable possessions. In adolescence, they both acquire such valuables and begin to interact in even more public arenas so that increased victimization at the hands of strangers makes sense.

An additional possible principle is that the identity of perpetrators may vary according

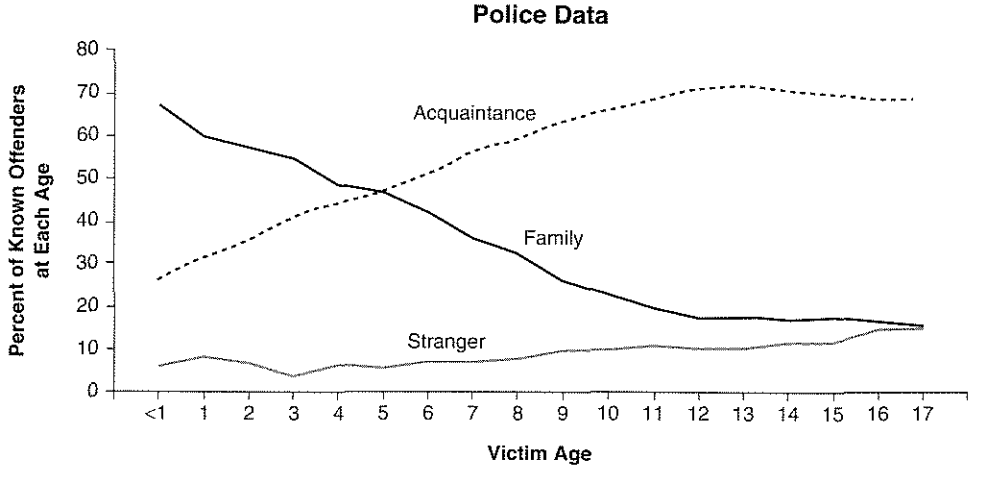

Figure 2.4a Juvenile Victim Relationship to Offender by Victim Age: Police Data

SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation (1997), National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS; 12 states only), computer file. Tabulations undertaken by Crimes Against Children Research Center, Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

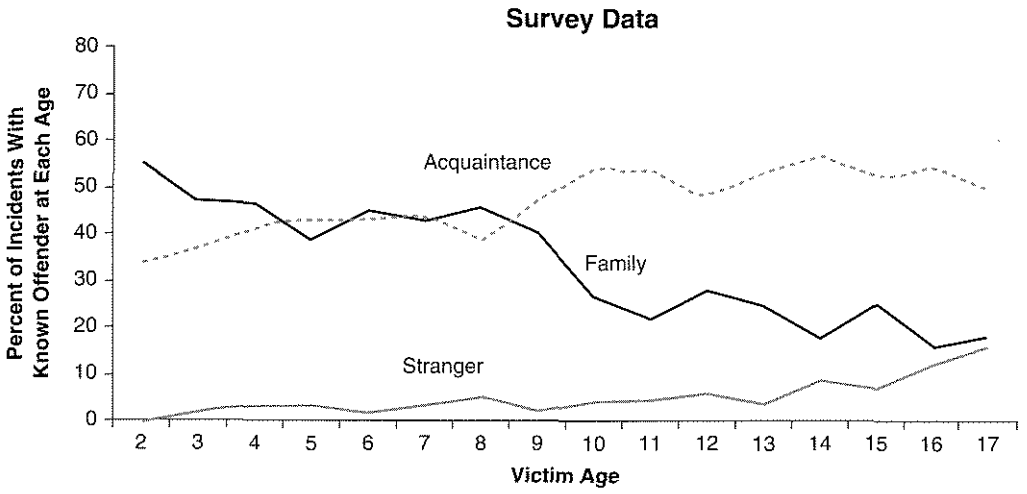

Figure 2.4b Juvenile Relationship to Offender by Victim Age: Survey Data

SOURCE: Developmental Victimization Survey. All forms of victimization (Finkelhor et al., 2005b).

to the type of victimization and its place on the dependency continuum. Victimizations that are more dependency related should involve more perpetrators who are parents and family members. Available data suggests that this is true. Parents comprise 100% of the perpetrators of neglect (Sedlak, 1991)—the most dependency-related victimization—but only 28% of the perpetrators of homicide (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1992). This pattern occurs because the responsibilities created by children's dependency status fall primarily on parents and family members. They are the main individuals in a position to violate those responsibilities in a way that would create victimization. Thus, when a sick child fails to get available medical attention, it is the parents who are charged with neglecting the child, even if the neighbors also did nothing.

Consistent with developmental patterns in victim–offender relationship and the dependency continuum, we would also expect that more of the victimizations of younger children would take place in the home and that victimizations would depart farther and farther from the home as children age and move out into an ever-widening circle of social activity.

We would also expect that, as the homicide data shows, crimes against children involving firearms would increase along with development. In fact, one explanation for why teens are murdered less than young adults in spite of their equivalent or higher overall violent victimization rate could be that teens and their associates have less access to firearms than do young adults.

GENDER AND VICTIMIZATION

Developmental victimology needs to consider gender as well as age in its effort to map the patterns of victimization in childhood. In overall terms, many of the gender patterns seen among adults also apply among children. That is, boys overall suffer more victimization than girls, but girls suffer more sexual assaults. On the basis of the conventional crime statistics available from the NCVS and Uniform Crime Report, the ratio of boys to girls for homicide is 2.3 to 1; for assault, 1.7 to 1; and for robbery, 2 to 1. Girls suffer vastly more incidences of rape (8.1 to 1; Bureau of Justice Statistics,

1992; Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1992). But these ratios primarily pertain to the experience of adolescents, and they do not consider age variations, which add a considerable wrinkle to the pattern.

THE AGE CRIME CURVE

The life course patterns in crime and delinquency have been one of the most interesting threads for ongoing discussion and research in criminology. The empirical foundation for the discussion is the apparent observation that criminal behavior accelerates dramatically during the adolescent years to reach a peak in young adulthood and then falls off in later years. The dramatic rise from preadolescence to adulthood has been ascribed to a variety of factors. One argument is that it reflects a biosocially based status competition for mates that gets its start in adolescence (Kanazawa & Still, 2000). Others contend that crime rises in adolescence because at that stage young people begin to have adult aspirations but are excluded from the labor market (Greenberg, 1985; Grogger, 1998). Others point simply to the lax social controls that operate during adolescence and young adulthood—singlehood, no family responsibilities, and no commitment to employers. Does victimization risk have the same age pattern, accelerating during adolescence in the same dramatic fashion as delinquency? Official crime statistics would say yes, but more comprehensive self-report surveys suggest no.

Police data such as from NIBRS jurisdictions show that teens constitute three fourths of the juvenile crime victims, with risk escalating as youth age (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2000). Only a few crimes, such as kidnapping, forcible sodomy, and incest, appear more evenly distributed across developmental stages. But the police data have serious limitations as valid testimony to the age curve for victimization. Many of the victimizations of younger children—assaults at the hands of peers, abuse at the hands of parents, neglect and other forms of child maltreatment—are forms of victimization that are considerably less likely to be defined as crimes or matters of police concern.

The age patterns in victimization rates are considerably different when the evidence comes from victims themselves and their family members, for example, from the DVS, which assessed victimizations from ages 2 through 17, using the same screening questions across all ages (Figure 2.5). Overall, victimization rose slightly but not precipitously for the adolescents.[1] The rise was largest for sexual victimizations and witnessing/indirect victimizations. There was no rise for assaults. Perhaps, most surprisingly, child maltreatment also rose with age. This might be the form of victimization that we would most expect to decline with age. In fact, some studies of child maltreatment known to professionals also show higher rates for older children. But it may be the case that the maltreatment of younger children is difficult to access, both in surveys (which almost of necessity must get this information from the caregivers themselves) and among cases known to professionals, who are less likely to have contact with younger children.

The absence of a steep increase in victimization is also apparent in the NCVS data. Rates of violent crime measured in the NCVS for 12- to 14-year-olds are as high as rates for 15- to 17-year-olds. Rape and aggravated assault are a bit higher for the older adolescents, but simple assault is actually more common for the younger youth. The steep increases noted in self-reported delinquency studies (Elliott, Huizinga, & Menard, 1989) are not apparent in the self-reported victimization studies.

Why does the self-report information contrast so starkly with the official police data? Studies clearly show that the younger the victims, the less likely it is that victimization will be reported to law enforcement (Finkelhor &

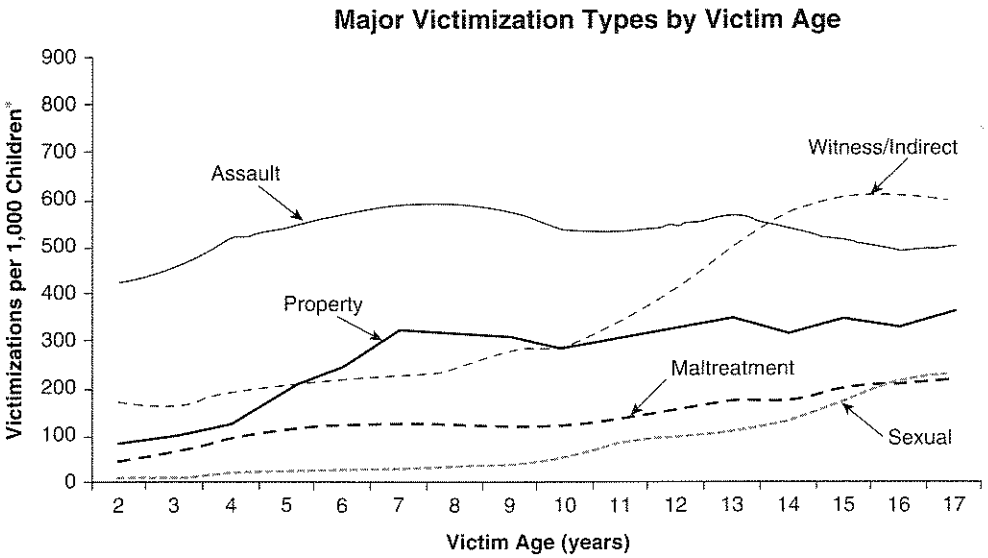

Figure 2.5 Major Victimization Types by Victim Age

NOTE: For purposes of generalization, data are shown as 3-year running averages.

Ormrod, 1999). The public and police do not want younger victims caught up in a judicial system. They are less apt to define juvenile victimizations as crimes. Families, schools, and child welfare officials lay claim to the arbitration of offenses against younger victims. Younger victims themselves have a harder time independently accessing police. So, in spite of police data, victimization does not accelerate in adolescence in the same way as delinquency.

THE LIFESTYLES AND ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY OF CRIME VICTIMIZATION

Developmental victimology also needs to develop theories of victimization risk that take into account the specific context of childhood. This may mean altering some of the conventional approaches taken by victimology as it has been applied to adults. In victimology, in general, one conceptual framework has dominated the discussion: the closely related "lifestyle exposure" and "routine activities" theories (Cohen, 1981; Garofalo, Siegel, & Laub, 1987; Gottfredson, 1986; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). Such theories, as they have been expounded in the past, highlight the fact that lifestyles and activities of different people put them in environments or situations in which they are more or less in contact with potential offenders and at risk of potential victimization.

Four central concepts have been used in these approaches to explain the connection between lifestyles and risk: proximity to crime, exposure to crime, target attractiveness, and guardianship (Miethe & Meier, 1994). Proximity to crime would mean living in high-crime areas. Exposure to crime would include things such as being out at night. Target attractiveness would be attributes that might entice offenders such as the ownership of desirable and portable possessions. Guardianship highlights that spending considerable time alone or apart from the family or other possibly protective individuals can create vulnerability. These concepts have proved useful in explaining why certain groups such as

men, blacks, and single people have higher crime victimization rates. They have also been used to explain why rates of crime have increased over time in some places and in some periods, when, for example, fewer people began living in families, and people began acquiring more conspicuously valuable items.

When these concepts have been applied to some extent to the analysis of youth victimization, it has been primarily to point out how increased exposure and decreased guardianship heighten youth vulnerability. Young people are viewed in this theory as engaging in risky behaviors, such as staying out late, going to parties, and drinking, which compromise the guardianship provided by parents and adults and expose them to more possibilities for victimization (Jensen & Brownfield, 1986). Much of the research on youth victimization has particularly stressed its connection to delinquent activities (Lauritsen, Laub, & Sampson, 1992; Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991). Delinquency is seen as a lifestyle that puts a person in close proximity to other offenders—aggressive or delinquent companions or rival gang members. Moreover, it also greatly reduces guardianship because delinquents tend to avoid conventional social environments and through their activities also largely forfeit their claims on the protection of police and other authorities (Sparks, 1982). Empirical research has confirmed that delinquents are indeed more prone to victimization than other youth (Lauritsen et al., 1992; Lauritsen et al., 1991).

CRITIQUE OF LIFESTYLE AND ROUTINE ACTIVITIES THEORY

The lifestyle theory perspective of youth victimization has ultimately been fairly narrow. For one thing, many youth get victimized without being involved in delinquency. Delinquent activities are primarily the domain of adolescents, particularly adolescent boys, but even young children get assaulted, kidnapped, and sexually abused (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994) without any connection to delinquent behavior. For another thing, the lifestyle and routine activities theories were designed for and have always been best at explaining street crime such as stranger assaults and robberies. But much of youth victimization, especially of younger children, occurs at the hands of acquaintances and family members (Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman, 1994).

These acquaintance and intrafamily victimizations are not as well suited to the lifestyle or routine activities concepts. For example, routine activities studies often operationalize *exposure to crime* as the amount of time routinely spent out at night or away from the family household. However, when trying to explain parental child abuse, such explanations collapse. It does not increase a child's risk of parental abuse to be away from their parents. In fact, it may actually reduce it.

Thus it is not surprising that theories developed to explain children's victimization by acquaintances and family members have virtually ignored lifestyle theory and have relied on other concepts besides exposure and guardianship. For example, in trying to account for who becomes the target of bullying, observers have noted that these tend to be children with "avoidant-insecure" attachment relationships with primary caregivers, who lack trust, have low self-confidence, have physical impairments, are socially isolated, and are physically weaker (Olweus, 1993; Smith, Bowers, Binney, & Cowie, 1993).

The literature on physical abuse also takes a very different tack from the lifestyles approach. This literature tends to equate victimization risk primarily with family and parental attributes, such as family stress, isolation, alcoholic and violence-prone caretakers, parents who have victimization histories and unrealistic expectations of their children (National Research Council,

1993), and youth characteristics such as oppositional behavior, difficult temperament, or impairments that are a burden or source of disappointment for caregivers (Berdie, Berdie, Wexler, & Fisher, 1983; Garbarino, 1989; Libby & Bybee, 1979; Schellenbach & Guerney, 1987). A still different victimization literature, the one on child sexual assault, notes even other risk factors: girls, children from stepparent families, children whose parents fight or are distant and punitive, reduced parental supervision, and emotional deprivation that make children and youth vulnerable to the offers of attention and affection that sexual predatory offenders sometimes use to draw children into sexual activities (Finkelhor, 1993; Finkelhor, 1994).

The concepts from these various literatures can, to a limited extent, be subsumed into the routine activities conceptual framework. Thus, for example, lack of supervision (considered a risk for sexual abuse) corresponds to the guardianship concept. Family social isolation (as a risk for parental physical abuse) also has an element of missing guardianship, but in this case the guardians are not the family members themselves, but members of a related social network. One might also consider characteristics such as having an impairment, being insecurely attached, being a female, or being emotionally deprived as features of "target attractiveness."

But target attractiveness, in the routine activities literature, has primarily been utilized in a very narrow sense, in reference to the value and portability of material objects that as a result of their lifestyle a person may own or carry (Hough, 1987; Miethe & Meier, 1994). It could be extended without too much distortion to refer to the value of a victim as an object of desire, such as for a sexual crime. But target attractiveness takes on a very different meaning in the case of violent victimizations, one in which the word *attraction* seems quite inappropriate. A child who is beaten by a parent because the child's disability disappoints and frustrates a parent is an "attractive target" for parental anger in only a very ironic and convoluted way. Moreover, it is not necessarily true, as is often the case for property crime, that the offender is simply choosing among more attractive targets, deciding to burglarize the home with the fancier exterior. In the example of parental assault, if the child were not disabled, it is not clear that some other child would then suffer the abuse instead. Maybe, in this case, nobody would be abused.

But perhaps the biggest objection to trying to subsume these child victimization risk factors into routine activities theory is that none of these target attributes constitutes a "lifestyle." Nor do they necessarily increase risk through routine activities. Thus, femaleness, although it is a form of target attractiveness and does increase the risk for sexual abuse, is not a routine activity. Moreover, while maleness may put men at differential risk for physical assault because men engage in more unsupervised and risk-taking behavior (a lifestyle feature), femaleness does not put women at differential risk for sexual assault by virtue of anything they do. Femaleness itself is the risk attribute. Similarly, while emotional deprivation may change a person's routine activities, if a molester preys on such a child because she is needy, it is not the routine activities of the child that necessarily elevate the risk. The routine activities idea of target attractiveness does not seem broad enough.

A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT VICTIMIZATION

Thus, to explain the full range of victimizations among youth, the lifestyle or routine activities framework needs to be modified. Concepts such as guardianship, exposure, and proximity, when it comes to victimization by

intimates, need to be seen not as aspects of routine activities or lifestyles but as environmental factors that expose or protect victims from victimization. Thus, when a child is placed at risk for sexual abuse because parents are fighting and inattentive, the lack of guardianship is an environmental condition conducive to victimization, not a problem of a lifestyle or routine activity for the child.

In addition to the environmental conditions highlighted by the lifestyle theory to explain the risks for youth victimization, more attention also needs to be given to the risk-increasing potential of individual characteristics and attributes, such as female gender or emotional deprivation. These personal characteristics of individuals would appear to increase vulnerability to victimization, independent of any routine activities, because these characteristics have some congruence with the needs, motives, or reactivities of offenders. That is, because certain offenders are drawn or react to certain types of victims or certain characteristics in victims, such victims are more vulnerable. This process might be called "target congruence," and it increases risk in one of three more specific ways, referred to here as *target vulnerability*, *target gratifiability*, or *target antagonism:*

1. In the case of target vulnerability, some victim characteristics increase risk because they compromise the potential victim's capacity to resist or deter victimization and thus make the victim an easier target for the offender. For youth victimization, the prototypical risk factors in the vulnerability category would be attributes such as physical weakness, emotional deprivation, or psychological problems.

2. In the case of target gratifiability, some victim characteristics increase risk because they are some quality, possession, skill, or attribute that an offender wants to obtain, use, have access to, or manipulate. The prototypical risk factor in the gratifiability category would be female gender for the crime of sexual assault, but keeping in mind that for some sexual offenders, gratifiability focuses on prepubescent children or in some cases boys. Having valuable possessions, as in the routine activities notion of target attractiveness, would also fall into this category.

3. In the case of target antagonism, some characteristics increase risk by being qualities, possessions, skills, or attributes that arouse the anger, jealousy, or destructive impulses of the offender. Examples in this category would be ethnic characteristics or being gay or effeminate (for hate crimes), or being anxiously attached, a "mama's boy," etc. (as in the case of bully victims). In the case of parental assaults, characteristics such as being a burden due to disability or being disobedient would be other examples.

Although these target congruence concepts, and particularly the target gratifiability one, have similarities to the notion of target attractiveness, the word *attractiveness* and its stereotypical applications in the crime of sexual assault have victim-blaming connotations that should be avoided. The attractions implied in the concepts used here are specific to the predispositions, proclivities, and reactivities of the offender, hence the idea of congruence. Thus gratifiability means that the target fits what the offender is looking for, whether conventionally desirable or merely satisfying of an offender's idiosyncratic motive. Antagonism does not imply provocation in the conventional sense: without some predisposition, a crying baby does not provoke assault any more than does being the member of a minority.

It is important to note, as the examples also illustrate, that target congruence changes considerably from crime to crime, and from offender to offender. Thus a female may have more target gratifiability for a sexual assault, but a male may have more target antagonism for a gay-bashing. Characteristics that might increase target antagonism for parental

assaults, such as disobedience, may have little if anything to do with risk for peer victimization. There may be some generalized target congruence characteristics, such as weakness, but even this may be a relatively insignificant factor in many victimizations.

These target congruence elements also clearly play a greater role in some offenses than others. In relatively impersonal street crimes or group victimizations (e.g., sniper attacks) and also in the case of family members who live with very violent individuals, offenders may not be choosing victims on the basis of any personal characteristic at all, only proximity. In other victimizations (e.g., attempts to assassinate the president, stalking crimes, or a parent maltreating a colicky baby) the congruence of the personal characteristics of the victim with the motives or reactivities of the offender provide a virtually complete explanation of victim choice.

These target congruence concepts seem to encompass most of the characteristics that have been cited in the literature on youth victimization outside the lifestyle theory domain, characteristics such as low self-esteem and disobedience. But they also seem quite relevant to the prediction of forms of victimization, such as street crime, which has been the primary focus of routine activities research.

RESEARCH NEEDS

The research needs in the field of developmental victimology are vast and urgent, given the size of the problem and the seriousness of its impact, and they range from studies of risk factors to studies of treatment efficacy to studies of criminal justice policy. But in the limited space of this discussion, we will mention only three important points.

First, if we are to take it seriously, we need much better statistics to document and analyze the scope, nature, and trends of child victimization. The National Crime Victimization Survey records crime victimizations only from age 12 and older. The Uniform Crime Reports in the past have made no age information available about crimes, with the exception of homicide (something that is changing under a new system, but the full national implementation of this system is still a long way off). The national data collection system about child abuse also has severe methodological limitations, restricting the way in which the information can be aggregated nationally or compared among states (Finkelhor & Wells, 2003). We need comprehensive yearly national and state figures on all officially reported crimes and forms of child abuse committed against children. These need to be supplemented by regular national studies to assess the vast quantity of unreported victimization, including family violence and child-to-child and indirect victimization. While there are methodological challenges in such efforts, studies such as the ones referenced in this chapter demonstrate that this is feasible.

Second, we need theory and research that cuts across and integrates the various forms of child victimization. A good example is the work on post-traumatic stress disorder in children, which has been applied to the effects of various victimizations: sexual abuse, stranger abduction, and the witnessing of homicide (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1995, 1996; Eth & Pynoos, 1985; Terr, 1990). Similar cross-cutting research could be done on other subjects, such as what makes children vulnerable to victimization or how responses by family members buffer or exacerbate the impact of victimization. To be truly synthesizing, this research needs to study the pandemic victimizations, not just the acute and extraordinary victimizations, which have been the main focus in the past.

Finally, the field needs a more developmental perspective on child victimization. This would begin with an understanding of the mix of victimization threats that face children of different ages. It would include the kind of factors that place children at risk and the strategies for

victimization avoidance that are appropriate at different stages of development. It also would differentiate how children at different stages react to and cope with the challenges posed by victimization. It is ironic that until recently the problem of children as aggressors has had more attention in social science than has children as victims, reflecting perhaps the priorities of the adult world. It is encouraging that as the needs of children are more fully recognized, this balance is finally changing.

REFERENCES

Axelrod, A., & Markow, D. (2001). *Hostile hallways: Bullying, teasing, and sexual harassment in school.* Washington, DC: American Association of University Women Educational Foundation.

Baum, K. (2005). *Juvenile victimization and offending, 1993–2003* (Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report No. NCJ209468). Washington, DC: Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Berdie, J., Berdie, M., Wexler, S., & Fisher, B. (1983). *An empirical study of families involved in adolescent maltreatment.* San Francisco: URSA Institute.

Boney-McCoy, S., & Finkelhor, D. (1995). Prior victimization: A risk factor for child sexual abuse and for PTSD-related symptomatology among sexually abused youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*(12), 1401–1421.

Boney-McCoy, S., & Finkelhor, D. (1996). Is youth victimization related to trauma symptoms and depression after controlling for prior symptoms and family relationships? A longitudinal, prospective study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 64*(6), 1406–1416.

Bureau of Justice Statistics. (1992). *National crime survey.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Catalano, S. M. (2004). *Criminal victimization, 2003* (BJS/NCVS Report No. NCJ 205455). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Christoffel, K. K. (1990). Violent death and injury in U.S. children and adolescents. *American Journal of Diseases of Children, 144,* 697–706.

Christoffel, K. K., Anzinger, N. K., & Amari, M. (1983). Homicide in childhood: Distinguishable pattern of risk related to developmental levels of victims. *The American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology, 4*(2), 129–137.

Cohen, L. E. (1981). Modeling crime trends: A criminal opportunity perspective. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 17,* 140–159.

Crandall, J. (2002). *Most say spanking's OK by parents but not by grade-school teachers.* ABC News and ICR International Communications Research. Retrieved February, 10, 2006, from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/spanking_p011021108.html.

Crittenden, P. A., & Craig, S. E. (1990). Developmental trends in the nature of child homicide. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 5,* 202–216.

Daro, D. (1999). *Public opinion and behaviors regarding child abuse prevention: 1999 survey.* Chicago: Prevent Child Abuse America.

Elliott, D. S., Huizinga, D., & Menard, S. (1989). *Multiple problem youth: Delinquency, substance use, and mental health problems.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Eth, S., & Pynoos, R. S. (1985). *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in children: Progress in psychiatry.* Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. (1992). *Crime in the United States, 1991: Uniform crime reports.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Finkelhor, D. (1993). Epidemiological factors in the clinical identification of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 17,* 67–70.

Finkelhor, D. (1994). Current information on the scope and nature of child sexual abuse. *The Future of Children, 4*(2), 31–53.

Finkelhor, D., & Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1994). Victimization of children. *American Psychologist, 49*(3), 173–183.

Finkelhor, D., & Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1995). Victimization prevention programs: A national survey of children's exposure and reactions. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*(2), 125–135.

Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. K. (1999). *Reporting crimes against juveniles* (Juvenile Justice Bulletin No. NCJ178887). Washington, DC:

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. (2000). *Characteristics of crimes against juveniles* (Juvenile Justice Bulletin No. NCJ 179034). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. K. (2001). *Child abuse reported to the police* (Juvenile Justice Bulletin No. NCJ187238). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (in press). Poly-victimization: A neglected component in child victimization trauma. *Child Abuse & Neglect.*

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., Turner, H. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2005a). Measuring poly-victimization using the JVQ. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 29*(11), 1297–1312.

Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., Turner, H. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2005b). The victimization of children and youth: A comprehensive, national survey. *Child Maltreatment, 10*(1), 5–25.

Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., & Ormrod, R. K. (in press). Kid's stuff: The nature and impact of peer and sibling violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect.*

Finkelhor, D., & Wells, M. (2003). Improving national data systems about juvenile victimization. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 27*(1), 77–102.

Fox, J. A. (2005). Uniform Crime Reports [United States]: Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976–2003 [Computer file] ICPSR04351-v1 (pp. 11–22). Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor].

Garbarino, J. (1989). Troubled youth, troubled families: The dynamics of adolescent maltreatment. In D. Cicchetti & V. Carlson (Eds.), *Child maltreatment: Theory and research of the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect* (pp. 685–706). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Garofalo, J., Siegel, L., & Laub, J. (1987). School-related victimizations among adolescents: An analysis of National Crime Survey (NCS) narratives. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 3,* 321–338.

Gottfredson, M. R. (1986). Substantive contributions of victimization surveys. *Crime and Justice: An annual review of research, 7,* 251–287.

Greenberg, D. F. (1985). Age, crime, and social explanation. *American Journal of Sociology, 91,* 1–21.

Greven, P. (1990). *Spare the child: The religious roots of punishment and the psychological impact of physical abuse.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Grogger, J. (1998). Market wages and youth crime. *Journal of Labor Economics, 16*(4), 756–791.

Hammer, H., Finkelhor, D., & Sedlak, A. J. (2002). *Children abducted by family members: National estimates and characteristics* (Juvenile Justice Bulletin No. NCJ196466). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Hashima, P., & Finkelhor, D. (1999). Violent victimization of youth versus adults in the National Crime Victimization Survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 14*(8), 799–820.

Hindelang, M. S., Gottfredson, M., & Garofalo, J. (1978). *Victims of personal crime.* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Hough, M. (1987). Offenders' choice of targets: Findings from victim surveys. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 3,* 355–369.

Jaffe, P. G., Wolfe, D. A., & Wilson, S. K. (1990). *Children of battered women.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Jason, J. (1983). Child homicide spectrum. *American Journal of Diseases of Children, 137,* 578–581.

Jason, J., Carpenter, M. M., & Tyler, C. W. (1983). Underrecording of infant homicide in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health, 73*(2), 195–197.

Jensen, G. F., & Brownfield, D. (1986). Gender, lifestyles, and victimization: Beyond routine activity theory. *Violence and Victims, 1,* 85–99.

Kanazawa, S., & Still, M. C. (2000). Why men commit crimes (and why they desist). *Sociological Theory, 18,* 434–447.

Kilpatrick, D. G. (1990). *Violence as a precursor of women's substance abuse: The rest of the drugs-violence story.* Paper presented at the 98th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA.

Lauritsen, J. L., Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (1992). Conventional and delinquent activities: Implications for the prevention of violent victimization among adolescents. *Violence and Victims, 7*(2), 91–108.

Lauritsen, J. L., Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (1991). The link between offending and victimization among adolescents. *Criminology, 29,* 265–292.

Libby, P., & Bybee, R. (1979). The physical abuse of adolescents. *Journal of Social Issues, 35,* 101–126.

Margolin, G., & Gordis, E. B. (2000). The effects of family and community violence on children. *Annual Review of Psychology, 51,* 445–479.

Miethe, T. D., & Meier, R. F. (1994). *Crime and its social context: Toward an integrated theory of offenders, victims, and situations.* Albany: SUNY Press.

Nader, K., Pynoos, R., Fairbanks, L., & Frederick, C. (1990). Children's PTSD reactions one year after a sniper attack at their school. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 147,* 1526–1530.

Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. C. (2001). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth. *JAMA, 285*(16), 2094–2101.

National Research Council. (1993). *Understanding child abuse and neglect.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Olweus, D. (1993). Bullies on the playground: The role of victimization. In C. H. Hart (Ed.), *Children of playgrounds: Research perspectives and applications* (pp. 85–128). Albany: SUNY Press.

Schellenbach, C. J., & Guerney, L. F. (1987). Identification of adolescent abuse and future intervention prospects. *Journal of Adolescence, 10*(1), 1–12.

Sedlak, A. J. (1991). *National incidence and prevalence of child abuse and neglect: 1988—Revised report.* Rockville, MD: Westat.

Sedlak, A. J., & Broadhurst, D. D. (1996). *Third national incidence study of child abuse and neglect.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sedlak, A. J., Finkelhor, D., Hammer, H., & Schultz, D. J. (2002). *National estimates of missing children: An overview* (Juvenile Justice Bulletin No. NCJ196466). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Smith, P. K., Bowers, L., Binney, V., & Cowie, H. (1993). Relationships of children involved in bully/victim problems at school. In S. Duck (Ed.), *Learning about relationships* (pp. 184–205). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sparks, R. F. (1982). Crime and delinquency issues: A monograph series. In R. G. Sparks (Ed.), *Research on victims of crime: Accomplishments, issues, and new directions.* Rockville, MD: National Institute of Mental Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Strassberg, Z., Dodge, K. A., Pettit, G. S., & Bates, J. E. (1994). Spanking in the home and children's subsequent aggression toward kindergarten peers. *Development and Psychopathology, 6,* 445–461.

Straus, M. A. (1994). *Beating the devil out of them: Corporal punishment in American families.* New York: Lexington Books.

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Finkelhor, D., Moore, D., & Runyan, D. K. (1998). Identification of children maltreatment with the Parent–Child Conflict Tactics Scales: Development and psychometric properties data for a national sample of American parents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 22*(4), 249–270.

Terr, L. (1990). *Too scared to cry.* New York: Harper/Collins.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Administration on Children Youth and Families. (2004). *Child Maltreatment 2002: Reports from the states to the National Child Abuse & Neglect Data System.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Wells, L. E., & Rankin, J. H. (1995). Juvenile victimization: Convergent validation of alternative measurements. *Journal of Research in Crime, 32*(3), 287–307.

Wolak, J., & Finkelhor, D. (1998). Children exposed to partner violence. In J. L. Jasinski & L. M. Williams (Eds.), *Partner violence: A comprehensive review of 20 years of research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Wolak, J., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2006). *Online victimization: 5 years later.* National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Bulletin. #07-06-025. Alexandria, VA.

NOTE

1. Figure 2.5 shows the percentage of each age cohort with any victimization or any specific type of victimization, but it does not show the total frequency of victimizations. However, taking into account victimization frequency—which is roughly the same at all ages—does not change the shape of the lines shown in Figure 2.5.